
A Critical Examination of Curriculum Implementation in UK and Vietnamese Higher Education

A Multiple Case Study

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Declaration by author

I, Thi Ngoc Bui, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

The phenomenon of internationalization has had a significant impact on higher education practices in recent decades (de Wit, 2017; Knight, 2012; Mittelmeier and Yang, 2022). Many countries, including Vietnam, have embraced language curriculum reform as part of their efforts to promote global connectivity. Vietnam has specifically adopted English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in its universities and has drawn inspiration from foreign institutions to enhance the quality of higher education and improve graduate employability (Tran and Nguyen, 2018). To this end, the government of Vietnam (GoV) established the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project, also known as the National Language Teaching and Learning Reform, in 2008. This project aimed to foster students' communicative competence within a multilingual and multicultural context and involved the development of new language curricula at all levels of education. At the tertiary level, universities were granted more autonomy to design their own English curricula that best suited their students and circumstances. GoV encouraged key institutions to implement 'advanced programmes' of English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI). However, initiating and translating the language policy into institutional curriculum plans posed certain challenges, as any misconceptions or mistakes by administrators or teachers could lead to an 'implementation gap'.

In light of these challenges, the primary objective of this multiple case study is to examine the implementation of the national language policy in two state institutions in Vietnam, with a specific focus on classroom practices at the tertiary level. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the perspectives and approaches of both teachers and non-English major students, not only within the Vietnamese setting but also within the United Kingdom context, in order to identify appropriate pedagogical approaches for promoting multilingual and intercultural communication in today's globalised society.

By adopting a new curriculum framework (Scott, 2016) and drawing on the theoretical framework of 'Teaching English as an International Language' (TEIL) by Selvi et al. (2024) and Rose et al. (2020), this study critically examines the objectives and contents of the curriculum, assesses the extent of its development and implementation, evaluates the

adequacy of resources, personnel, ELT methods, and materials, and seeks to understand the intricacies and complexities of curriculum implementation.

This examination is informed by successful curriculum designs and ELT pedagogical practices from both contexts and concludes with specific recommendations for a research-based curriculum framework, an effective curriculum design with practical pedagogical implications, and coherent strategies for curriculum implementation in these similar contexts.

Keywords: Curriculum Reform, Pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Higher Education

Impact statement

The impact of this research can be assessed through both practical and scholarly research methods. The study collected and analysed an empirical dataset using three case studies, a conceptual framework, and a comprehensive review of existing literature. In terms of scholarly research, Scott's (2016) curriculum framework serves as an effective theoretical and conceptual guide for identifying gaps between the intended and implemented curriculum at national, institutional, and classroom levels in both UK and Vietnam educational institutions. This curriculum model, which focuses on curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and evaluation standards, offers a valuable perspective to examine how curricula are designed, conceptualised, and implemented in higher education institutions worldwide. Not only did this curriculum model significantly inform the research design, particularly in reshaping the research questions, but it also guided the analysis and discussion of the data. As a result, this model can be utilised by both scholars and practitioners to design, develop, and evaluate curricula at various levels, in diverse areas, and within different contexts.

Furthermore, the analysis of the three university case studies, viewed through the theoretical lens of 'Teaching English as an International Language' (TEIL), has the potential to generate significant impact. This approach contributes to a deeper understanding of language curriculum design, development, and implementation across three distinct contexts. By employing a case study research strategy, this thesis presents an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of how these different contexts influence curriculum implementation. Consequently, this research expands the existing body of knowledge on various pedagogical practices, different approaches to language teaching, and effective methods of integrating them to achieve curriculum goals in the contemporary globalised world.

One of the primary motivations behind conducting this thesis was the potential impact it could have on professionals in higher education (HE), specifically those who work as language curriculum designers, language practitioners, and researchers. The focus of my

thesis is to address the importance of possessing a comprehensive and detailed understanding of curriculum models, as well as various approaches and practices for teaching and learning 'globally owned' English in multicultural and multilingual settings. Additionally, there is a demand for an effective curriculum model that encompasses standards, development processes, and implementation frameworks for designing, developing, and implementing a language curriculum in higher education institutions (HEIs). Moreover, a theoretical model and an effective design of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) curriculum, along with considerations for implementation, can prove beneficial for researchers, curriculum designers, and practitioners working in similar contexts.

I have disseminated my conceptual explorations and empirical findings through presentations at various esteemed academic conferences. These notable events encompassed a poster presentation at the UCL Poster Conference in 2017, presentations delivered at the International Conference on Multilingualism and Language Studies in Higher Education in 2017, as well as the Joint Academic Exchange Program held at Waseda University in Tokyo during November 2017. Additionally, I presented my research at the BAICE Student Conference in 2017, the UCL IOE Doctoral Conference in June 2017, and participated in a symposium at the IALIC Conference in 2018 (International Association for Languages and International Communication), which took place in Helsinki. Lastly, I had the privilege of attending BERA conferences in 2018 and 2023 (British Educational Research Association) to showcase my scholarly contributions.

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Table of Contents

Declaration by Author

Abstract

Impact Statement

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Rationale of the Study	
1.2 Statement of the Problem	
1.3 My Roles as a Researcher and a Teaching Professional	
1.4 The Purpose of the Study and Preliminary Research Questions	
1.5 Significance of the Study	
1.6 The Thesis Outline	
1.7 Summary of Chapter 1	
Chapter 2: Literature Review: Theoretical Approach	16
2.1 Curriculum and Curriculum Frameworks	
2.1.1 Definition of Terms	
2.1.2 An Overview of Curriculum Frameworks	
2.1.3 A New Model of Curriculum	
2.2 Selection of Theoretical Frameworks	
2.3 Curriculum Change	
2.4 Curriculum Implementation	
2.5 Change Implementation Strategies	
2.6 Factors Affecting Teachers' Implementation Processes	
2.7 Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions	
2.7.1 Concepts of Belief and Perception	
2.7.2 Teachers' Beliefs or Perceptions and Classroom Practices	
2.8 Summary of Chapter 2	
Chapter 3: Literature Review: Practical Approach	46
3.1 Definition of Terms	
3.1.1 English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes	
3.1.2 Methods and Approaches	
3.2 Methods and Approaches in Language Teaching and Learning	
3.2.1 Grammar-Translation Method	
3.2.2 The Direct Method	
3.2.3 The Audio-Lingual Method	
3.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching	
3.2.5 Integrated Skills Approach	
3.2.6 Task-based Language Teaching	
3.2.7 Summary of Methods and Approaches	

- 3.3 English and HE Internationalisation
- 3.4 Teaching and Learning English in Globalised World
 - 3.4.1 Englishes in Global Contexts
 - 3.4.2 Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL)
 - 3.4.3 Practical Implications for Teaching and Learning EIL
- 3.5 Summary of Literature Review

Chapter 4: Background and Context

71

- 4.1 English Education in Asia
 - 4.1.1 Dominant Language Policies
 - 4.1.2 English Teaching and Learning
- 4.2 The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and CEFR-V
 - 4.2.1 The CEFR and its Implementation
 - 4.2.2 The CEFR-V in Vietnamese Education
- 4.3 Education in Vietnam
 - 4.3.1 A Brief History of Curriculum Development
 - 4.3.2 Internationalisation through English Communication
 - 4.3.3 English Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and Challenges
 - 4.3.4 The Institutional Contexts
- 4.4 Education in the UK
 - 4.4.1 History of Curriculum Development
 - 4.4.2 The Context of English Language Teaching and Learning
 - 4.4.3 The EAP Curriculum in UK Higher Education
 - 4.4.4 The Institutional Context
- 4.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5: Methodological and Ethical Considerations

102

- 5.1 Theoretical Framework and Rationale
 - 5.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology
 - 5.1.2 Research Paradigms and Methodological Approaches
- 5.2 The Mixed Methods Design
 - 5.2.1 Description of Mixed Method Design
 - 5.2.2 Operationalisation of the Research Design
- 5.3 The Selection of Universities and Research Participants
 - 5.3.1 The Three Universities
 - 5.3.2 Research Participants
- 5.4 Data Generation Techniques
 - 5.4.1 An overview
 - 5.4.2 Document Review
 - 5.4.3 Questionnaires
 - 5.4.4 Semi-structured Interviews
 - 5.4.5 Focus Groups
 - 5.4.6 Classroom Observations
- 5.5 Data Collection
 - 5.5.1 Ethical Considerations
 - 5.5.2 The Procedures of Data Collection
- 5.6 Data Analysis

- 5.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis
- 5.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis
- 5.6.3 Validity, reliability and triangulation

5.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 6: EAP Curriculum in Vietnam (Case 1)

139

- 6.1 The National Language Policy
 - 6.1.2 The Rationale of the Policy
 - 6.1.3 Policy Design
 - 6.1.4 Policy Technologies
 - 6.1.5 Expected Implementation
- 6.2 Intended EAP Curriculum at Institutional Level
 - 6.2.1 The Design of the EAP Curriculum in the EMI Programme
 - 6.2.2 The EAP curriculum standards
 - 6.2.3 The EAP Pedagogic standards
 - 6.2.4 The EAP Assessment standards
- 6.3 Teachers and Learners Profile
 - 6.3.1 EAP Teachers' Demographic Information
 - 6.3.2 EAP Students' Characteristics and Previous Learning Experiences
- 6.4 Teachers' and Students' Conceptions of the EAP Curriculum
 - 6.4.1 Teachers and Students Perceptions of the Status of English and Needs
 - 6.4.2 Teachers' Perceptions of the EAP syllabus
 - 6.4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the CLT
 - 6.4.4 Teachers and Students' Perceptions of the Assessment
- 6.5 Factors Affecting Teachers' EAP Curriculum Implementation
- 6.6 Teachers and Students' Opinions and Confidence in Implementing EAP Curriculum
 - 6.6.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards EAP Curriculum Implementation
 - 6.6.2 Students' Attitudes towards EAP Curriculum Implementation
 - 6.6.3 Teachers' Self- efficacy in the Implementation Process
- 6.7 The Implementation of the EAP Curriculum
 - 6.6.1 Pedagogical Practices
 - 6.6.2 Assessment Practices
 - 6.6.3 Student and Teachers' Roles
 - 6.6.4 EAP Textbooks and Supporting Materials
 - 6.6.5 Teacher Training and Other Resource Support
 - 6.6.6 Appropriateness and Practicality of Change
 - 6.6.7 Difficulties Faced by EAP Teachers
 - 6.6.8 Difficulties Faced by EAP Students
- 6.8 Chapter Summary
 - 6.8.1 At National Level
 - 6.8.2 At Institutional Level
 - 6.8.3 At Classroom Level

Chapter 7: EOP Curriculum in Vietnam (Case 2)

211

- 7.1 Intended EOP Curriculum at Institutional Level
 - 7.1.1 The Design of the EOP English Curriculum

- 7.1.2 The EOP Curriculum Standards
- 7.1.3 The EOP Pedagogic Standards
- 7.1.4 The EOP Assessment Standards
- 7.2 EOP Teachers' and Students' Profile
 - 7.2.1 EOP Teachers' Demographic Information
 - 7.2.2 EOP Students' Characteristics and Previous Learning Experiences
- 7.3 Teachers' and Students' Conceptions of the EOP Curriculum
 - 7.3.1 Teachers and Students Perceptions of the Status of English and Needs
 - 7.3.2 Teachers' Perceptions of the EOP syllabus
 - 7.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the CLT
 - 7.3.4 Teachers and Students' Perceptions of the Assessment
- 7.4 Factors Affecting Teachers' EOP Curriculum Implementation
- 7.5. Teachers and Students' Opinions and Confidence in Implementing EOP Curriculum
 - 7.5.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards EOP Curriculum Implementation
 - 7.5.2 Students' Attitudes towards EOP Curriculum Implementation
 - 7.5.3 Teachers' Self- efficacy in the Implementation Process
- 7.6 The Implementation of the EOP Curriculum
 - 7.6.1 Pedagogical Practices
 - 7.6.2 Assessment Practices
 - 7.6.3 Student and Teachers' Roles
 - 7.6.4 EOP Textbooks and Supporting Materials
 - 7.6.5 Teacher Training and Other Resource Support
 - 7.6.6 Appropriateness and Practicality of Change
 - 7.6.7 Difficulties Faced by EOP Teachers
 - 7.6.8 Difficulties Faced by EOP Students
- 7.7 Chapter Summary
 - 7.7.1 At Institutional Level
 - 7.7.2 At Classroom Level

Chapter 8: EAP Curriculum in the UK Context (Case 3)

273

- 8.1 Intended EAP Curriculum at Institutional Level
 - 8.1.1 The EAP Curriculum standards
 - 8.1.2 The EAP Pedagogic Standards
 - 8.1.3 The EAP Assessment Standards
- 8.2 Teacher and Students' Profile
 - 8.2.1 Teacher's Demographic Information
 - 8.2.2 Students' Characteristics and Previous Learning Experiences
- 8.3 Students' Perceptions of English Status and Needs
- 8.4 Teacher's Perception of the EAP Curriculum
- 8.5 The Implementation of the EAP Curriculum
 - 8.5.1 Pedagogical Practices
 - 8.5.2 Assessment Practices
 - 8.5.3 Textbooks and Supporting Materials
 - 8.5.4 Difficulties Faced by Teacher and/or Designer
 - 8.5.5 Difficulties Faced by Students
- 8.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 9: Discussion and Wider Literature: Implications for Curriculum Implementation in Higher Education **300**

- 9.1 Cross-case Analysis in Vietnam Higher Education Context (Case 1 vs. Case 2)
 - 9.1.1 The Top -down Language Policy and the Role of Policymakers
 - 9.1.2 Institution Curriculum Standards and the Role of Administrators
 - 9.1.3 Teachers and Students Perceptions and Attitudes
 - 9.1.4 Pedagogic and Evaluation Practices
 - 9.1.5 Roles of Teachers and Students
 - 9.1.6 Factors and Difficulties
- 9.2 Cross-case Analysis in the UK and Vietnam Higher Education Context
 - 9.2.1 The Curriculum Standards
 - 9.2.2 Pedagogic and Evaluation Practices
 - 9.2.3 Difficulties and Modifications
- 9.3 Considerations
 - 9.3.1 Considerations of Policy and Change in Vietnamese Higher Education
 - 9.3.2 Considerations of Effective Curriculum Design
 - 9.3.3 Considerations of Effective Pedagogical and Evaluation Practices
 - 9.3.4 Cultural and Technological Considerations
- 9.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter 10: Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications for Future Research **335**

- 10.1 Research Review
- 10.2 Key Findings
- 10.3 Contributions of the Study
- 10.4 Limitations of the Research
- 10.5 Implications for Future Research
- 10.6 Conclusion

References **349**

Appendices **397**

- Appendix 1: Information Letter
- Appendix 2: Consent Form
- Appendix 3: The Questionnaire for Teachers
- Appendix 4: The Questionnaire for Students
- Appendix 5: Interview Instrument for Policy-makers
- Appendix 6: Interview Instrument for Administrators
- Appendix 7: Interview Instrument for Teachers
- Appendix 8: Interview Instrument for Students
- Appendix 9: A Sample of Lecturer Interview Transcripts
- Appendix 10: List of Documents
- Appendix 11: Schedule for Research and Changes

List of Figures

- Figure 2.1: Scott's New Curriculum Model
- Figure 2.2: 4-Step Process of Curriculum Development
- Figure 2.3: Framework for the Implementation of Curriculum Standards
- Figure 2.4: A Framework for Understanding of the Intended and Enacted Curriculum
- Figure 2.5: Factors affecting Teachers' Implementation
- Figure 2.6: Pedagogical Change
- Figure 3.1: The theoretical positioning of Teaching English as an International English
- Figure 4.1: Simplified Structure of Cases 1 and 2 in Vietnamese Higher Education
- Figure 4.2: Undergraduate Pathway
- Figure 5.1: Mixed-methods Research Design
- Figure 5.2: The Research Design
- Figure 5.3: Summary of the Lecturer Questionnaire Design
- Figure 5.4: Summary of the Student Questionnaire Design
- Figure 6.1: Four Year Undergraduate EMI Programme in Case 1
- Figure 6.2: Four Year Undergraduate EMI in Case 1 (2016)
- Figure 6.3: Years of Learning English before University
- Figure 6.4: Respondents for Multiple Choice Questions
- Figure 6.5: Resources of Information about CEFR
- Figure 6.6: Resources of Information about VSTEP
- Figure 6.7: How widely CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 1
- Figure 6.8: Domains CEFR used as a Reference in Case 1
- Figure 6.9: Domains VSTEP used as a Reference in Case 1
- Figure 6.10: How useful CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 1
- Figure 6.11: Continuum of Programmes that integrate Content and Language Learning
- Figure 7.1: Pedagogical Activities for a Unit
- Figure 7.2: Gender Difference
- Figure 7.3: Years of Learning English before University
- Figure 7.4: Respondents for Multiple Choice Questions
- Figure 7.5: Resources of Information about CEFR
- Figure 7.6: Resources of Information about VSTEP
- Figure 7.7: How Widely CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 2
- Figure 7.8: Domains CEFR used as a Reference in Case 2
- Figure 7.9: Domains VSTEP used as a Reference in Case 2
- Figure 7.10: How useful CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 2

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Global Englishes Language Teaching Framework
Table 4.1: CEFR-V and CEFR Levels
Table 4.2: The Target English Proficiency Level
Table 4.3: Pre-sessional Programme Durations
Table 4.4: Pre-sessional English Courses
Table 5.1 Techniques used for Subsidiary Questions
Table 6.1: Demographic Descriptions of the Survey Participants
Table 6.2: Reasons for the Importance of the English Study
Table 6.3: Importance of English Areas (Students)
Table 6.4: Importance of English Areas (Teachers)
Table 6.5: Importance of English Skills in Major's Success
Table 6.6: Teachers' Perceptions of the Syllabus
Table 6.7: Teachers' Perception of CLT
Table 6.8: The Important CLT Practices for Students
Table 6.9: The required CLT practices for teachers
Table 6.10: Importance of English Areas in University Final Examination (Teachers)
Table 6.11: Importance of English Areas in University Final Examinations (Students)
Table 6.12: Factors affecting Teachers' Curriculum Implementation
Table 6.13: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the TATCI Scale
Table 6.14: Means and Standard Deviations in the SATCI Scale
Table 6.15: Sample Means and Standard Deviations in 10 Implementation-related Behaviours
Table 6.16: Teachers' Self-efficacy in the Implementation Process
Table 6.17: Pedagogic Practices used in the Classroom
Table 6.18: CLT Pedagogical Processes
Table 6.19: Students' EAP Experiences
Table 6.20: Frequency of Teachers' Pedagogic Practices
Table 6.21: Students' Favourite Pedagogical Practices
Table 6.22: Difficulties faced by teachers
Table 7.1: Demographic Descriptions of the Survey Participants
Table 7.2: Reasons for Importance of English Study
Table 7.3: Importance of English Areas (Students)
Table 7.4: Importance of English Areas (Teachers)
Table 7.5: Importance of English Skills in Major's Success
Table 7.6: Teachers' Perception of the Syllabus
Table 7.7: Teachers' Perceptions of CLT
Table 7.8: The Required CLT Practices for Teachers
Table 7.9: The Important CLT Practices for Students
Table 7.10: Importance of English Areas in University Final Examination (Teachers)
Table 7.11: Importance of English Areas in University Final Examinations (Students)
Table 7.12: Factors affecting Teachers' Curriculum Implementation
Table 7.13: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the TATCI Scale
Table 7.14: Means and Standard Deviations in the SATCI Scale
Table 7.15: Sample Means and Standard Deviations in 10 Implementation-related Behaviours

Table 7.16: Teachers' Self-efficacy in the Implementation Process
Table 7.17: Pedagogic Practices used in the Classroom.
Table 7.18: CLT Pedagogic Practices
Table 7.19: English Usage and Classroom Practice
Table 7.20: Frequency of Teachers' Pedagogic Practices
Table 7.21: Students' Favourite Pedagogic Practices
Table 7.22: Difficulties faced by Teachers
Table 8.1: EAP Topics of Study

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN:	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEFR:	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEFR-V:	The Vietnamese rendition of the CEFR
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
EAP/ESP:	English for Academic Purposes/ English for Specific Purposes
EFL/ESL:	English as a Foreign Language/ English as a Second Language
EIL:	English as an International Language
ELT:	English Language Teaching
EMI:	English as a Medium of Instruction/ English-Medium Instruction
EOP:	English for Occupational Purposes
GE:	General English
GELT:	Global Englishes Language Teaching
GoV:	Government of Vietnam
HaUI:	Hanoi University of Industry
HE:	Higher Education
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
IELTS:	The International English Language Testing System
KNLNN:	Khung Năng Lực Ngoại Ngữ (Foreign Language Capacity Framework used for Vietnam)
L1/L2:	First language/Second language
MOET:	The Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)
MOIT:	The Ministry of Industry and Trade (Vietnam)
Project 2020:	National Foreign Languages Project
TEIL:	Teaching English as an international language
TOEFL:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC:	Test of English for International Communication
ULIS:	University of Language and International Studies
VNU:	Vietnam National University

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises seven sections. The research study is based on my experience as a lecturer at the tertiary level and complements previous and recent research on curriculum implementation and English language teaching and learning. Section 1.1 provides a general overview of the recent educational reform in Vietnam known as the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project¹ with respect to internationalisation. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 then delve into the motivations, foundations, and insights derived from my personal perspective as an early implementer of change and transformation. Section 1.4 outlines the research objectives, underlying assumptions, and the four research questions investigated in this thesis. Section 1.5 explores the potential theoretical and practical contributions of this research to the issues of curriculum design, curriculum implementation, and English teaching and learning. Section 1.6 describes the thesis structure and provides an overview of each of the ten chapters. Lastly, section 1.7 summarises the chapter.

1.1 Rationale for the study

Globalisation has had a profound impact on education, particularly in relation to the spread of English as a global language. English has become a crucial tool for global business, higher education, and migration, and has been referred to as 'the first truly global language' (Crystal, 2018). The influence of English extends beyond English-speaking countries, reaching non-English-speaking nations as well. According to Crystal (2006), the number of English speakers increased from 1.2 billion in 2003 to 1.5 billion in 2006, and this upward trend has continued. English is spoken as a global language by an estimated 2 billion individuals (Rose et al., 2020) and approximately 2.3 billion people use it as either a first or additional language (Patel et al., 2023). The widespread adoption of English, coupled with the rise in its global usage, has prompted a re-evaluation of English-language learning and teaching objectives, as well as a re-conceptualisation of the language itself (Nero, 2012).

¹ The Project 2020, now extended to 2025, is reported to be worth 9.738 billion VND, approximately US \$400 million (Vietnamese Government, 2008), or 0.4% of Vietnam's GDP in 2008 (World Bank, n.d.).

Internationalisation, a response to globalisation, has been a dominant force shaping educational practices in recent decades (de Wit, 2017; Knight, 2012; Kosmützky and Putty, 2016; Mittelmeier and Yang, 2022; Rumbley et al., 2012). Governments, particularly in regions like Hong Kong and Singapore, perceive EMI as the most effective means of promoting internationalisation and development. The experience of certain ASEAN countries, such as Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia, has demonstrated that the most successful approach to enhancing English proficiency is to establish bilingual environments within universities, where English serves as the medium of instruction for scientific and technological subjects (Burns and Vu, 2014; Tran and Ngo, 2023).

Considerable changes have occurred in the field of English language learning and teaching as a result of collaborative learning processes and communicative pedagogies. Recent approaches to language teaching have placed a strong emphasis on meaningful and creative communication practices, which has been well-received by educators. Numerous governments worldwide have enhanced their curricula by adopting English as a means to promote internationalisation, making English a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary education. Moreover, an increasing number of institutions globally prioritise language curriculum reform as a means to enhance the quality of higher education and attract international students, often by implementing EMI programmes and borrowing curricula from foreign institutions. Vietnam is no exception to this trend.

The Government of Vietnam (GoV) has consistently implemented various initiatives aimed at enhancing language teaching and learning to improve students' communicative competence within the multifaceted and multicultural context of a global society. Among these initiatives, one policy directive stands out as particularly significant in the realm of foreign language instruction: Decision No 1400/QĐ-TTg, titled 'Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020'. This decision explicitly states that:

... by 2020, most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges, and universities will be able to confidently use foreign languages

in daily communication, study, and work in an integrated, multicultural, and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage for the development of Vietnamese people during the country's industrialization and modernization process².

In order to operationalise this Decision, *the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*, also known as Project 2020, was established and referred to as the National Language Teaching and Learning Reform. Consequently, English was introduced in grade 3 of primary school, and the European Common Framework of References for Languages (CEFR)³ was utilised as the Proficiency Scale to assess students' required English proficiency. A new curriculum designed for all levels of general education was developed, characterised as learner-centred and communicative task-based, with the aim of standardising students' English communicative competences. At the higher education level, universities were encouraged to create their own programmes tailored to their students and specific circumstances. The government has also encouraged key tertiary institutions to implement 'advanced programmes' of EMI, where English is mandated as the language of instruction. These advanced programmes are planned to be implemented across the entire tertiary educational system, aiming to develop the youth's language proficiency and their professional capacity in the future (Pham and Barnett, 2022).

Although an increasing number of universities in Vietnam have implemented new English curricula in EMI and other programmes since 2011, there is a lack of curriculum evaluation studies. Despite concerns raised at national and institutional conferences or informally among teachers, many questions regarding curriculum planning and implementation remain unanswered. These include how the current English curriculum aligns with national policies and meets the expectations of university communities regarding language education. Additionally, it is unclear how universities interpret and incorporate these language policies into their institutional curriculum plans, and how teachers adapt the curriculum to enhance

² Decision No 1400/QĐ-TTg, signed by Prime Minister of Vietnam in 2008, was translated into English by the researcher.

³ The CEFR, launched in 2001, is an international standard that describes language ability on a six-point scale, ranging from A1 for beginners to C2 for those who have achieved mastery of a language. (Council of Europe)

students' competency in multicultural and multilingual communication (Project 2020), or 'global lingua franca communication' (Selvi et al., 2024). A limited number of studies on EMI, and other language programmes mainly address challenges of implementation from the perspectives of stakeholders (Nguyen et al, 2017; Vu and Burns, 2014). At the same time, there is an urgent need in the field of ELT for the reconceptualisation of linguistic norms and for planned and implemented classroom-based research (Rose et al., 2021). Recent studies from various countries have emphasised the crucial role of ELT in supporting EMI students in achieving course outcomes (McKinley and Rose, 2022). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research in Vietnam that focuses on the implementation of the EAP curriculum in EMI programmes. Consequently, this study was conducted to address this research gap in the existing literature and respond to the urgent need for further investigation. The goal of this research project was to investigate the strategies and practices employed by institutions to enhance students' confident communication within a multilingual and multicultural context. The aim was to provide both theoretical and empirical evidence to explain a potential 'implementation gap' between the intentions of policymakers and/or administrators and the actual instructional practices of teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since its implementation of market-based economic reforms in 1986⁴, Vietnam has recognised English as a 'foreign language' (Le, 2017), and the development of English proficiency has become an integral part of the nation-building process. However, the quality of English language teaching within the education system remains a prominent concern for all stakeholders. As a result, Vietnamese students exhibit low levels of English proficiency despite undergoing years of schooling. For instance, even though 98% of students study English for seven years (from grade 6 to grade 12, ages 11-18), they struggle to utilise the language for basic communication (Nguyen, 2011). From 2017 to 2019, the average English scores remained below 5.0 on a 10-point scale, with the most common scores ranging from

⁴ 'Doi Moi' (reform) has led Vietnam into a new era of market-oriented socialism, changing from a top-down planning system to a market-based system, although with a socialist orientation (Vietnamese Communist Party, 1986)

3 to 3.4 (MEQMA⁵, 2019). Several key issues in language teaching and learning have been identified, including the English curriculum, teacher quality, teaching methods, testing, and assessment (Le, 2013). Despite the recent recommendation of a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach to enhance communication skills in the language curriculum, limited progress has been made due to the incongruity between CLT principles and traditional Vietnamese classroom cultures (Nguyen, 2017). Vietnamese graduates' low English competency has exposed an 'implementation gap' between the intended national policies and the enacted curriculum, not only in higher education but also at lower levels in the entire education system (Ngo and Tran, 2023). Furthermore, the spoken and written English of university graduates has been facing increasing criticism from businesses and society (Nguyen, 2013; Tran and Marginson, 2018; Ngo and Tran, 2023). This fact also emphasises the disparity between the ELT curricula and the actual use of English in the workplace.

The problem statement addressed by this research is situated within the higher education context in Vietnam. In this particular context, there is a significant demand for curriculum change, yet there is a lack of clear guidelines for universities to effectively plan and implement the proposed reforms. The education sector in Vietnam has undergone a transition from a Confucian-based system to a Westernised one, largely influenced by the cultural, economic, and political systems of Europe and North America (Cambridge Online Dictionary). The objective of curricular reform in Vietnam is to shift teaching paradigms away from traditional teacher-centred, textbook-driven courses that rely on limited resources and assessment based solely on written tests. Instead, the aim is to promote more participatory teaching methods and strategies. This includes fostering student-centred classes, incorporating a wider range of teaching resources, and implementing evaluation methods based on everyday performance. The introduction of CEFR-based curriculum or imported textbooks from Western countries poses a challenge for Vietnamese teachers and students, as their traditional pedagogical styles and strategies are assumed to differ from those used in developed countries. A more comprehensive discussion of the Vietnamese context of English teaching will be provided in section 4.3.3.

⁵ MEQMA: MOET's Education Quality Management Agency.

The issue at hand within my institution is the lack of faithful implementation of the new CEFR-based curriculum. Consequently, this has led to unsatisfactory examination results. Over the past decade, several temporary solutions have been devised in order to assist students in fulfilling the English language requirement for university graduation. Throughout the reform process, I have personally witnessed the numerous challenges faced by administrators and teachers, as well as the difficulties encountered by students within the new teaching and learning paradigm. This firsthand experience has served as motivation for me to conduct research in two institutions that represent the two distinct directions of English teaching in higher education in Vietnam: EAP for study in an 'emerging EMI context' (as described by Galloway and Rose, 2015), and EOP for employability purposes. The research itself is designed and implemented as classroom-based research, with a specific focus on examining how the language curricula contribute to the enhancement of students' communicative competencies within the current multilingual and multicultural context.

My aim is to gather both theoretical and empirical evidence to provide an explanation for the 'implementation gap' and, more importantly, to scrutinize the factors that contribute to this gap in order to facilitate enhancements. Currently, the most prominent challenges in Vietnamese higher education revolve around determining the content and methodology of the curriculum to align with the objectives of Project 2020 and adequately prepare students for multilingual and intercultural communication. Consequently, there is a need for a productive curriculum model that is specifically tailored to the Vietnamese context, given that many curricula and textbooks have been borrowed from Anglophone countries and native-speakerism is a dominating ideology (Boonsuk, Ambele, and McKinley, 2021). There is also a need for language standards or levels of proficiency that English learners need to acquire, as well as effective pedagogies to enable them to engage in disciplinary or workplace communication in today's globalized world. This motivated me to conduct an additional case study in an Anglophone institution, which serves as a supplemental case, to compare the EAP curriculum required for preparing students to adhere to academic conventions and practices of university disciplines in English. Moreover, I aimed to identify the most effective strategies for supporting students in achieving the required levels of English proficiency in both the 'traditional' EAP context of the UK and the emergent EMI

context of Vietnam. In this regard, the UK case study is used as a reference to the main study of the two university cases in Vietnam. Therefore, it focuses on the implementation of preparatory English courses in the EAP context at the classroom level, aiming to answer questions about what and how to teach that align with the calls for a more globally-oriented approach in ELT (Sahan et al, 2022). It particularly investigates the ways in which teachers address challenges encountered during the implementation process, with a specific focus on the recognition of English as a global language for cross-cultural communication purposes. Additionally, it explores the teachers' incorporation of various teaching techniques and methods within the local context. The expected outcomes of this study have the potential to enhance academic language and literacy support for students in Anglophone universities and in emergent EMI settings (Hakim and Wingate, 2022), whilst also investigating the role of the periphery in English language learning and usage. Moreover, the findings presented in the final chapter may contribute to the development of guidelines for intercultural language teaching, thereby assisting English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners in the design and implementation of curricula to meet the diverse and evolving needs of learners in the multilingual and intercultural global community.

1.3 My roles as a researcher and a teaching professional

My role in this research extends beyond that of a traditional researcher; I also function as a teaching professional and an early implementer in one of the case studies. Therefore, it is essential to articulate my positionality and the perspective I adopt towards this research project, as well as to acknowledge any inherent biases. With fifteen years of experience as a lecturer of English in Vietnamese higher education, I have gained valuable insights into the Vietnamese higher education context, which form the foundation for this research. The university where I am employed serves a large population of approximately 40,000 students and employs over 200 full-time English language teachers. I have consistently collaborated with administrators and fellow lecturers at my institution to revise the curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, and assessment protocols, all aimed at enhancing the quality of English teaching and learning. Consequently, I am regarded as an insider in one of the case studies, as I am conducting research within my own workplace.

In regard to the other institution in Vietnam, it has more than 30,000 students, and the department in which I conduct this research employs over 100 English language lecturers. I completed my undergraduate and master's studies at this institution and also used to work there as a short-term contract teacher. These multiple positionalities in this case as an alumni, an ex-teacher, and a researcher led to a confusion over insider/outsider status which is so called a 'returning native' (Perryman, 2011). My positionalities in the two university case studies within Vietnamese higher education afford me access to institutional documents and facilities. Moreover, conducting interviews and classroom observations presents fewer complications for me in this context compared to conducting research in the UK. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge additional layers of complexities and the potential for personal bias or lack of objectivity arising from my close association with colleagues who also participate in this research. Further details regarding the ethical treatment of research participants (Section 5.5.1) will be provided later in this thesis.

Within the UK higher education sector, my professional position is defined as that of a doctoral researcher, which necessitates a greater investment of time and effort to obtain permission to conduct the research and in 'absorbing the culture' (Gillham 2000, 28). Furthermore, it is important to note that the university I managed to access would likely be smaller in size compared to the two cases in Vietnam, particularly in terms of the number of EAP students and teachers.

1.4 The purpose of the study and preliminary research questions

The aim of this research is to investigate the design, perception, and implementation of English curricula in higher education settings in the UK and Vietnam, specifically focusing on the classroom practices of lecturers and students. This study involves a critical examination of the curriculum's objectives and content, an assessment of its implementation, and an evaluation of the adequacy of resources, personnel, teaching methods, and materials. Additionally, it seeks to comprehend the intricacies and creativity involved in curriculum enactment. Given the complexity of understanding the ongoing process of innovation and

the implementation of these language teaching approaches in multilingual and multicultural contexts, a case study approach was deemed appropriate to address the following four research enquiries:

1. What is the gap between the intended English curriculum and the implemented one at the tertiary level? What factors account for this gap?
2. How do language teachers and students make sense of and implement the English curriculum that utilises communicative approaches?
3. What internal (personal) and external (contextual) factors contribute to designing, planning, and implementing this English curriculum?
4. What are the implications for curriculum innovation, especially in resource-limited contexts like Vietnam, and for English language teaching approaches that support EFL tertiary teachers within multilingual and multicultural contexts?

The research questions addressed in this study focus on policy implementation at various levels: national, institutional, and classroom. To answer these questions, a mixed-method case study design was utilised, which involved employing the use of various data collection methods such as questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups. Additionally, published literature and programme documents were analysed as supplementary sources of data (see Chapter 5 for more details). The theoretical framework of this research is based on Scott's new curriculum model (Chapter 2) and Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) (Chapter 3), which incorporates a multiple case study approach to investigate the implementation of language policy and the English curriculum within classroom settings. The data analysis aims to identify changes in teaching and learning approaches in relation to the language policy, as well as shifts in the role of English in the internationalisation of Vietnamese higher education. A triangulation of data sources will be used to determine the specific challenges encountered by lecturers and students when teaching and learning English in multicultural and multilingual contexts, as well as their strategies employed to overcome these challenges.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research holds significant academic value as it delves into the enactment of curriculum reform in Vietnam, which is timely and important. Despite concerns raised in ELT conferences and government reports, there is a dearth of research examining curriculum implementation at both the institutional and classroom levels. The study narrows its focus on the implementation of the English curriculum in two Vietnamese state institutions, which were in a privileged position to adapt to changes in response to national policies and their own expectations and circumstances. In contrast, other institutions continue to grapple with the initiation of the policy and its integration into their institutional curriculum plans. As previously mentioned, there exists limited empirical literature on the implementation of the new curriculum at the institutional level. Consequently, understanding the challenges and enablers that university administrators and teachers may encounter during the implementation of such educational reform remains lacking.

The study contributes empirically to the understanding of curriculum change and enactment using the curriculum model proposed by David Scott (2016) and the Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) framework developed by Rose and Galloway (2019). These models will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. As mentioned in section 1.2, there has been considerable confusion during the third phase of Vietnamese language curriculum reform, specifically in higher education. Universities have been tasked with implementing the new curriculum with little or no guidance. Given this uncertain situation and ongoing debates, it is important to consider the perspectives of institutions and teachers. They play a crucial role in interpreting and implementing national language policies, adapting the curriculum to pedagogical approaches and strategies, addressing the needs of learners and the context, and delivering instruction in the classroom.

In the realm of language policy, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) utilised the metaphor of an onion to symbolise the intricate layers of language planning and policy, with the state, institutions, and teachers serving as pivotal actors. Classroom practitioners, situated at the nucleus of the onion or the core of language policy, actively engage with and enact it

through their own practices. Additionally, French (2016: 313) introduced students as an additional layer at the centre of this 'onion', acknowledging their substantial impact on language policy. This shift entails a transition from a top-down approach to a bottom-up perspective in language planning and policy (Menken and García, 2010: 250). As noted in section 1.1, there is an urgent necessity for the re-evaluation of linguistic norms and the planning and execution of classroom-based research in the context of English language teaching and learning in today's globalised world. As such, this study concentrates on the latter phase of curriculum implementation at the classroom level, involving both teachers and students as practitioners, and examining their instructional and learning strategies, strengths, weaknesses, teaching and learning styles, and degrees of commitment.

The findings have the potential to contribute to both local and broader discussions surrounding curriculum implementation and language teaching and learning in higher education. The study aims to identify the degree to which the intended curriculum is effectively implemented within the university setting, as well as the disparities between the intended and actualised curricula. Consequently, as outlined in the final chapter, these findings offer valuable insights for stakeholders in Vietnam and the UK, including policymakers, curriculum managers, teachers, book editors, and English language teaching software designers. This information can assist in anticipating potential challenges, determining necessary changes or measures to address these challenges, and ultimately ensuring the attainment of curriculum goals.

The study contributes to the growing body of research on innovation management and curriculum development policy and enactment in Vietnam and ASEAN contexts. Specifically, it aims to contribute to the local research scene on innovative English curriculum implementation, as well as to the broader language teaching and learning literature, through research findings from a case study conducted at a UK university. This research allows local language teaching practitioners to examine the resulting issues and pedagogical underpinnings of new curricula, which can inform the design of future curricula. Additionally, by analysing effective design and key factors influencing the implementation of new curricula, this study is intended to serve as a reference for Higher Education institutions (HEIs), providing a set of considerations for incorporating internationalisation strategies,

pedagogies, and teaching approaches or 'pedagogic standards' (as referred to by Scott) into their curricula.

1.6 The Thesis Outline

The thesis consists of ten chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction presents an overview of the study, providing a succinct description of the research context, research questions, research design, scope and significance, and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review (Theoretical Approach) critically analyses the existing literature to establish the theoretical foundation and international experiences in the implementation of curriculum change. Initially, this chapter examines theories of curriculum and curriculum implementation, as well as theories of change, to establish a framework for analysing the implementation of English Language Teaching (ELT). Change is a process that occurs within a social context and follows a structured approach involving various factors and stakeholders. Uncertainty and challenges are inevitable elements that necessitate the change agents' continuous effort to clarify the meaning of change and collaborate for collective action and improvement. However, these elements are often misinterpreted as adverse outcomes of ineffective change. Therefore, comprehending the process through which change is enacted becomes essential for successful change implementation.

Chapter 3: Literature Review (Practical Approach) provides a comprehensive examination of the historical development of language teaching, covering various methods from grammar-translation to post-communicative approaches. The following section of this chapter delves into the fundamental concepts of ELT and pedagogies related to Global Englishes and examines experiences of implementation in the context of TEIL. Additionally, this chapter explores the practical implications of TEIL in the modern globalised world. It also investigates pedagogical principles and practices through a critical analysis of the current literature.

Chapter 4: Context of the Study contextualises the research by analysing the growth of tertiary English teaching and learning worldwide, with a focus on Asia, particularly Vietnam. At the national level, it explores the dynamic changes in Vietnam's socio-political landscape, from a closed communist country to an active member of the international community. These changes have significantly influenced the country's educational goals and activities. In response to these developments, Vietnam has adopted English as a means of internationalisation and the CEFR as the standard for assessing the quality of English learning in recent educational reforms. Vietnamese educational institutions have been encouraged to actively develop bilingual programmes or innovate their own English curriculum to suit their students and circumstances. However, ELT in Vietnam is currently facing unforeseen and challenging obstacles in implementing the national language and teaching reform. This chapter also explores the context of higher education in the UK, specifically focusing on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for international students. Lastly, it analyses the institutional contexts of the three cases.

Chapter 5: Methodology provides a detailed explanation of the structural framework used to address the research questions. It begins by discussing the theoretical perspectives that influenced the research design at four different levels: epistemology, theory, approaches, and strategies. Following this, the subsequent sections describe the complex process of data collection, including the creation, examination, modification, and use of data collection instruments such as questionnaires, interview schedules, and classroom observation protocols. Additionally, it highlights important considerations in mixed-method research, such as credibility, researcher positioning, ethics, and translation issues. Finally, it outlines the procedures used for data coding, categorisation, and analysis.

Chapter 6, 7 and 8: Data Analysis examines and scrutinises data derived from the questionnaire, interviews, and observations, utilising various formats that are pertinent to and structured around the research inquiries for the three cases in the United Kingdom and Vietnam. The focal point lies in the systematic analysis of the institutions, stakeholders, and their respective roles in the implementation of the curriculum, as well as the conflicts and disputes that arise within these institutions.

Chapter 9: Cross-case Analysis and Discussion provides a more comprehensive analysis of the findings and presents a synthesized argument regarding the issue of change and the discrepancy between the intended and implemented curriculum. It is structured around three main areas: curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and assessment standards. It offers insights into the research questions by examining the underlying assumptions that shape the study. By correlating statistical data with the written testimonies of the research participants, and by relating the findings to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter situates the findings within the ongoing body of research in ELT. Moreover, this study utilises its findings and relevant literature to identify noteworthy instances of curriculum interpretation and support that could be advantageous in various institutional settings. Subsequently, it proposes potential modifications to the content and emphasis of ELT, as well as diverse pedagogical approaches for language instruction and learning in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Chapter 10: The Conclusions provides a concise summary of the thesis, evaluates and acknowledges the constraints of the research, including the strengths and weaknesses of the sample population. Ultimately, it reaffirms the principal discoveries and offers recommendations derived from the study.

1.7 Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter has sought to provide a broad overview of the research, emphasising the rationale and objectives of the study in relation to my position as a researcher and an early curriculum practitioner or implementer. The main research questions have also been introduced, along with the challenges of curriculum reform and the importance of the study. In the next chapter, I will explore the theoretical foundations of the research project, discussing the dynamic nature of curriculum, its components, curriculum change, and curriculum implementation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL APPROACH

This research project explores the diversity, creativity, and complexity of how curricula are implemented in educational settings in the UK and Vietnam, with a specific focus on the classroom practices of teachers and students. To provide a solid foundation for this study, the chapter begins by examining key concepts in the field of curriculum and discussing the theoretical perspectives that guide the entire research project. This includes an exploration of curriculum models, curriculum reforms, and curriculum implementation. Additionally, the chapter reviews strategies that have been employed to facilitate curriculum change, as well as factors and variables that can either support or hinder the implementation of curriculum policies in classrooms. Given that educational change and innovation are closely linked to teachers' beliefs and often require them to adopt new teaching methods, several studies that highlight the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, as well as teachers' beliefs and educational change and reform, are included. This study will utilise the comprehensive literature review on educational change and teachers' beliefs to scrutinise the modifications implemented in the English Language curriculum within higher education establishments in the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

2.1 Curriculum and curriculum frameworks

2.1.1 Definition of terms

What is a curriculum as we now understand the word? It has changed its meaning as a result of the curriculum movement. It is not a syllabus – a mere list of content to be covered – nor is it even what German speakers would call a Lehrplan – a prescription of aims and methods and content. Nor is it our understanding a list of objectives....(Stenhouse, 1983: 155-6)

The term 'curriculum' has been subject to various interpretations and its understanding and theorisation have developed over the course of time. Currently, there are multiple definitions and viewpoints regarding the scope of the term 'curriculum', as different authorities hold diverse ideological positions. While there may be some similarities among these interpretations, there is still no widely accepted or unanimously agreed-upon definition for this term (Moore, 2015; Wiles, 2009; Young, 2014). Bates (2005: 96) suggests

that curriculum has both a general meaning, referring to everything that occurs within an educational setting, and a specific one, pertaining to the content being taught. Additionally, it encompasses various meanings in between these two extremes. In a narrow sense, the curriculum can be described as a 'plan', such as a 'plan for learning' (Taba, 1962). This refers to an overall plan outlining the content or specific materials of instruction that the school should provide to students in order to qualify them for graduation, certification, or entry into a professional or vocational field (Good, 1959). According to Pratt (1994: 5), the concept of curriculum refers to the 'plans' for instructional acts, rather than the 'acts of instruction' themselves. In this analogy, a curriculum can be seen as the set of blueprints used to construct a house. Therefore, a curriculum can be considered a 'blueprint for instruction'. In an effort to provide a broader definition, Hass (1980: 32) argued that the curriculum is all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education, with the aim of achieving broad goals and specific objectives, 'which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice'. However, it was Dewey (1902) who introduced the concept of experience into the definition of curriculum, a concept that remains relevant today (cited in Pinar et al., 1995). Following Dewey, John Franklin Bobbitt's (1918) assertion of curriculum as 'educative experience' was influential. In his book *The Curriculum*, the first published on the subject in 1918, Bobbitt said that 'the curriculum encompasses the entire scope of formative deeds and experiences occurring in and out of school, not just experiences occurring in school'; it includes unplanned and undirected experiences, as well as intentionally directed experiences for the purposeful formation of adult members of society. Bobbitt (1941) suggested that curriculum is the general experiences of living, rather than simply training for adult life. Thus, curriculum as lived experiences emerged as being more important than the planned course of study, and as a social process within society and schools. The aim of curriculum has expanded from knowledge transmission to the expansion or construction of more knowledge (Young, 2013).

In his book *'Understanding the School Curriculum'*, Alex Moore (2015: 44) considers Lawrence Stenhouse to be 'one of the best known and influential curriculum definers'. Stenhouse 'draws our attention to two understandings of curriculum that persist and continue to coexist in tension with one another today'. The first understanding is the

curriculum seen as 'an intention, plan, or prescription, an idea about what one would like to happen in schools'. The other understanding is the curriculum seen as 'the existing state of affairs in schools, what does in fact happen' (Stenhouse 1975: 2). McCormick and Murphy's more recent work goes further than Stenhouse's by refining and developing this distinction. They identify the 'specified' or 'intended' curriculum (e.g. national curriculum orders, examination syllabi), the 'enacted' or 'practiced' curriculum (what teachers and schools do with the specified curriculum in practice, and how it undergoes change in the process), and the 'experienced' curriculum (how the curriculum is experienced by students, and we might add by teachers) (McCormick and Murphy, 2000: 210). In today's complex and changing education field, Alex Moore's argument that we should conceptualise the curriculum as endlessly unfinished rather than seeking out one definitive answer seems to be appropriate.

Pinar (2015) proposed a new perspective on curriculum, describing it as a complex conversation with various interpretations and multiple dimensions. In this view, curriculum is not limited to the institutional text, planned courses, or experiences. Instead, it is understood in relation to historical, political, racial, gendered, phenomenological, post-modern, autobiographical, aesthetic, theological, and international contexts (Pinar et al., 2008). One particular aspect of this complex conversation that I want to highlight for the reader is the idea of 'curriculum as policy.' This refers to a dynamic phenomenon or process, subject to interpretations, modifications, and creative changes that align with global, national, historical, and local contexts. Many scholars acknowledge that curriculum policy is far more intricate than a mere 'text' formulated by policymakers to govern and regulate institutions or school activities (Ball, 2006, 2015, 2021; McLaughlin, 2005; Pinar, 2015). Curriculum policy not only shapes the activities of schools or institutions and influences perceptions and actions, but it is also influenced and altered by the specific contexts in which it is implemented.

2.1.2 An Overview of curriculum frameworks

In recent decades, governments worldwide have mostly agreed on the nature of the school curriculum, learning approaches, and assessment practices, with a few exceptions (Scott, 2016: 11). Stenhouse's idea of considering the contexts of education and curriculum,

Young's (2006) suggestion regarding the distinction between pedagogy and curriculum⁶, and Bernstein's (2000) argument about the two distinguishing curriculum markers⁷ are crucial to our understanding of the curriculum. Curriculum development encompasses the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a curriculum, as well as the people, processes, and procedures involved (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018). As mentioned in the previous chapter, my research aims to identify how institutions interpret and translate national policy and university expectations into the institutional curriculum, and how this curriculum is implemented in classrooms. This means that the curriculum will be comprehensively examined at multiple levels: national policy (for the two cases in Vietnam), institution, and classroom (for the three cases). In doing so, it is essential to explore the development of curriculum frameworks and uncover the rules that constitute the curriculum.

In his book 'New Perspectives on Curriculum, Learning and Assessment', David Scott (2016: 11) identifies four traditional ways of understanding a curriculum: (1) as a body of knowledge that curriculum makers and implementers wish to transmit from one generation to the next; (2) as a means for determining certain ends in students, in terms of their ability to apply acquired knowledge, skills, and dispositional elements; (3) as a process that focuses on providing an effective framework for learning rather than solely on the end result; and (4) as praxis, which explicitly acknowledges the interests it serves. This book also describes the eight curriculum models⁸ that have been influential throughout the history of curriculum ideas. Each model, along with its basic premises and proponents, aligns with different conceptions of the curriculum. Curriculum models are structures that curriculum developers use to systematically design, reconfigure, or rearrange various components of the curriculum. They also help establish the rationale for using specific teaching, learning, and assessment approaches to meet unique needs, contexts, and purposes. These models

⁶ Young (2006) suggests that pedagogy and curriculum should be treated as distinct, and that the curriculum should be knowledge-based and disciplinary-focused. Young's idea of 'powerful knowledge' is the theoretical driver of a UK national shift towards 'knowledge-led' or 'knowledge-rich' school curricula over the last ten years.

⁷ Basil Bernstein (2000:104) mentions the two distinguishing markers of a curriculum: classification and framing.

⁸ The eight curriculum models that focus on curriculum construction are: scientific curriculum development, epistemic foundationalism, cultural transmission, innovative pedagogical experimentation, productive learning environments, autonomous instrumentalism, critical instrumentalism, and economism (Scott, 2016: 11).

are not only significant for curriculum planners in constructing the curriculum but also for researchers examining curriculum implementation. Neary (2003a: 39) describes two polarised curriculum models: the 'Product Model,' which emphasises 'plans and intentions,' and the 'Process Model,' which emphasises activities and effects. Basil Bernstein (1996) identified two other models of curriculum, namely performance and competence frameworks, to distinguish between the knowledge forms generated by different pedagogic practices. The former, rooted in the behavioural objectives movement, is considered the norm, while competence modes 'may be seen as interruptions or resistances to this normality or may be appropriated by official education for specific and local purposes' (Bernstein, 1996: 65). Several theoretical frameworks have been developed in relation to curriculum implementation. One of the widely used curriculum innovation models by curriculum researchers is Rogers's theory of diffusion model. Although the model is over 30 years old, it was adapted in its newest revision by Rogers in 2003. According to Rogers, the innovation-decision process involves five steps: (1) knowledge, (2) persuasion, (3) decision, (4) implementation, and (5) confirmation. However, even the best theory cannot be used in research unless it meets the basic requirements for an empirical study, addressing the relationship between the problem that the study wishes to address and its research aims (Best and Kahn, 2010). In terms of language teaching and learning, Richards (1982), a foremost scholar of curriculum theory in TESOL, mentions six important components of curriculum development, including Needs, Goals/Objectives, Syllabus, Methodology, Assessment, and Evaluation. These components are used by Rose et al. (2020) to provide structure to curriculum innovation in Global Englishes.

Since the objective of this research is to investigate the viewpoints of Vietnamese teachers and students regarding the enforcement of a government-mandated curriculum at the tertiary level, it can be classified as implementation research. This type of research provides a comprehensive description of how a programme is being implemented and offers feedback on the ongoing implementation process. In this study, the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation model was first selected as the theoretical framework for evaluating the curriculum implementation in Vietnamese higher education. This evaluation model seeks to collect and interpret information that can be utilised by decision-makers for evaluation purposes (Popham, 1993). However, while this evaluation model is suitable for

the Vietnamese cases, it may not be appropriate for comparing the Vietnamese and UK contexts due to variations in standards, pedagogies, assessment, and methodologies for ELT in higher education. Therefore, it is more appropriate to employ a productive curriculum model, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.1.3 A new model of curriculum

David Scott (2016) conducted a review of education systems in various countries and explored potential reforms. According to his findings, most education reforms prioritise assessment-driven, goal-directed, and fact-based learning. Furthermore, Scott argues that the majority of education systems follow the same curriculum standards. To address this, he proposes a new curriculum model that emphasises three distinct sets of standards. These include curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and summative assessment or evaluation standards. As a result, a list of essential curricular questions⁹ has been devised for curriculum designers.

Curriculum standards, which now, in Scott's words, dominate conceptions of curriculum around the world, are defined as the expected student achievements. That is 'what they know, what they can do, and what dispositions they have acquired' after completing a learning course. Therefore, curriculum standards in schools, which serve as the basis for teaching, learning, and assessment approaches, establish the foundations of the curriculum or the most appropriate forms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for learning. In this sense, pedagogic standards are understood as the arrangements made within an institution for learning activities. Teachers are the individuals responsible for adapting the curriculum

⁹Scott (2016: 143-144) suggests a series of questions for curriculum designers:

- How should the notion of a standard be understood?
- What items of knowledge should be included in a curriculum and what items excluded?
- What reasons can be given for including some items of knowledge and excluding others?
- How should those items of knowledge be arranged in a curriculum?
- What is the relationship between disciplinary or academic knowledge and pedagogic knowledge and what form should it take?
- What types of arrangements in schools are suitable for delivery of the curriculum?
- What should be the strength of the insulations between different types of children, teachers and learners, teachers and educational managers, different types of knowledge, different items of domain specific knowledge, different types of skills, different educational purposes, different teaching episodes, different parts of the policy-cycle and different organisational units?

standards into action learning sets, which consist of pedagogic approaches and strategies. To develop a pedagogic approach, it is necessary to specify the learning circumstances, resources, and technologies that facilitate learning practices. Additionally, it is important to consider the interplay between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, alongside a theory of learning. Moreover, teachers must develop a theory of transfer to enable the application of learning from one context to others in different timeframes.

The third component of this novel curriculum model comprises summative assessment or evaluation standards, which serve as a comprehensive summary of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should possess upon the completion of a learning programme. These standards can then be assessed through various means. While these standards are derived from curriculum standards, they serve distinct purposes, such as auditing, monitoring, and inspection. Auditing entails evaluating actions against a set of norms, whereas monitoring involves systematically observing a programme or activity. Inspection, on the other hand, can be utilised as a top-down approach to assess conformity to practice codes and achievement of standards.

2.2 Selection of theoretical frameworks

Section 2.1 presents a literature review on curriculum and curriculum models. It is important to note that there is no single ideal model, and no single model can fully encompass a complete programme. However, the identification and consistent use of these models can help maintain cohesion and clarity in the programmes being investigated. These models can also assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the newly designed curriculum and its implementation by teachers. Ultimately, this contributes to providing the best and most cohesive educational experience for both students and programme staff. To clarify, the term 'curriculum' in this research context refers to defining the purpose of an institution in relation to a National Curriculum.

In the context of language teaching and learning, the term 'curriculum policy' (Pinar, 2015) will be used to refer to the national curriculum or national language policy of Vietnam, while at the institutional level, curriculum will be referred to as the intended and enacted curriculum (McCormick and Murphy, 2000). This distinction is necessary as both UK and Vietnamese universities have responsibilities for curriculum development. I define curriculum as an 'intended programme of learning' and view it as a framework of processes within a productive curriculum model developed by a critical realist researcher. Taking this critical perspective into account, I will analyse the various elements of the curriculum in UK and Vietnamese higher education, their relationships, and how they are implemented, which is referred to as the 'enacted curriculum'. The multiple case study aims to address enquiries regarding what and how to teach in response to the increasing demand for a more globally oriented approach in ELT. The CIPP evaluation model is deemed insufficient, prompting the exploration of a more effective curriculum model suitable for cross-case analysis. Meanwhile Scott's new curriculum model emerged from a comprehensive review of educational systems and potential reforms across various countries with a particular focus on the pivotal components that can be called 'standards' (see figure 2.1). Consequently, it is regarded as an appropriate framework for curriculum evaluation in diverse national contexts. Therefore, I have decided to adopt this model in this research, which specifically addresses critical questions regarding what and how to teach within the contexts of the UK and Vietnam, aiming to establish an excellent framework in light of the increasing demand for a more globally oriented approach to ELT. To understand the relationships between the intended and enacted curriculum and other participants in the implementation process, I will adopt a framework from Westbrook et al. (2013), which will be referenced in section 2.4. Particularly, this research explores the implementation of EAP and EOP curriculum in the field of language teaching and learning, with a specific focus on the pedagogical implications at the classroom level. The objective is to comprehend how these curricula can enhance students' communicative abilities in a multilingual and multicultural environment, enabling them to participate as global citizens in the twenty-first century. To accomplish this, the research draws upon the theoretical positioning of 'Teaching English as an International Language' (TEIL) (Rose et al., 2020; Selvi et al., 2024) and the GELT framework (Rose and Galloway, 2019), which will be discussed further in

Chapter 3. These frameworks serve as a point of reference for the shared agenda of the diverse but overlapping English teaching fields and inform the research findings.

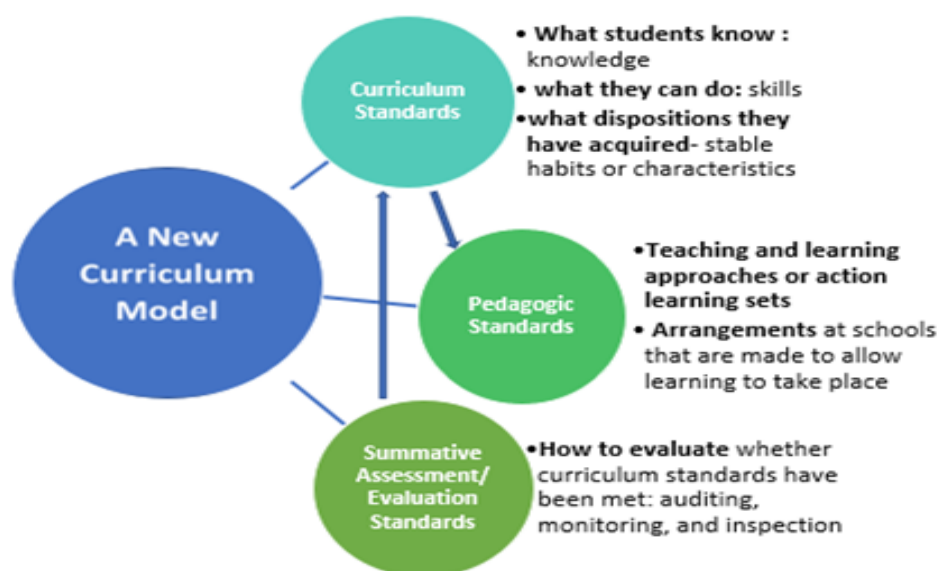


Figure 2.1: Scott's new curriculum model (2016)

According to this model, curriculum development is viewed as a continuous decision-making process that encompasses aims, objectives, forms of knowledge, skills, dispositions, teaching and learning approaches, and evaluation of the whole process. Curriculum, in this sense, provides information about the entire educational experience, including its various stages and outcomes. This process involves several sequential steps, with the first step being the establishment of the aims and objectives of the overall educational programme (see Figure 2.2). From these aims and objectives, curriculum standards are derived, which represent the fundamental forms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for functioning in society. The next step is to identify the most appropriate methods for delivering these curriculum standards. In other words, this stage involves selecting pedagogic standards, which entails choosing from a range of teaching and learning approaches. Decisions must be made across various areas, including pedagogic mode, learning mode, resources and technologies, formative feedback mechanisms, and arrangements for learning activities in the classroom, as well as how learning can be transferred to other environments. The final step is the development of summative

assessment or evaluation standards, which differ from formative assessment standards. As mentioned in section 2.1.4, summative assessment standards are derived from curriculum standards and therefore serve a different purpose. Scott also emphasises that systemic evaluation processes should not directly impact the learning processes in the classroom.

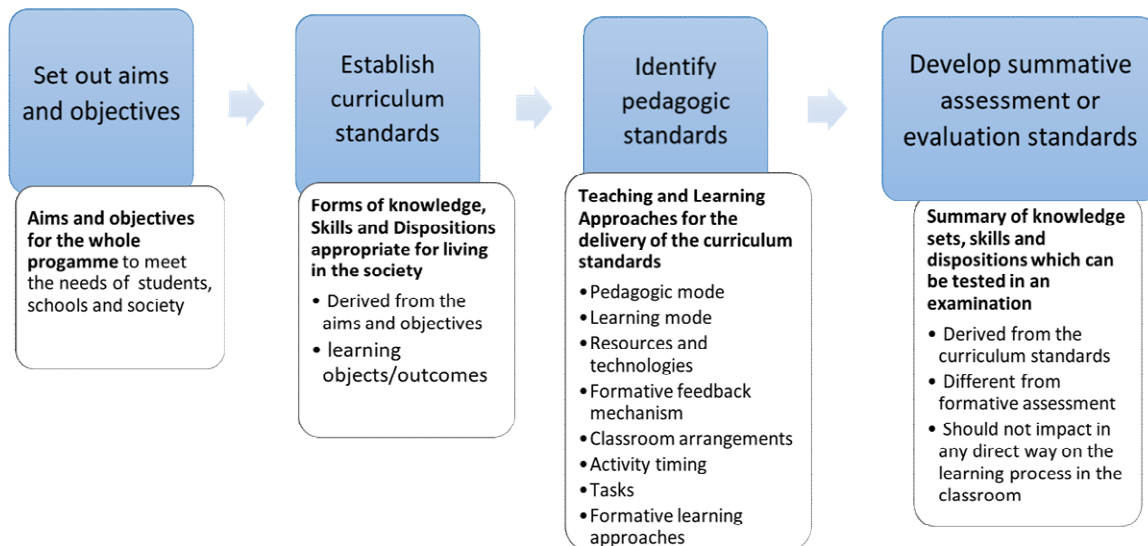


Figure 2.2: 4-step Process of Curriculum Development (Scott, 2016)

2.3 Curriculum change

According to Apple (1982), the curriculum not only reflects officially and ideologically selected knowledge, but it is also a vehicle for change, representing the desired future of society. Hence, curriculum change entails the introduction of something new and the alteration of existing elements, involving not only teachers and schools but also the community. In other words, this planned or unplanned change can occur at the classroom, school, or education system level. 'Extending and deepening our understanding of educational change beyond the boundaries of what is usually addressed in the field can really strengthen how we think about change and deal with it in action' (Hargreaves, 1998: 283). A comprehensive understanding of change and a clear conception of the curriculum are essential prerequisites for successfully implementing the new curriculum. Change is defined by Fullan and Park (1981: 10) as 'alterations from existing practice to some new or revised practice (involving materials, teaching methods, and beliefs) in order to achieve certain desired student learning outcomes'. Curriculum change, as described by Hamilton

(1995: 10), refers to 'the instigation and implementation of new ways of doing and thinking which have the potential for diffusion'. Thus, curriculum change encompasses a range of concepts including innovation, development, and adoption. Curriculum change and innovation are distinguishable in that change may occur naturally or be deliberately initiated, whereas innovation is always intentional (Fullan, 2001). Markee (1997: 47) defines change as an ongoing process, while innovation is a 'willed intervention, development of ideas, practices, or beliefs that are fundamentally new.' In this study, both terms are used as there were specific innovations in the curriculum, such as the introduction of competence skills and skills-based teaching, alongside a broader process of change in the entire undergraduate study system within the context of Vietnam. Change, in the context of this study, is thus a planned, systematic, and intricate process that aims to modify, innovate, develop, renew, and enhance a curriculum to adapt it to new circumstances or priorities.

Our societies are changing day by day and the process of modernisation has profoundly affected not only a society's vision of itself but also the lives of individuals. In keeping with it, curriculum change is dictated by the shifting patterns in the social, political, economic, and technological configuration of a society to adequately prepare learners for life. It is thus deemed of great importance that the higher education system organized by a society becomes responsive and relevant to the new needs of the society (Beck and Young, 2005; Castells, 2001; Gouëdard et al., 2020) and ensures integration and adaptation of the changes taking place around it. Thus, curriculum change is based on the rationale that there exists a disparity between the requirements of the society and the education system. Educational renovations or changes in this sense represent innovative approaches to addressing outstanding or ongoing challenges (OECD, 2017). The world in the era of globalisation has become a global village and the industrialized countries at the centre of progress as well as those in the periphery are all affected by this change (Al'Abri, 2011). Accordingly, curriculum changes have increasingly been influenced by globalisation in terms of political, technological, economic as well as social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Local boundaries have become vague and educational boundaries have been pushed aside (Hargreaves, 1989).

The increasing awareness of interdependence among cultures, economies, and technologies has resulted in a dire need for societies to transform their education systems in order to be in step with the rest of the world (Muller, 2000). There is in turn a significant pressure on educational institutions to transform their curricula to meet the needs and demands of the new century. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring 'excellence of all' (UNESCO, 2000: 51) was included as one of the goals for the member nations in the 21st century. In the context of a fast-changing world, curriculum reforms in many countries have been conducted 'at various paces and methods as a way to equip children with the knowledge, skills and competences needed for tomorrow' (Gouëdard et al, 2020). In this situation, ongoing changes at all levels are required and all fields of knowledge are affected, including the teaching of the English language, specifically in the non-English speaking countries. Many of the recent curriculum reforms around the world involve changes in teaching culture and philosophy that accompany a shift from a content-based curriculum to a competence-based curriculum (Wesselink et al., 2010; Bergsmann et al., 2015), and a wholesale movement away from traditional subject-based, teacher-centred pedagogic approaches to more student- and learner-centred, or active learning approaches (Crick and McCombs, 2006; Harris and Cullen, 2008; Schweisfurth, 2015), with the introduction of communicative curricula and the focus on the teacher's role as a facilitator (Moate and Cox, 2015). A learner-centred pedagogy is not new to adult learning in higher education (ibid.) and is regarded as 'one vision of best practice' (Schweisfurth, 2015). Accordingly, learner-centred pedagogy, as a policy discourse, has been 'a globally-travelling prescription for improvements to learning' though faced with implementation challenges (ibid.). However, policymakers frequently embrace pedagogical approaches, such as learner-centeredness, and 'best practices,' such as interactive classrooms, that have proven effective in a particular educational setting, without critically evaluating their applicability to their own educational context (Wedell, 2022).

In the ELT context, recent research has highlighted a pressing need to innovate current TESOL curricula and practices, a response to internationalisation and globalisation, to better address new global sociolinguistic realities of how English is used in the 21st century (Rose et al., 2020). In terms of TESOL, Galloway and Rose (2015) list six proposals for curriculum change (discussed further in Chapter 3) to keep pace with the sociolinguistic changes in

global English language. It is not the awareness of the dominant educational norms of 'British' and 'American' but a diverse range of speakers (McKay, 2012), the movements in the multilingual turn that allow other languages to add efficacy and authenticity in the language classroom, the notion of teaching the language and how to better use it in a global context, the emphasis on the strategies to have successful communication with speakers of differing Englishes and proficiency, the positioning of English use in diverse contexts and cultures, and the movement in hiring practices to non-native English speaking teachers. English language education is faced with change and innovation, and issues related to how to translate the new ideas into pedagogical change and practices, especially in non-native English-speaking countries. Selvi et al. (2024:44) also argue for the involvement of key stakeholders beyond teachers, such as material developers, curriculum designers, test writers, administrators, and teacher educators, among others in a systematic change in language education so as to create 'a more inclusive and effective teaching-learning environment'. In this regard, a wide range of key stakeholders are involved in my research of the national policy implementation although the role of teachers as agents of change are of importance and the main focus of the research.

Over the last two decades, many developing countries have embarked on major curriculum and pedagogical reforms to effectively meet social needs and the ever-growing demand for English proficiency through various forms and approaches. These developing countries including those in Asia have brought about a number of curriculum changes at different levels and of various degrees. China implemented a new curriculum at all levels in 2003-04. Japan's new curriculum, introduced in 1998, was implemented in 2002 and Malaysia reintroduced EMI curriculum in primary and secondary schools in 2003. Thailand has seen several English language curriculum reforms over the last 20 years. In Vietnam, the language curriculum went through large-scale changes at all levels including the undergraduate level of university education in 2008. This change has had significant effects on the whole educational system of the country in general and HEIs in particular. The context of UK and Vietnamese higher education and change will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4. As my research explores the implementation of curriculum change in the context of UK and Vietnamese HEIs, the focus of discussion will therefore be on curriculum standards,

pedagogic standards, assessment standards and their practices, teaching materials, teaching methods, and also change management.

2.4 Curriculum implementation

Implementation is defined by Fullan (2007) as the process of transferring or carrying out ideas, programmes, or activities into practice to the people expected to make those changes. In the educational field, implementation can happen at different levels with different degrees. Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses, and subjects. In other words, it is a reference to what takes place in classrooms. Fullan (2015) argues that teachers are the core unit of change and successful educational reform requires at least three key elements: materials, teaching approaches, and beliefs. Consequently, the absence of sufficient teacher expertise will impede any prospects for meaningful transformation. This study aims to analyse how these three elements, along with others, are addressed in the implementation of Project 2020 in Vietnam and curriculum change in the UK. Previous research in the field of education has shown that curriculum implementation often strays from the original intentions of the designers (O'Sullivan, 2004; Smith and Southerland, 2007). This issue has been extensively studied in the context of ELT (Elmore, 1996; Chapman, 1997; Gorsuch, 2000; Wang and Cheng, 2009; Smith and Southerland, 2007), with similar findings in relation to the introduction of communicative curricula.

The implementation of the curriculum standards (see figure 2.3) in the three cases in this research will be examined in accord with the five key elements suggested by Scott (2016: 154-7). The first element is the development of a standards document to involve parents in their children's education so as to improve their children's performances. The second element is planning a sequence of lessons which are in line with curriculum standards. Lesson planning by teachers is an essential pedagogic process which has a number of sub-elements, from their performance as a teacher, the arrangements of resources and technologies within the classroom, spatial and temporal arrangements within the school and during the lesson, to theoretical applications such as the development of a theory of

learning, and a theory of acquisition and transfer of knowledge and skills. As such, lesson planning not only makes the curriculum standards accessible and suitable for students but also increases teachers' abilities. The third element, goal-oriented teaching, is pivotal because of the supportive role of goal clarity in productive learning environments. To this end, teachers notify students of the lesson's intended aims and objectives and provide students with opportunities to perform the tasks and evaluate whether or not they meet the goals as 'self-directed learners'. This process is divided into three main stages of the lesson (at the beginning, in the middle or during the lesson, and at the conclusion) with specific actions for each stage. The fourth element is scaffolding in teaching which is an essential support offered to students by a more experienced person to help them achieve the learning outcomes. The high or low level of efficacy of this element depends on multiple opportunities teachers provide students with to practice and how well they combine techniques and tasks. The final element, individual student progression, is related to curriculum standards and is built on a formative approach. The teacher's roles to this extent are identifying and interpreting the standards, determining students' weaknesses, reflecting on students' current capabilities, and identifying the means for improvement.

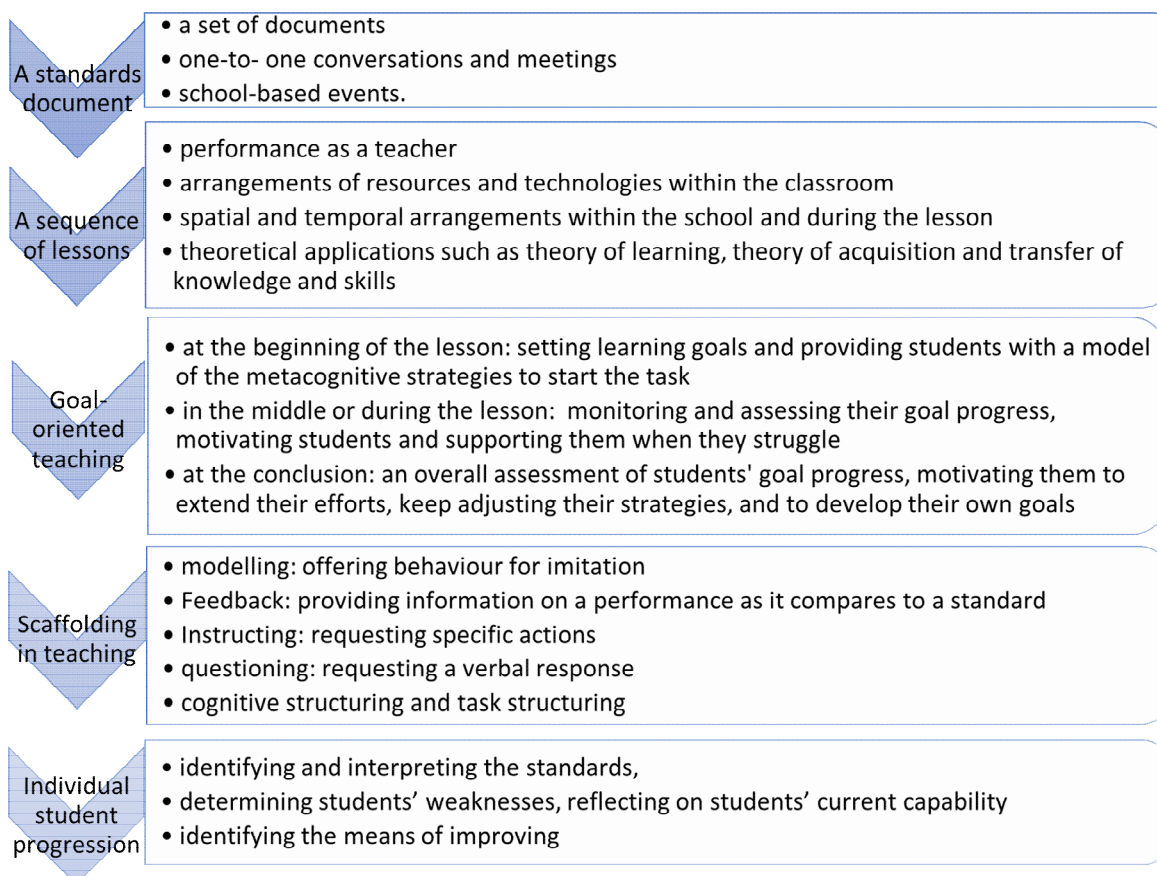


Figure 2.3: Framework for the implementation of curriculum standards (Scott, 2016)

2.5 Change Implementation strategies

The implementation of any change or innovation requires specific strategies (Fullan, 2001; Nicholls, 1983). Chin and Benne (1984) have identified an overall framework that divides the broad area of change management into three main strategies, also known as 'meta-strategies'. The first strategy is the power-coercive strategy, or 'top-down' approach, which emphasises the use of political and economic sanctions as the primary means of bringing about change. In this top-down strategy, power and authority lie with a small group of planners and decision-makers. The role of teachers, who are the true grassroots implementers of any innovation or change, is disregarded. As a result, teachers may struggle to implement the change effectively due to a lack of understanding, knowledge, skills, and motivation. This lack of involvement in the planning process is a consequence of the fact that teachers were not included (Spillane et al., 2002). Therefore, the issues identified with

this approach in the implementation of change include teacher resistance (Knight, 2009), insufficient ownership and commitment to the changes by teachers, a lack of clarity regarding the nature of the reforms, and a deficiency in shared understanding (Fullan, 2007).

The second strategy for implementing change is the empirical-rational approach, which focuses on using information as the primary motivator for change and employs various sub-strategies to facilitate progress. In this context, individuals are considered to be rational and will embrace the change if it is presented logically, in an engaging and convincing manner. However, Markee (1997) argues against this strategy, stating that rational arguments alone are insufficient to gain teachers' support and acceptance for the change. The literature suggests that the success or failure of a reform depends on numerous factors, which will be discussed in the next section. Such strategies overemphasise the rational and fail to consider the complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty inherent in the process of change in schools (Zembylas and Barker, 2007: 239). In these first two approaches, teachers are perceived as mere implementers of externally imposed changes. Consequently, their lack of personal commitment to change may result in failure during the implementation process (Schwartz, 2002: 126).

The third strategy, known as the normative-reeducative strategy, differentiates itself from the previously mentioned strategies due to its unique bottom-up approach. It recognises the crucial role played by the end users of change, who are responsible for its implementation. Change is motivated in this approach when individuals experience some level of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs due to conflicts in fundamental values. The strategy posits that people's actions are influenced by the values and norms of a particular society or culture. Therefore, the acceptance of change necessitates a re-evaluation of deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviours (Richardson and Placier, 2001). Consequently, complications arise, and the direction of change is determined from within. Tyack and Cuban (2009) proposed a bottom-up approach to educational reform, focusing on empowering teachers, the end users, to enhance instruction from within the system. In this approach, teachers assume the role of initiators and collaborators in shaping the change (Markee, 1997; Schwartz, 2002). The primary areas of focus in this strategy include

enhancing overall organisational problem-solving, facilitating personal growth and development of system members, both as individuals and as part of specific groups within the system.

In this regard, the effectiveness of 'top-down' strategies for implementing curriculum change is considered inadequate (Billett, 1996). Accordingly, Menken and García (2010: 250) note the evolving nature of education reform implementation processes in the 21st century, with a shift in focus from a top-down approach to a bottom-up perspective. Teachers should not be expected to consistently implement change solely based on bureaucratic orders or rational arguments, but rather, they should be provided with comprehensive support to understand and adapt to the changes and innovations. This support should motivate them to take ownership of the changes, develop their skills, and be committed to their success.

In the field of English language education, extensive research has been conducted regarding the implementation process of innovations (Alderson, 2009; Mukherjee, 2018; Murray, 2008; Tan and Reyes, 2016; Waters and Vilches, 2001, 2008; Wedell, 2009, 2011, 2022). Waters and Vilches conducted extensive research on the implementation process of innovations in ELT using a needs analysis framework. Conducting a thorough needs analysis of the end users, i.e. teachers and learners, can provide a deep understanding of the realities on the ground and facilitate the successful implementation of appropriate reforms. Rose et al. (2020) highlight the importance of three key concepts in shaping effective TESOL practices: curriculum development, needs analysis, and teaching approaches. They emphasise that needs analysis is particularly crucial as it influences other curriculum components and informs the goals and objectives of the curriculum. These needs-based goals, in turn, guide the structuring of lessons, the selection of methods to achieve the goals, and the assessment of language use. Therefore, all curriculum components should be adjusted if there is any incongruity in evaluation or changes in students' needs. Rose et al. (2020:28) also suggest a 'complete overhaul towards EIL-oriented outcomes' if the traditional TESOL curriculum fails to meet the needs of EIL users in today's globalised world.

From the preceding discussion, it is important to acknowledge that proper implementation strategies serve as the bedrock of any successful educational change. The accomplishment

of successful implementation is a multifaceted process that necessitates equal attention to both the 'what' and 'how' aspects of the desired educational change. Several research projects have highlighted one of the reasons for the failure of curriculum reform, which is the excessive focus on the 'what' while neglecting the 'how' of change. In numerous cases, well-designed curricula with commendable objectives fall short of achieving their intended goals due to flawed implementation (Fullan, 1991; Higgins, 2004). Oftentimes, the emphasis is solely placed on policy formulation, particularly the initiation and policy stages, with the implementation phase being hurried to rapidly progress to the routinisation phase (Rogan and Aldous, 2005). Regarding curriculum changes in Australia and the United States, Porter (1980: 75) highlights that those involved in policy creation and enactment of relevant legislation seldom consider the implementation stage. Previous research studies on education policy, based on the top-down perspective discussed earlier, have tended to analyse the processes of policy implementation in a linear and decontextualised manner, disregarding the mediating role of local factors and the agency of the individuals involved (Perryman et al., 2017; Viczko and Riveros, 2015). In response to the limitations of the top-down approach, Ball et al. (2012) developed a framework for comprehending policy implementation processes. This framework takes into account the agency of actors and facilitates a better understanding of actual situations.

This phenomenon is also evident in the context of Vietnam, where the national language policy has been implemented from a central authority without considering the teachers' role as end-users. In Vietnamese higher education, there have been a limited number of published research studies addressing the understanding, management, and implementation of the curriculum. These studies have highlighted several issues, including the lack of institutional autonomy and capacity, as well as the limited accountability of both institutional leaders and the MOET, which serves as the governing body for curriculum planning and management (Do, 2013). Additionally, various stakeholders have different and sometimes conflicting interpretations of the curriculum (Phan, 2015).

2.6 Factors affecting teachers' implementation process

The implementation of curriculum change is a complex process that involves multiple

factors. The curriculum serves as the primary point of reference for teachers. In developing countries, where the curriculum is outlined in the official textbook and teacher guides, it is often the sole resource utilised by teachers. It establishes a connection between the officially selected educational goals and content and the act of teaching and assessment in the classroom or school. Stenhouse (1979) identifies teachers as the primary agents in the curriculum implementation process as they interpret, modify, and supplement the meanings encapsulated in the official curriculum. Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment are interconnected and mutually influence each other during day-to-day classroom interaction (cf. Bernstein, 1975; Alexander, 2008). This study aims to examine the correlation between the intended curriculum or prescribed curriculum and the actual teaching practices in classrooms, commonly referred to as the 'enacted curriculum.' The successful implementation of a new curriculum requires teachers to assume the role of 'agents' and make substantial adjustments to their beliefs and instructional approaches. As a result, it is imperative to comprehend the factors that may contribute to disparities between the intended and enacted curriculum. Figure 2.4, adapted from Westbrook et al. (2013), provides a framework that illustrates the relationships between the intended and enacted curriculum, as well as other participants in the implementation process, highlighting the influence of various factors.

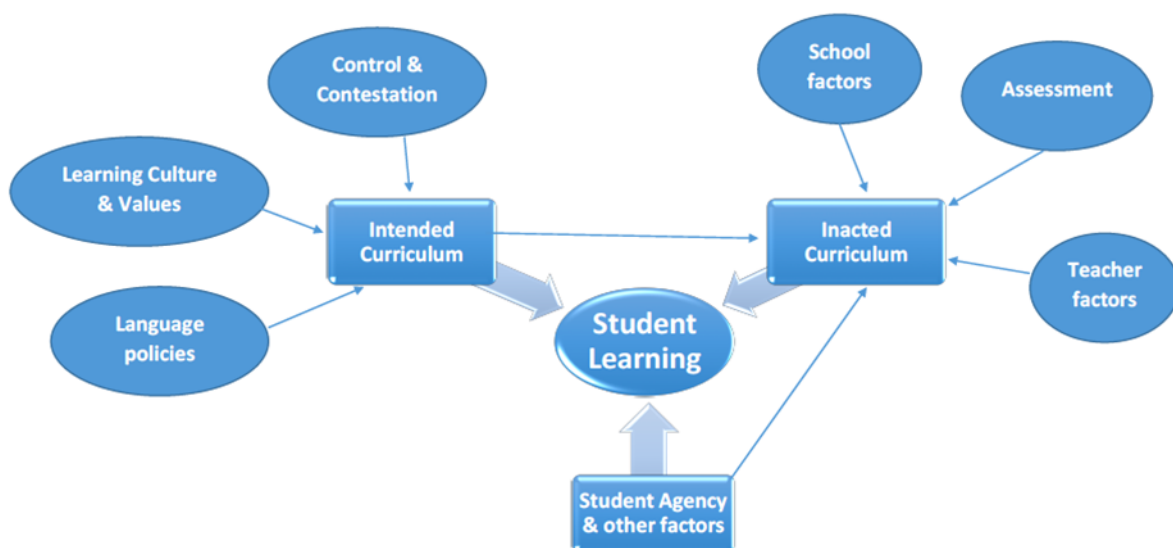


Figure 2.4: A framework for understanding of the intended and enacted curriculum (adapted from Westbrook, et al., 2013)

Some factors that play a crucial role in the implementation process include contextual factors, such as the nature of change and innovation, institutional factors, learner factors, and teacher factors. In this study, a detailed discussion will focus on teacher factors, while the other factors will be briefly examined. This literature review identifies two categories of factors that might influence teachers' curriculum implementation: internal (personal/individual) factors and external (contextual) factors. Internal factors stem from the teachers themselves, encompassing their beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, knowledge, and perceptions of curriculum innovation. Conversely, external factors originate from outside the classroom, encompassing sociocultural, political, administrative, or learner factors that teachers have limited or no control over. This review demonstrates that external testing and resource support (human, financial, and material) are the most influential factors (cf. Alderson and Wall, 1993; Everard, Morris and Wilson, 2004).

In relation to curriculum policy, the process of policy enactment is complex (Ball et al., 2012) and is influenced by a range of factors. Internal factors in this regard include teachers' individual experiences, commitments, perspectives, competencies, and career aspirations (Ball et al., 2011b; Maguire et al., 2015). Other factors include the various interpretations of policy texts (Ball, 1994), policy paradoxes (Ball et al., 2011a), context-specific interpretations of policy objectives (Singh et al., 2014), inconsistencies in the values of policies proposed by different agencies, diverse and contradictory configurations of schools (Ball et al., 2011b), principals' concerns regarding a collaborative school culture (Singh et al., 2018), and discrepancies between policies and local needs (Singh et al., 2013, 2014, Smardon, 2018). This literature review will be referenced in the discussion of language policy enactment in the context of Vietnam in Chapter six and Chapter seven.

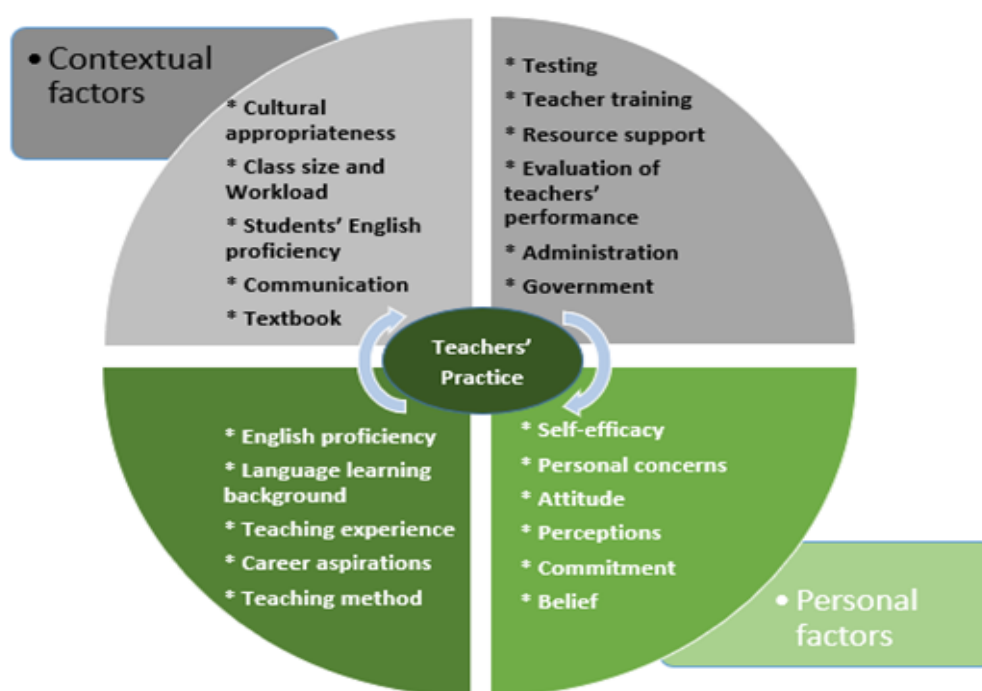


Figure 2.5: Factors affecting teachers' implementations

Figure 2.5 illustrates the various factors that can impact teachers' implementation of the ELT curriculum. This review highlights the crucial role that teachers play in the success of any change or reform, as they are responsible for selecting, rejecting, shaping, and adapting the planned curriculum to suit their specific context. It is evident that teachers are the main drivers of change within their own educational settings. Consequently, long-term planning, contextual analysis, and understanding of the cultural and socio-historical aspects are necessary when introducing any change or innovation. The effectiveness of curriculum change is also influenced by the institution itself, particularly in terms of leadership. UNESCO (2004) emphasises the importance of good management and support for teachers, as administrative support and effective communication between teachers and the administration foster a motivating and productive environment. Conversely, ineffective leadership and management pose significant barriers to the success of any educational reform. Additionally, the availability and quality of resources have a substantial impact on the change process. Johnson et al. (2000) discovered, in their research, that Egyptian teachers struggled to implement innovations due to resource limitations. As discussed in the preceding chapter, learners are pivotal in the implementation of language curriculum changes, given their significant influence on language policy (French, 2016). Therefore, this

study focuses on the end users of curriculum implementation at the classroom level, encompassing teachers and students as practitioners. It examines their teaching and learning strategies, strengths, weaknesses, teaching and learning styles, and level of commitment. When considering educational change, it is crucial to consider learners' past language learning experiences, their motivation to learn English, as well as their beliefs regarding classroom norms and learning behaviours (Shamim, 1996).

2.7 Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions

2.7.1 Concepts of belief and perception

The research in question focuses on the implementation of change and innovation in the English language curriculum by teachers. It is crucial to provide a clear definition of teachers' beliefs and perceptions, highlighting the potential relationship between these beliefs/perceptions and educational change/reforms. For the purpose of this study, belief is defined as 'a proposition that may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour' (Borg, 2001: 186). The concept of belief is complex and multifaceted (Rokeach, 1968; Pajares, 1992), and it has been described as 'an individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition' (Pajares, 1992: 316), 'psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true' (Richardson, 1996: 103), 'transpection or thinking through in the activity of understanding the world and oneself' (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011: 362), or simply 'all that one accepts or wants to be true' (Murphy and Mason, 2006: 306). Furthermore, Borg (2003: 81) defines teachers' beliefs as an aspect of their cognition, encompassing 'what teachers know, believe, and think' within the teaching process. Teachers' beliefs can be elaborated as their perspectives regarding the appropriate approach to teaching, encompassing both core and peripheral beliefs. Core beliefs, which are deeply ingrained through experience (Phipps and Borg, 2009: 381-8), have a more stable influence on behaviour compared to peripheral beliefs. Peripheral beliefs, which are theoretically embraced, may not necessarily manifest in pedagogical practices due to contextual factors (Niu and Andrews, 2012). By synthesising

various definitions from the literature, which includes approximately 60 distinct terms employed to denote belief (Borg, 2015, 2019), Borg has expanded the definition which now comprises a constellation of assumptions, values, feelings, and attitudes towards teaching.

Perceptions can be defined as cognitive processes that organise sensory information, which is generated by the properties of objects or events in the external three-dimensional world (Gerrig and Zimbardo, 2002). Alternatively, Richards and Schmidt (2010: 427) describe perceptions as the recognition and understanding of events, objects, and stimuli through the use of senses. The term 'perceptions' can also be understood as a construct of belief (Pajares, 1992: 317), and both constructs significantly influence decision-making and inform practice in various contexts, including teaching and learning. Concerning change, teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum can have either positive or negative effects on teaching and learning outcomes. In this regard, if teachers feel confused or lack understanding about the change, it may influence their decision to either accept or reject it (Wallace and Fleit, 2005: 192).

It is widely acknowledged that the beliefs and perceptions of teachers can be influenced by their training and education (Korthagen and Lagerwerf, 1996). Along the same lines, it has been contended that training can exert an influence on pedagogical beliefs, particularly when these beliefs are consciously challenged (Tillema and Knol, 1997; Von Wright, 1997, 2006). Conversely, research indicates that educators are unlikely to adopt practices acquired through professional development if such practices conflict with their pre-existing beliefs (Rogers et al, 2022). However, despite holding positive beliefs, if contextual circumstances hinder the implementation of new practices, teachers may feel compelled to revert to their old teaching methods. As a result, there is an argument that prioritising a change in the school culture is necessary to promote a transformation in beliefs, perceptions, and subsequently, instructional practices (Fullan, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1998).

2.7.2 Teachers' beliefs or perceptions and classroom practice

As previously discussed, scholars agree that teachers' perceptions and beliefs have a significant influence on their pedagogical decisions and practices (Rogers et al, 2022). This

idea was demonstrated in a study conducted by Sanchez (2014: 221), which revealed that teachers' understanding of the subject matter greatly affected the choices they made in their classrooms. Additionally, Sanchez and Borg (2014) propose that teachers' perceptions of the context, including the needs and expectations of the learners, played a role in determining the grammar instruction they delivered during class. Numerous studies have emphasised the strong connection between teachers' beliefs and their decision-making and teaching practices (Anderson, 2015; Attardo and Brown, 2005; Baker, 2014; Borg, 2003, 2011, 2017, 2019; Jones and Fong, 2007; Kisa and Correnti, 2015; Poynor, 2005; Richardson, 1996; Yook, 2010). Teachers choose what to teach based on their belief in what is most important for their students, and subsequently adjust their teaching techniques accordingly (Williams and Burden, 2000). In the field of ELT, there has been a significant increase in research on teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practices over the past few decades (Anders and Evans, 2019; Baker, 2014; Borg M., 2001; Borg S., 2003, 2006, 2017, 2019; Borg and Sanchez, 2020; Farrell and Ives, 2015; Farrell and Yang (2017); Phipps and Borg, 2009; Sato and Kleinsasser, 2004; Whyte et al., 2022; Yook, 2010; Zheng and Borg, 2014). This surge in interest stems from the importance of comprehending teachers' thoughts and perceptions on teaching, subject matter, students, learning, as well as their roles and responsibilities. Considering the limited existing research, Farrell and Yang (2017) suggest that the beliefs and practices of teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), particularly in teaching speaking, represent a critical area for further investigation. In higher education, teachers' teaching practices are influenced by the vast majority of the iceberg, as illustrated in the iceberg theory of teachers' practice and cognition (Borg, 2019). Also, it is crucial to understand teacher self-efficacy beliefs because educators who possess higher levels of efficacy are more likely to set ambitious goals and attribute any failures to their own teaching or school-related factors whilst educators with lower levels of efficacy tend to associate failure with internal factors related to students (Urbach et al., 2015: 324). In short, this literature review suggests that teachers' beliefs generally have an impact on their pedagogical practices.

However, research has also indicated that there can be a contradiction between teachers' professed beliefs and their actual practice and behaviour in the classroom. For instance, in Hiep's (2007) study examining the beliefs and implementation of CLT by three teachers in

Vietnam, the findings revealed that while these teachers expressed beliefs that aligned with the principles of CLT, they encountered difficulties in carrying out activities such as pair work, group work, and role play. The inconsistency between their stated beliefs and their classroom practices stemmed from various contextual factors, including traditional examination formats, large class sizes, perceptions of student and teacher roles, low student motivation, and teachers' limited expertise in developing communicative activities. Similar explanations for the disparity between professed beliefs and actual practices were also identified by other researchers. Borg (2003; 1999), Phipps (2010), Phipps and Borg (2007; 2009), and Hiep (2007) all highlighted curriculum requirements, examination systems, classroom and school structures, as well as external constraints such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, and teachers' insufficient subject knowledge as impediments to the implementation of teachers' instructional beliefs. Several research findings within Asian contexts suggest that teacher attitudes have not consistently aligned with the principles of the communicative curriculum (Carless, 2007; de Segovia and Hardison, 2009; Fang and Garland, 2014; Li, 2001; Tsushima, 2012; Zheng, 2015). This misalignment has been identified as a contributing factor to the poor outcomes associated with CLT reforms (Ching-Ching and Kuo-Hung, 2018). To summarise, there has been evidence of both consistency and inconsistency in teacher beliefs and pedagogical practices. This coexistence of consistencies and inconsistencies (Basturkmen et al., 2004) within educational settings has a significant impact on the structure of lessons and the overall learning and teaching process.

In terms of pedagogy, Alexander's definition, which suggests that teaching is an act while pedagogy encompasses both the act and discourse (Alexander 2001), appears to be the most useful. From this perspective, pedagogy includes teachers' ideas, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding about the curriculum, the teaching and learning process, and their students. What influences their teaching practices is what teachers actually think, do, and say in the classroom. Alexander (2015) developed a two-part framework that consists of teaching as an act and teaching as ideas. The act of teaching includes tasks, activities, interactions, and judgements. It also encompasses the form of teaching, typically referred to as the lesson, as well as the organisational, curricular, epistemic, and temporal elements that shape it. On the other hand, teaching as ideas comprises values, beliefs, theories,

evidence, policies, and justifications at three different levels: classroom, system/policy, and cultural/societal. Teaching as an act identifies the universal aspects of teaching across cultures, while considering teaching as ideas allows us to examine the cultural variables involved. Husbands and Pearce (2012) outlines nine characteristics¹⁰ of highly successful pedagogies based on their literature review. In this regard, effective pedagogy consists of three elements: teacher thinking, teacher doing, and their impact on student learning outcomes. The conceptual framework (Figure 2.6) of facilitating and constraining factors in effecting pedagogical change indicates that the relationship between curriculum and its assessment methods, as well as teacher education, and teachers' thinking and doing within a specific context can be seen as enabling or disabling teachers' thinking and doing (Westbrook et al., 2013). In this research, the framework serves as a valuable guideline for comprehensively understanding the implementation of change in the three university cases, with teachers as key actors.

¹⁰ Effective pedagogies (Husbands and Pearce, 2012): give serious consideration to pupil voice; depend on behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do); involve clear thinking about longer term learning outcomes as well as short-term goals; build on pupils' prior learning and experience; involve scaffolding pupil learning; involve a range of techniques, including whole-class and structured group work, guided learning and individual activity; focus on developing higher order thinking and meta-cognition, and make good use of dialogue and questioning in order to do so; embed assessment for learning; are inclusive and take the diverse needs of a range of learners, as well as matters of student equity, into account.

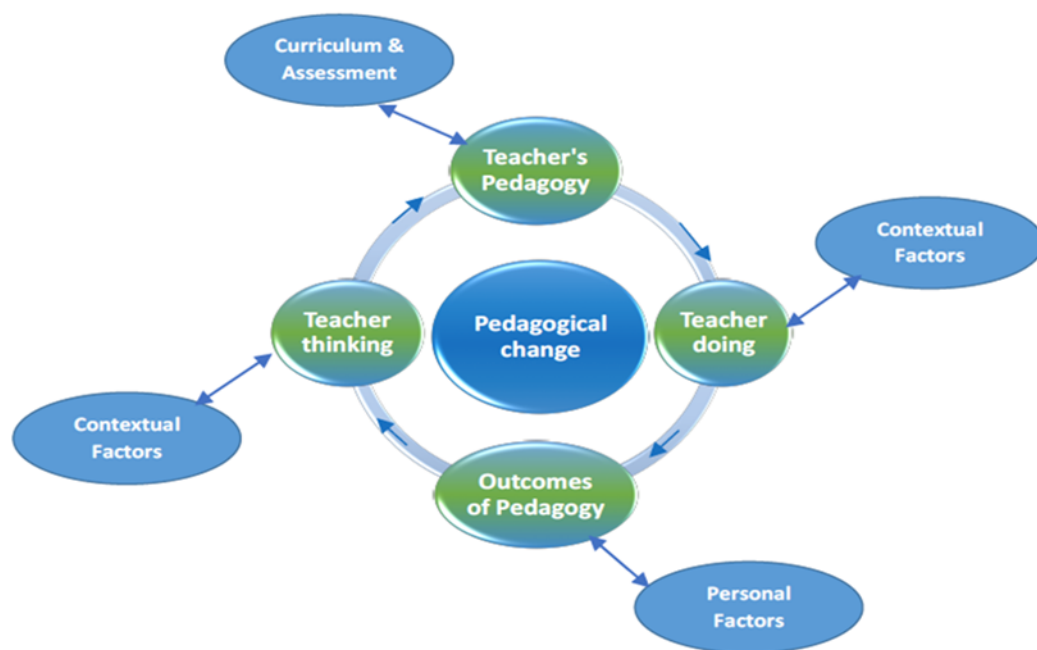


Figure 2.6: Pedagogical change (adopted from Westbrook, et al., 2013)

2.8 Summary of chapter 2

In summary, this chapter has provided background information on curriculum, curriculum reform, and curriculum implementation. It has specifically explored curriculum 'policy' (Pinar, 2015), a novel curriculum model proposed by Scott (2016), and frameworks developed by Westbrook et al. (2013) for comprehending the curriculum, the relationships between the intended and enacted curriculum, as well as other participants involved in the process of implementing curriculum change. These theoretical and conceptual frameworks serve as a guiding map for the research. Additionally, the chapter has reviewed existing literature on research practices in English curriculum implementation and has defined the concepts of teacher belief and teacher conception.

The research review reveals that the increasing importance of English as an International Language (EIL), driven by globalisation and internationalisation, has prompted numerous attempts at curriculum change and reform in English Language Teaching (ELT) around the world. This situation has generated significant research interest, particularly focusing on EFL teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning, their perceptions, their impact on teaching practices, and the success of curricular reform. The findings of these studies

indicate the challenges involved in implementing reforms and demonstrate that teachers' negative perceptions are closely associated with barriers to reform implementation. Research has also suggested that EFL teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of a particular reform are vital to its success. These perceptions are strongly influenced by their pre-existing beliefs about English language education. Therefore, in order to have a deeper and clearer understanding of the feasibility of reform in English language education, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of teachers' beliefs. Nevertheless, reforming the English language curriculum is necessary to enhance students' proficiency and prepare them for the challenges of the globalised world. The implementation of curriculum reform becomes particularly important when abstract ideas are put into practice. However, curriculum reform in ELT has often faced difficulties and has not always been successful, as the success of reform largely depends on teachers who play a crucial role as implementers. However, the success or failure of curriculum reform cannot be solely attributed to teachers. Other stakeholders and various relevant factors also present challenges in the implementation process. Therefore, it is important to involve different stakeholders and consider various factors that impact the implementation process.

Additionally, it is necessary to conduct planned and implemented classroom-based research that puts pedagogical innovations into practice, especially in the field of English teaching and learning. This is particularly relevant as English has become the dominant lingua franca in the twenty-first century, and in the context of Vietnamese higher education, where a national language policy has been implemented from the top down to enhance students' communicative competence in today's superdiverse world. This research should primarily focus on the end users of these changes, namely teachers and students. It should examine not only their beliefs and perceptions but also their teaching and learning practices.

The subsequent chapter will review the principles and characteristics of language teaching approaches and other pedagogical practices throughout the history of language teaching and learning. It will also concentrate on the new paradigm in ELT and explore its practical application in addressing the global needs and realities, enabling students to become critical multilingual users of English.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: PRACTICAL APPROACH APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The previous chapter delved into the theoretical perspectives that underpin the entirety of the research, encompassing curriculum development, curriculum modification, and curriculum implementation within the context of language teaching. This chapter offers further insights into the realm of language teaching and learning, adopting a practical standpoint, whilst also examining the global landscape of English language instruction. The field of language teaching and learning has been a topic of intense debate within the education sphere since the early 20th century. Throughout its extensive history, it has been shaped by a range of educational theories, including behaviourism, constructivism, functionalism, and cognitivism. Specialists in the field have devised various approaches and methods in their pursuit of enhancing the efficacy of language instruction, leading to numerous transformative changes and innovations in classroom practices.

It is noticeable that the foundations of present-day approaches and methods were developed in the early twentieth century. Language teaching during this period of time was characterized by change, innovation, and the development of language teaching ideologies. Changes in language teaching approaches and ideologies have reflected recognition of changes in the sociolinguistic needs of learners, such as a move toward oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the goal of language study. They have also reflected changes in theories of the nature of language and of language learning. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the term curriculum is understood in the broad sense that includes content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and assessment knowledge. Furthermore, these three sets of standards will be examined in the empirical chapters. In particular, there will be a focus on language teaching approaches, methods and strategies or 'pedagogic standards' and practices which are crucial components of both curriculum design and curriculum enactment. The aim of this chapter is therefore to review such a methodological history of language teaching from the grammar-translation method to the post-communicative period and teaching English as an international language. It then develops a methodological and conceptual framework for investigating teaching and learning practices in the classroom, focusing on effective pedagogies and practical implications that can be fruitful to the language educators and enhance learners' communicative competence to meet the glocal needs and diverse realities.

3.1. Definition of terms

3.1.1 English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

The curricula analysed in this study concentrate on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) practices within higher education. Consequently, it is essential to critically examine the concepts of EAP and EOP, which are classified as subsets of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998).

By definition, 'English for Academic Purposes involves the teaching and learning of the English language so that students can operate effectively in the disciplines, i.e., in their specific subject(s) in an academic institution, typically a university' (De Chazal et al., 2014: 5). EAP is not focused on conveying subject content; rather, it seeks to cultivate essential academic skills, language proficiency, and competencies. EAP in this research is used as language support units for EMI students (University Case 1) and for international students (University Case 3). Particularly, this study examines the English preparation courses in the context of Vietnamese EMI programmes and pre-sessional courses in the UK 'traditional' EMI context, which aim at enhancing students' language proficiency and academic skills prior to the pursuit of their respective disciplines.

The other subset, EOP is frequently characterised as courses intended to enhance students' English proficiency and skills necessary for effective functioning in their respective fields of specialisation within the professional sphere (Rautenbach et al., 2018). In this sense, EOP is specifically designed to cultivate both linguistic and occupation-related competencies in students and is typically integrated into a professional curriculum. In this research context, EOP curriculum which emphasises competency-based skills required by the labour market is examined in University Case 2.

3.1.2 Methods and approaches

Within the field of foreign language teaching methodology, a distinction is made between methods and approaches. Methods refer to specific fixed teaching techniques, while

approaches encompass broader teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in various ways. The underlying theory of language and language learning in instructional design leads to the development of principles that guide the teaching and learning process. Different instructional designs in language teaching often reflect diverse understandings of the nature of language and language learning. An instructional design that is explicit in terms of language theory and learning but allows for flexibility in objectives, teacher and learner roles, and activities is commonly referred to as an approach. On the other hand, an instructional design that includes specific applications in terms of objectives, teacher and learner roles, and classroom activities is referred to as a method.

Anthony (1963) identified three hierarchical levels of methodologies: an approach, a method, and a technique. An approach is defined as 'a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning', making it axiomatic due to the involvement of beliefs and principles (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 21). In contrast, a method is procedural, described as 'an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach' (ibid.: 21). In other words, an approach has a broader scope than a method. 'Within one approach, there can be many methods ... A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well' (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 21).

Thus, an approach refers to theories about language and language learning that inform practices and principles in language teaching. It is the level at which beliefs and correlative assumptions about language teaching and learning are identified. A method, on the other hand, is the level at which theoretical principles and philosophies about language teaching and learning are put into practice, and choices are made regarding the skills and content to be taught, as well as the order in which the content is presented (Richard and Rodgers, 2014). The technique is the level at which specific classroom procedures and practices are described. Additionally, Celce-Murcia (2001) and Brown (2007) suggest that, among these three concepts, method is the most fundamental in language teaching and learning.

3.2. Methods and Approaches in Language Teaching and Learning

This section provides an introduction and explanation of the primary teaching approaches and methods that have been prominent in the field of language teaching and learning throughout the past century. Palmer, often referred to as 'the father of British applied linguistics' (Stern, 1983: 100), summarised the most fundamental principles of language teaching methodology in the 1920s, which serve as the foundation for most of the methods discussed in this section. Palmer (1922) identified these teaching principles as follows: (i) initial preparation; (ii) habit formation; (iii) accuracy; (iv) gradation; (v) proportion; (vi) concreteness; (vii) interest; (viii) order of progression; and (ix) multiple line approach (Richard, 2001). The six methods discussed in this section include: the grammar-translation method, originating from the classical language teaching domain; the direct method, rooted in modern languages teaching; the situational method and audio-lingual method, both based on the principles of behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics; the communicative method, which draws on sociolinguistic concepts; content-based instruction; and content and language integrated learning. Some methods have gained popularity in various regions of the world, where English is utilised as a medium of instruction, as well as competency-based language teaching, which places emphasis on learning outcomes or outputs, and other approaches and methods that have emerged during the post-communicative era.

3.2.1 Grammar-Translation Method

The grammar-translation method, which is representative of the traditional approach to language teaching, was widely adopted in Western society and dominated the field of language instruction, particularly in the United States, during the first half of the previous century. This method places emphasis on developing reading skills, while paying little attention to the communicative aspect of language. Under this approach, instruction is provided in the students' native language (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014). The primary instructional strategy employed is translation, whereby teachers translate the target content and pair it with its equivalent in the learners' first language. Consequently, the role of the first language in the process of acquiring a foreign language becomes apparent. The

focus lies in grammatical analysis, involving the examination of word forms and inflections. Consequently, there is limited use of the target language for communicative purposes. Moreover, according to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), both teachers and students assume traditional roles, with the teacher holding authority and students tending to follow their lead. Students are taught to memorise grammatical structures and rules to enhance reading comprehension, with errors being deemed unacceptable. It is expected that teachers will correct such errors whenever they arise.

This method has faced extensive criticism primarily due to its lack of emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills, which are essential for effective communication in the target language context (Kim, 2008). Additionally, the method's focus on rote memorisation of vocabulary and explicit grammar rules, while disregarding other language skills, resulted in a passive understanding of the language rather than the ability to actively use it (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). However, the grammar-translation method does offer practical advantages (Hammerly, 1982) as it does not require extensive knowledge of the language or teaching techniques. Furthermore, it was a widely used method until the mid-twentieth century when a new approach was introduced to address the limitations of the grammar-translation method. In summary, although this method prioritises comprehension of literary texts over speaking and listening in the target language, it continues to be popular in many parts of the world today. In recent decades, it has remained dominant in East Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, China, and Vietnam, where students are taught using a teacher-centred, book-centred method (Zhenhui, 2001). Despite its decline, it is still actively used and widely practised in these contexts, even with the introduction of new communicative methods (Beaumont and Chang, 2011; Li and Yang, 2018; Yi, 2021). Ngoc and Iwashita's (2012) research also indicates that Vietnamese learners prefer a communication-oriented approach that includes grammar instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2014) attribute the method's popularity to its minimal demands on teachers' skills. While many new methodologies have been developed and implemented, understanding the historical foundations of the grammar-translation method provides valuable insights into current language instruction practices.

3.2.2 The Direct Method

The direct method was developed as an alternative to the grammar-translation method. According to Mackey (1965: 161), it is considered one of the most widely used methods that has sparked significant controversy. This approach emerged in response to the growing interest in teaching language for the purpose of speaking. Consequently, it places a strong emphasis on communicative practice, with students actively engaging in speaking and listening to the foreign language in everyday situations. To achieve this, teachers implement classroom practices that entail extensive oral interaction, avoidance of translation, and the postponement of reading and writing skills until later stages. However, certain variants of this method have allowed for limited explanations in the student's native language, particularly when teachers need to clarify grammar rules to rectify common errors made by students in speaking. François Gouin, a French educator and influential author in the field of language education in 1880, questioned the ineffective academic routine of the classical method. Although initially disregarded, Gouin's ideas eventually resurfaced and became integral to the principles of the direct method (Brown, 2014).

The direct method assumes that the mechanisms and processes of first language acquisition should be adopted and followed to easily and effectively learn a foreign language. The strength of this method lies in its potential to fully immerse learners, similar to how one learns a first language. All instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language, and as Rivers (1968: 10) explains, 'the method provides an exciting and interesting way of learning the foreign language through activity'. The direct method remains relevant and continues to generate interest and enthusiasm in language teaching settings, such as Berlitz language schools. However, despite its positive outcomes, popularity, and enduring presence in the field of language teaching, this method has faced substantial criticism. It is often regarded as a demanding approach that heavily relies on skilled native English teachers, necessitates small class sizes, and requires longer classroom time. In addition, the learning conditions for a second language differ greatly from those of acquiring a first language (cf. Hammerly, 1982), making it challenging to create natural situations of understanding within the artificial environment of a classroom (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983).

3.2.3 The Audio-Lingual Method

The audio-lingual approach, which diverges from the Grammar translation method, gained prominence from the 1930s to the 1970s and emerged within the context of large-scale language teaching programmes in the 1950s and 60s. The theories of behavioural psychology and structural linguistics, which were developed in the United States during World War II, formed the theoretical foundations for this method (cf. Met and Galloway, 1992; Valdes, 2001). Behavioural psychology served as a teaching model based on the establishment of behavioural habits, while structural linguistics provided tools for analysing language into smaller components and contrasting language through contrastive analysis (Brown, 2014). Consequently, this method relies on repetition as the fundamental means of learning, placing emphasis on grammar. In other words, there are no rules to be memorised, and language learning is viewed as a mechanical process of habit formation. This method of teaching foreign languages prioritises the acquisition of grammatical and phonological structures, particularly for speaking and listening. The employed strategies include pattern drills, dialogue memorisation, and repetition. Given the focus on oral skills, accurate pronunciation and intonation are also highly emphasised.

The Audio-lingual Method, which places primary emphasis on listening and speaking, continues to be widely favoured in English language teaching. Sentence pattern practice, compared to grammar memorisation, is perceived as more easily learned and applied by learners. However, critics argue that this approach lacks a solid theoretical foundation and fails to enable students to effectively apply the skills acquired in the classroom to real-life communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Consequently, the shortcomings of the Audio-lingual Method necessitate the development of a new approach that more effectively addresses the needs of language learners, including the use of a foreign language for communicative and functional purposes. In response to advancements in cognitive psychology and its impact on the field of foreign language teaching, a new communicative approach has emerged.

3.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT was developed by Hymes (1972) as a replacement for previous foreign language teaching methods, such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods (Warschauer and Kern, 2000). Its emergence was timely, coinciding with a global readiness for a paradigm shift in language instruction. CLT is considered an amalgamation of the contributions made by previous methods, going beyond the mere teaching of language rules, patterns, definitions, and other knowledge, and instead focusing on fostering genuine, spontaneous, and meaningful communication (Brown, 2007: 18). This approach is rooted in a functional theory of language, which regards language as a tool for communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Its rationale draws from a multidisciplinary perspective, encompassing disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and education (Savignon, 1991). CLT places a strong emphasis on developing learners' 'communicative competence'¹¹, enabling them to effectively and appropriately use the language in real-life communicative situations. Consequently, the primary focus has shifted away from grammar and structure, towards language use, fluency development, learner-centeredness, and the ability to communicate in diverse contexts.

Richards and Rodgers (2014: 105) propose that CLT should be regarded as an approach rather than a method. It encompasses a 'diverse set of principles that reflects a communicative view of language and language learning' and can be applied to support a wide range of classroom procedures. Jacobs and Farrell (2003) asserted that the paradigm shift brought about by the CLT approach has led to eight significant changes in language teaching approaches. These changes go beyond CLT itself and include concepts such as learner autonomy, the social aspect of learning, integration of curricula, emphasis on meaning, recognition of diversity, development of thinking skills, utilisation of alternative assessments, and the redefinition of teachers as co-learners. It is also believed that these changes can be observed in more recent language teaching approaches. One noticeable characteristic is the transformation in classroom practices and the role of teachers within

¹¹ Savignon (1983, 2017) defines 'communicative competence' as 'the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons or between one person and a written text'.

this approach. In CLT, teachers no longer hold an autocratic position as the sole authority figure in the classroom, as was the case with previous methods. Instead, they assume the roles of facilitators and needs analysts, while actively encouraging student participation in classroom activities. Richards and Rodgers (2014: 107) suggest that research and documentation on local practices are necessary to determine the nature of such practices and whether the philosophy of CLT aligns with or has influenced local language teaching practices.

The different tasks and activities in CLT, including role-plays, discussions, games, and jigsaws, require the use of various materials. These materials can be categorised as task-based and text-based objects (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 79-80). For example, role plays and simulations use written cue cards to explain the assigned roles to students (McDonough and Shaw, 2013: 166). Jigsaws, information gaps, and problem-solving activities require materials that present two sets of information in the form of charts, diagrams, labels, and tables. These materials allow students to interact and fill in the missing pieces (McDonough and Shaw, 2013: 165). Communicative games and discussions rely on materials such as maps, pictures, and questionnaires (McDonough and Shaw, 2013: 163). All of these activities and materials aim to improve listening and speaking skills, as well as lexical and grammatical knowledge. On the other hand, text-based materials play a crucial role in developing the four main skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These materials focus on specific topics and themes and use visual cues, taped cues, pictures, and sentence fragments to initiate interaction (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 79).

These developments in activities, tasks, and materials influenced by CLT have also led to a reconsideration of evaluation and assessment procedures. Weir (1990: 11) criticised the existing structural methods used in assessing language skills and proposed the concept of 'Communicative Language Testing.' He argued that any assessment procedure aimed at testing communicative competence should be 'contextualised' through the use of authentic tasks and texts derived from real-life situations, emphasising the incorporation of tasks in the four main skills and using 'performance tasks such as controlled writing tasks, listening and note-taking, and face-to-face spoken interactions' (ibid.: 86). Finally, he underscored the significance of employing 'integrated tasks' and developing 'relevant and adequate

scoring criteria' (ibid.: 18-19). These concerns regarding the construct validity of communicative tests were brought to the forefront due to the 'backwash effect' of assessment procedures on curriculum implementation.

3.2.5 Integrated Skills Approach

The concept of 'integrated skills' teaching refers to the instruction of four primary skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, in a unified manner (McDonough et al., 2013: 201). The key advantage of this approach lies in its ability to facilitate learners' understanding of real-life communication by engaging them in meaningful tasks and activities (McDonough et al., 2013). This approach has the potential to be highly motivating for students across diverse ages and backgrounds (Oxford, 2001). Integration of skills can be achieved by employing diverse strategies during the teaching of each individual skill through various activities, tasks, and materials. This approach is effectively exemplified in communicative language teaching, wherein activities necessitate the simultaneous utilisation of two or more of the four language skills (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

An important strategy for teaching the two receptive skills, listening and reading, is the integration of speaking and writing through pre-, while-, and post-activities. The 'pre-activities' aim to prepare students for the texts by focusing their attention on the subject matter. This is done through an introduction from the teacher, pre-questions, and pre-teaching of vocabulary items (Lewis and Hill, 2002: 107). The activities in the 'while' stage are dependent on the specific objectives for listening and/or reading. These may involve various tasks such as skimming (getting the main idea), scanning (identifying details), comprehension, making inferences, drawing conclusions, guessing the meanings of unknown words, and finding relationships (McDonough et al., 2013: 106-9). The organisation of these tasks, whether done individually, in pairs, or in groups, as well as the use of different techniques such as silent reading, reading aloud, or the use of audiovisual aids like tapes, videos, and overhead projectors, impacts the incorporation of the four language skills (McDonough et al., 2013: 112-42). Similarly, the post-activities also rely on the objectives set for listening and reading (Lewis and Hill, 2002: 62). They provide students with opportunities to identify and practise grammatical structures, vocabulary items, and

phonological features, such as pronunciation, stress, and intonation, found in the texts. These activities often involve oral practice through role-plays, discussions, and presentations where students can express their attitudes and feelings towards the content of the texts (McDonough et al., 2013: 215-20).

3.2.6 Task-based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), originating in the mid-1980s, is an approach to communicative language teaching (Jackson, 2022) that is grounded in the constructivist theory of learning. It is a learner-centred approach that prioritises meaningful activities with content over linguistic forms (Jeon and Hahn, 2006: 2). TBLT is primarily driven by a theory of learning rather than a theory of language (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 79). A comprehensive definition of TBLT (Littlewood, 2004: 323) can be attained by considering the two dimensions of tasks: the focus on forms and meanings, and the active personal involvement of learners in the tasks themselves. The classroom setting in which tasks are carried out also plays a crucial role in TBLT. The arrangement of the classroom should be flexible, allowing learners to benefit from different settings in different learning situations (Jeon and Hahn, 2006: 5). Another determinant in TBLT is the teacher, who is responsible for designing and implementing the tasks. The success of a TBLT classroom depends on the alignment between the teacher's intention and the learner's interpretation of the task objectives (Murphy, 2003: 353). Therefore, the teacher must provide clear explanations of the task objectives for the students.

The early literature on TBLT acknowledged its primary focus on the teaching and learning of ESL. However, this focus has since expanded to include consideration of foreign language contexts (Shehadeh and Coombe, 2012; East, 2024). The past decade has witnessed significant growth in TBLT literature, with emerging trends and themes in task-based teaching and learning, such as the teaching of less commonly taught languages (Heidrich Uebel and Van Gorp, 2023), the incorporation of technology (González-Lloret and Ziegler, 2022), and the use of translanguaging (Seals et al., 2020). Jackson (2022) has advocated for the transformative potential of TBLT, suggesting that it can empower learners by involving

them in decision-making processes regarding the tasks they undertake, as well as fostering intercultural awareness and acceptance.

3.2.7. Summary of methods and approaches

In summary, the shifts in language teaching paradigms throughout the last century seem to follow a cyclical pattern, driven by the connections between changes. According to Brown (2007), these shifts and changes, influenced by advancements in psychology and linguistics, have given rise to various methods. Each new method emerges from the previous one and involves a shift away from the principles of behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics towards cognitive and later socio-cognitive psychology, as well as more contextualised and meaning-based perspectives on language. Long (2016: 29) asserts that further advancements in theory and research, along with additional field trials, will undoubtedly refine existing models and potentially identify necessary changes. As a result, each new method typically claims to be more effective than the previous ones because of the more solid theories of language teaching and learning upon which it is built. In the late 20th century, English emerged as a global language that students require for global communication. This new reality necessitates an exploration of teaching English as an international language in our globally integrated world, a topic that will be further discussed in section 3.4.

3.3 English and HE internationalisation

According to the European Enlightenment and Kantian ideals, HE is seen as a means of self-formation. It aims to prepare students for active participation in public culture and contribute to societal improvement (Marginson, 2018). At a global level, HE is influenced by economic flows and the shared global or universal cultures associated with scientific research and intellectual values (Scott, 2011). On a national level, HE is integrated within governance structures and funded by national governments. At a local level, universities engage with their communities and manage day-to-day operations within their specific locality. The phenomenon of internationalisation has emerged as a significant force

affecting HE practices in recent decades (de Wit, 2017; Knight, 2012; Rumbley et al., 2012), resulting in an increase in the number of international students (OECD, 2021) and the development of internationally relevant curricula (Leask and Carroll, 2011).

As a result, more institutions around the world are striving to achieve a 'world-class' or 'global' status (Van Der Wende, 2017). The number of international students has doubled since 2000, reaching over four million students in 2012 and 6.4 million in 2021 (UNESCO, 2023), as cross-border travel for educational purposes has become a crucial part of internationalisation. While initially, the majority of international students were inclined towards 'native' English-speaking countries in the 'global North,' such as the USA, Canada, UK, or Australia (OECD, 2021), the past decade has witnessed a diversification in their choice of destinations (UNESCO, 2018). The increasing levels of cultural and linguistic diversity in many HEIs have had significant impacts on the marketing, development, and delivery of university programmes (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Consequently, there has been a growing reliance on English as a lingua franca in international education settings (Jenkins, 2013) and an expansion of provisions for EMI in universities (Akincioğlu, 2023, Spolsky, 2004; Galloway and Rose, 2015; Lasagabaster and Doiz, 2022, McKinley and Galloway, 2022). Europe, in particular, has experienced a substantial increase in EMI over the past two decades (Lasagabaster, 2022, Wachter and Maiworm, 2014), with English-taught courses rising by 1,000% since 2002.

The utilisation of EMI in higher education has experienced significant growth in the past decade (Macaro et al., 2018; McKinley and Galloway, 2022). EMI is defined as the use of the English language to deliver academic content in regions where English is not the dominant language (Macaro, 2018). Conversely, EMI is proposed not to be restrictive to non-Anglophone countries due to the remarkably similar experiences that international students in the United States encounter when compared to those studying the same subject in EMI programmes in countries where English is not the primary language (Pecorari and Malmström, 2018). Internationalisation of HE is often a key driving force behind the expansion of EMI. Teaching in English is frequently regarded as a symbol of internationalisation, and the rise of EMI in higher education has been remarkable. Scholars have referred to it as an 'unstoppable train' (Macaro, 2015: 7) and 'the most significant

phenomenon' in higher education (McKinley and Galloway, 2022). EMI programmes have gained prominence in national education policies worldwide and have been implemented in various ways, taking into account the diversity and complexity of different contexts. The implementation of EMI is influenced by factors that include the driving forces behind its introduction, language education policies, provisions for language support, and language proficiency requirements for both students and staff. Furthermore, EMI programmes can vary in terms of the extent to which English is used for teaching and learning within the curriculum. While EMI is recognised as just one aspect of the broader internationalisation agenda (Gray et al., 2018), it has been identified as a priority in many contexts (Sahan et al., 2022), including Vietnam, where it is linked to top-down policy initiatives.

The internationalisation of HE goes beyond student and program mobility, as pedagogies and curricula are impacted by international and intercultural dimensions (De Wit, 2017). Leask (2015: 9) defines curriculum internationalization as, '(t)he incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a programme of study'. Universities worldwide are increasingly 'exporting' their academic programs and forming agreements with international collaborative partners, indicating a rapid expansion of transnational higher education (Knight, 2016; Montgomery, 2014). Consequently, this influences the internationalisation strategies and goals of HE institutions (Montgomery, 2016).

In the context of Vietnam, internationalisation is often referred to as international integration or cooperation (Tran et al., 2023) and was listed as one of the eight initiatives in the Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011-2020 (GoV, 2012). Extensive integration into global higher education systems is prioritized in the government's policies and strategies. International cooperation activities with institutions from developed countries have been undertaken to enhance the quality of higher education and align with regional and international advancements. The Vietnamese government officially adopted the term 'internationalization' in a recently developed project titled 'Project on Internationalization of Vietnamese Higher Education' (GoV, 2016, 2019). The project also highlights that internationalisation of programs can be achieved through student exchange,

credit recognition, and joint qualifications with foreign institutions. Evidently, there have been changes in the Vietnamese approach to and ideologies of internationalisation (Tran et al., 2023), not only in the shift in the use of the term 'internationalisation' in policy documents but also in the transition from a passive stage to a more active role of Vietnamese institutions in this process. Vietnam is no longer solely a recipient but also a partner and provider of international education.

3.4 Teaching and learning English in the globalised world

Against the backdrop of globalisation and internationalisation, the past few decades have witnessed an increasingly diverse use of English in various domains and contexts. In a globalised world where the number of 'non-native' English speakers surpasses that of 'native' speakers, the value of how English is perceived, utilised, and taught to reflect this global usage has been emphasised by Galloway (2017: 3). Consequently, the emergence of global English has prompted a demand for a new paradigm shift in ELT and empirical validation of pedagogical and curriculum practices (Nero, 2012; Galloway, 2017; Rose et al., 2020; Selvi et al., 2024). To gain a comprehensive understanding of Englishes in a global context, it is important to consider the fields of World Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as an international language (EIL), and more recently Global Englishes. While these fields focus on slightly different areas of research, they share common ideologies such as the concept of English as a 'globally owned' language and the critique of native-speakerism. In addition, it is necessary to mention critical trends in ELT such as Translanguaging and the Multilingual Turn, which highlight the pluricentric nature of English and challenge the traditional monolingual approach.

3.4.1 Englishes in global contexts

In terms of World Englishes, linguist Braj B. Kachru conducted pioneering research on linguistic variations in 1986. His work has since inspired scholars studying the global spread of English. Kachru's influential three-circle model categorises Englishes into Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle represents native English-speaking

countries, while the Outer Circle consists of former colonies where English is used as a second language alongside national languages. The Expanding Circle includes countries where English is taught as a foreign language, such as China, Japan, and Vietnam. Although this traditional model has been referred to as the 'standard framework of World Englishes study' (Yano, 2001: 121), it has faced criticism for its perceived flaws in several aspects (Galloway and Rose, 2015: 18), including oversimplification of the spread of English and an unclear definition of the various circles. Consequently, Kachru's model has become outdated and fails to adequately capture the intricate sociolinguistic landscape within an increasingly superdiverse world (Selvi et al., 2024). To address these limitations, scholars suggest moving away from a nation-based model (Pennycook, 2010) and adopting a usage-based approach instead (Bruthiaux, 2003).

The paradigm of English as a lingua franca, as a global phenomenon, has emerged and evolved to address the limitations of World Englishes (Rose et al., 2020). It is now the most widely used form of English and is defined as a contact language between individuals who have different first languages and choose to communicate in English as a foreign language, such as 'Euro-English' (Modiano, 2003) or 'ASEAN English' (Kirkpatrick, 2010b). English is currently used more frequently to interact with non-native English speakers than with native English speakers, both within and across all three of Kachru's circles, as a lingua franca. These individuals are therefore referred to as speakers of English as a lingua franca, rather than speakers of English as a foreign language (Galloway and Rose, 2015). ELF scholars have criticised the outdated notion of the 'native' norm and have emphasised the way in which English is used for communication in the late 2000s and early 2010s, as well as the importance of English in multilingual contexts more recently (Rose et al., 2020). This has led them to investigate how English is used alongside other languages in lingua franca encounters. They also highlight the necessity of developing communication strategies to enable students to use English in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

English as an International Language (EIL) is a field of study that shares similarities with Global Englishes and ELF in terms of its focus on the societal and educational implications of the global use of English, rather than on the language itself and its variations. EIL serves as an encompassing term that captures the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of English use

worldwide (Rose and Galloway, 2019). It has replaced the traditional conceptualisations of English as a Native, Second, Foreign, or Additional Language in a global context (Rose et al., 2020). While Pennycook (2003, 2007) originally used the term Global Englishes to describe the global spread and use of various English varieties as part of broader globalisation processes, Galloway and Rose view it as an umbrella term that represents a field of study which challenges traditional ideologies and identities (2015). They describe it as an inclusive paradigm that examines the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and its users in a globalised world (2019:5). Global Englishes research aims not to codify English varieties, but rather to question the boundaries among varieties, languages, and communities, building upon previous understandings of English variation and change (Rose et al., 2020). EIL researchers, such as McKay and Brown (2016) and Matsuda (2012, 2017), share commonalities with Global Englishes scholars like Galloway (2017), Rose and Galloway (2019), and Selvi, Rose, and Galloway (2024), particularly in terms of practical implications for language teaching and learning. The following section will further discuss the implications of global English language teaching practices.

The two prevalent trends, known as 'The Multilingual Turn' and 'Translanguaging', have been identified as powerful driving forces that have caused a shift in perspectives regarding principles and practices in ELT (Selvi et al., 2024). The Multilingual Turn challenges the predominant monolingual orthodoxy and ideology that have traditionally dominated the fields of language teaching and learning (May, 2014). It is used as an umbrella term to more effectively capture the multifaceted realities, complexities, and practices associated with multilingualism (Marshall and Moore, 2018). On the other hand, Translanguaging emphasises an integrative approach to languages, which aligns with a multilingual approach to ELF, and encourages the use of students' other languages to support their second language learning. Research on Translanguaging has primarily focused on its applications in language education (García and Li, 2018), and it has also been connected to the concepts of Global Englishes (Rose and Galloway, 2019) and EIL (Rose et al., 2020).

3.4.2 Teaching English as an international language (TEIL)

The term TEIL, as adopted by Selvi et al. (2024), functions as an encompassing term due to its lucidity and accessibility to ELT professionals, as well as its foundation in language teaching scholarship. In recent years, English has emerged as a global language, expanding its influence into diverse domains beyond its traditional role as a foreign or second language. This paradigm shift necessitates a re-evaluation of ELT approaches at the epistemological, ideological, and pedagogical levels. It involves moving away from 'native speaker' norms and embracing the 'pluricentricity of English' in our highly diverse world. Furthermore, it requires an ontological shift in understanding language as 'a multilingual and situated social practice within a broader multilingual context' (Selvi et al., 2024: 25). At the pedagogical level, it is imperative to develop pedagogical practices that equip English users for effective communication as a global lingua franca (Selvi et al., 2024).

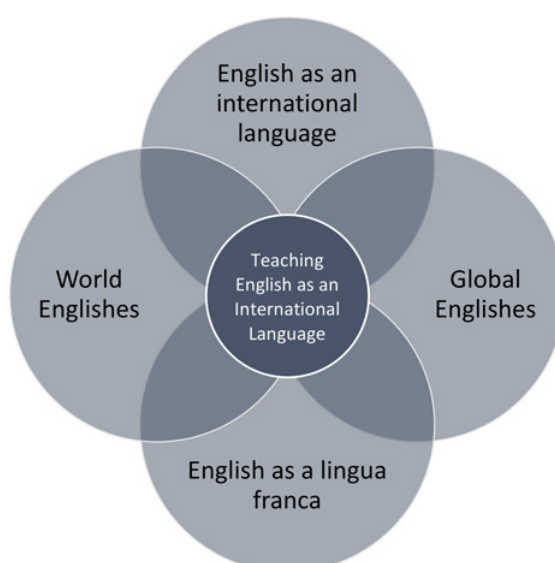


Figure 3.1: The theoretical positioning of TEIL (Rose et al., 2020)

Galloway (2011, 2017) and Galloway and Rose (2015, 2019) have summarised the theoretical calls for change in TESOL over the past few decades as the GELT proposals, which have also been cited by Selvi et al. (2024: 29). These proposals include: (i) the necessity to equip students with a diverse range of English varieties from around the world in order to better prepare them for international use; (ii) the emphasis on acknowledging multilingualism in ELT, as solely possessing knowledge of English is insufficient for global

contexts; (iii) the call for a critical approach to ELT that exposes students to the spread of English and its role as a global language; (iv) the promotion of awareness of ELF strategies in language curricula, which are communicative strategies that help students in adapting to various communities of language users in fluid contexts; (v) the emphasis on respecting diverse cultures and identities in ELT; and (vi) the need to change English teacher-hiring practices in the ELT industry, transitioning from native English-speaking teachers to multicompetent ELT professionals. These proposed changes represent a complete shift in the approach to language teaching and learning, rather than simply adding more lessons or new teaching materials to existing curricula that are based on native norms and a monolithic view of English. Since then, frameworks for change in ELT, developed from different paradigms such as World Englishes-informed ELT, ELF-oriented pedagogy, and Global Englishes Language Teaching, all aim to reflect and raise awareness of the complex sociolinguistic reality of English today (Selvi et al., 2024).

	Traditional ELT	GELT
Target interlocutors	Native English speakers	All English users
Ownership	Inner circle	Global
Target culture	Static NE cultures	Fluid cultures
Norms	Standard English	Diverse, flexible and multiple forms
Teachers	Non-NE speaking teachers (same L1) and NE speaking teachers	Qualified, competent teachers (same and different L1s)
Role-model	NE speakers	Expert users
Source of materials	NE and NE speakers	Salient English-speaking communities and contexts
Other languages and cultures	Seen as a hindrance and source of interference	Seen as a resource as with other languages in their linguistic repertoire
Needs	Inner Circle defined	Globally defined
Assessment criterion	Accuracy according to prescriptive standards	Communicative competence
Goals of learning	Native-like proficiency	Multicompetent user
Ideology	Underpinned by an exclusive and ethnocentric view of English	Underpinned by an inclusive Global Englishes perspective
Orientation	Monolingual	Multilingual/translingual

Note: NE = Native English

Table 3.1: Global Englishes Language Teaching framework (adopted from Rose and Galloway, 2019: 21)

The expanded version of the GELT framework, as proposed by Rose and Galloway (2019), has been regarded as a significant advancement in the field of ELT (Selvi et al., 2024). This framework portrays a continuum that encompasses both 'traditional ELT' and 'GELT' approaches, aiming to move away from conventional teaching methods. It is primarily intended for curriculum evaluation, design, and research. Table 3.1 presents thirteen practical dimensions for language educators. These dimensions can be viewed as a guide for initiating changes in current practices, allowing for a smoother transition away from 'native speaker' norms (Rose and Galloway, 2019; Selvi et al., 2024).

Although the 'traditional' ELT curricula have faced criticism in recent decades for being based on static 'native' norms, these traditional practices still maintain their dominant position (Selvi et al., 2024). Research within the field of ELT showcases the diversity in the use of English as a global language and emphasises the disconnect between the curricula and how English is utilised in globalised contexts. As a result, there is a pressing need for the reconceptualisation of linguistic norms and a shift in pedagogical practices. The next step involves conducting planned and implemented classroom-based research, where pedagogical innovations can be put into practice within English language curricula (Rose et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a growing demand for 'more locally sensitive materials, multilingual English teachers, and changes to standardised language tests' (Sahan et al., 2022: 4). Consequently, it is necessary to refer to practical applications (Selvi et al., 2024) that align with the current sociolinguistic realities and are beneficial for language educators who are prepared for change.

3.4.3 Practical implications for teaching and learning EIL

English practitioners and learners in today's globalised world encounter challenges stemming from the widespread use of English and the lack of appropriate teaching resources. Furthermore, teaching practices vary depending on the specific contexts, rendering it impractical to identify a single pedagogy that can effectively cater to all learners in all circumstances. Consequently, this section aims to present a compilation of practical activities (Selvi et al., 2024) that can be advantageous for language educators and learners in the instruction and acquisition of EIL in the globalised era. EIL innovations encourage

English educators not to wholly abandon their current practices, but rather to adapt them in order to address EIL-related issues within their respective local teaching contexts. Selvi et al. (2024) offers valuable insights into how one can critically evaluate existing English curricula and materials, and customise them to suit local needs. Furthermore, practical activities and lesson plans are outlined for each of the thirteen major dimensions mentioned in the previous sections.

Practical implications in the first dimension involve expanding the conception of 'traditional' *Target Interlocutors* to include English users from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds with varying levels of proficiency across different contexts, cultures, time, and space (Selvi et al., 2024:44). This expansion promotes linguacultural exchanges with diverse language users in real-life settings for English learners. Additionally, it allows for the integration of critical values of multilingualism and linguistic diversity into impactful practices.

In the second dimension, *The Ownership of English*, practical implications are evident at four different levels: (i) the *recognition* of how global ownership is reflected, valued, and built upon in ELT practices beyond the confines of the idealised 'native speaker' realm; (ii) *awareness-raising* by sensitising learners about the current global status of English through readings, facts, and statistics, in-class discussions, debates, case scenarios, and vignettes; (iii) English learners then construct different *identity* options and degrees of English ownership that enable teachers to know more about the language users and also their struggles; (iv) *participation* – the strategic steps that teachers may take to promote students' symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2009), through activities facilitated by technological tools such as chat rooms, social networking sites, telecollaboration, and other online platforms.

In the third dimension, known as *Target Culture*, teachers are encouraged to adopt more inclusive approaches such as Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) typology and Kubota's (2003) Four Ds. The aim is to expand their instructional content and promote the heterogeneity and hybridity of cultural identity by incorporating references from both the source culture and international target cultures. The fourth dimension, *Linguistic Norms*, focuses on the diverse forms and norms that teachers provide, use, prepare for, and expect from students in the

ELT classroom. This goes beyond the traditional idealised 'native speaker' norms and includes practices that reflect diversity in English usage and transcultural uses of ELF. This can involve comparing and contrasting dialogues using both idealised 'native speaker' norms and EIL norms to promote successful communication and develop communicative skills. It also involves recognising and building upon students' multilingual repertoire and allowing for translingual practices. The fifth dimension, *Teacher Identity*, involves strategies such as pre- and in-service teacher education activities, involving various stakeholders, and making efforts for innovation and change. This also requires a reconceptualisation of teachers' language proficiency as 'a specialised subset of language skills' that is necessary for language teaching (Freeman et al., 2015).

When considering the dimension of *Role Models* as users of English, it is crucial for practices to encompass the diverse range of language users within the global community. Role models serve as successful multilingual figures, originating from both global and local contexts, who demonstrate their language proficiency and share their lived experiences to shape their linguistic identities. In designing communicative tasks, teachers should take into account students' immediate and future realities, aspirations, needs, and motivation, in order to identify appropriate communicative skills and cultivate learners' strategic competence across various communicative settings. The practical implications for *The Sources of Instructional Materials* primarily revolve around equipping teachers with a critical mindset, an innovative approach, and transformative skills, as a response to the prevailing Anglocentric ideology of 'native speakerism' that is present in current teaching materials. This revised focus empowers teachers to critically evaluate existing materials, diversify their sources of instruction, develop contextually relevant and culturally sensitive materials that embrace diversity, and utilise the strategy of 'teacher talk around the text' to mediate instructional materials (Sunderland et al., 2000). As for the *Positioning of Other Languages and Cultures*, the practical implications extend to the domains of interactions, instruction, and assessment, with a particular emphasis on students' linguistic repertoires to support their learning within the classroom and their interactions in multilingual environments. Incorporating students' linguacultural repertoires during instruction has the potential to facilitate more effective and authentic language use, leading to educational success. Additionally, translanguaging and translingual practices can be applied to both formative

and summative assessments, such as utilising multilingual instructions, providing feedback, or establishing benchmarks, among others.

The tenth dimension, *The Goals of Learning*, emphasises practical learning objectives for individuals who are proficient in multiple languages and can engage in intercultural communication with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Practical implications, therefore, should resonate with the instigation of a shift from a dichotomy between 'native' and 'non-native' orientations towards a multilingual paradigm. It is crucial to consider the intricate connection between learners' needs and the identification of their learning goals. Instructional practices should be grounded in the realities of local and global contexts, and practical applications may involve intercultural communicative experiences. The dimension of *Assessment Criterion* highlights the significant role and responsibility of teachers and curriculum designers in developing tests that are relevant to students' current and future realities. A usage-based approach is advantageous for determining test specifications as it provides more relevant and context-specific approximations. For example, a proficiency test of English for Asian learners should include language samples, varieties, skills, and user profiles that test-takers may encounter in their present and future interactions. This can be achieved through target and present situation analyses. The final two dimensions, *Ideology* and *Theoretical Orientation*, explore the global perspective of critical multilingual users of English. Furthermore, fostering critical self-reflection on various aspects of the English language and a range of social, political, educational, and raciolinguistic issues can support learners in becoming critical multilingual users of English.

In summary, it is crucial to incorporate these practical applications as a means of facilitating different agents of change in the field of ELT to effectively implement pedagogical practices that cater to the diverse needs and realities within their specific teaching contexts (Selvi et al., 2024).

3.5 Summary of literature review

The literature reviews discussed in Chapters Two and Three provide several important qualifications for the study. There are a few assumptions that need to be made: (i) there is a continuing increase in the number of international students in the UK, but there is limited literature dedicated to pedagogies for and with them; (ii) teaching English in Vietnamese higher education to enhance students' communicative competence in multilingual and multicultural contexts is challenging and requires different skills and methods; (iii) there is a need to address research gaps, particularly in terms of describing the current situation of English curriculum implementation and addressing the 'implementation gaps' in the context of Vietnamese higher education; (iv) there is a need to focus on the paradigm shift in ELT to meet global and local needs; (v) there is a need for an effective curriculum model for examination. The first three qualifications highlight the main arguments for the contextual and substantive focus of the study, while the fourth and fifth dimensions guide the theoretical and methodological considerations of the research. Therefore, this literature review indicates that the present study is not only based on significant topics in the literature, but also offers unique contributions in terms of both theory and practice, potentially making significant contributions to the existing literature and the promotion of curriculum implementation research.

The next chapter will provide a contextualisation of this situation in relation to language teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This chapter aims to present a comprehensive academic examination of the research background, situating it within the broader context of internationalisation in Asia. Moreover, it seeks to clarify the origins of the research questions and assumptions that have been previously addressed. The first section (4.1) delves into the growing demand for ELT within the Asian context, outlining prevailing language policies and exploring the underlying factors contributing to this growth. Additionally, it examines the pedagogic practices and their implications for the wider ELT industry. The second section (4.2) focuses on CEFR, its implications, as well as its Vietnamese counterpart (CEFR-V) and its impact on Vietnamese higher education. Moving forward, the third section (4.3) and fourth section (4.4) provide a detailed analysis of the historical and political contexts of both the UK and Vietnam, specifically in relation to language policies and language education. Moreover, these sections explore potential challenges that teachers may encounter in terms of methodological and pedagogical practices. Finally, in section 4.5, a succinct summary of the chapter's key points is presented.

4.1 English education in Asia

4.1.1 Dominant language policies

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the internationalisation of HE and the adoption of EMI are experiencing significant growth on a global scale. National and institutional policies aimed at enhancing prestige and international recognition have resulted in a surge of English-taught programmes, particularly evident in non-Anglophone countries in Asia (Lasagabaster, 2022). Several East Asian countries, driven by the ambition to establish globally respected institutions, have prioritised the development of EMI programmes. Examples of this can be seen in China (Galloway et al., 2017; Rose et al., 2020; Xie and Curle, 2020; Zhang, 2018), Japan (Galloway et al., 2017; Rose and McKinley, 2018), Korea (Kim et al., 2017), Thailand (Galloway and Sahan, 2021; Hengsadeekul et al., 2014), and Vietnam (Galloway and Sahan, 2021; Hamid et al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2017; Sahan et al., 2022; Tran and Nguyen, 2018).

On one hand, researchers have observed that Asian higher education institutions (HEIs) are becoming increasingly diverse, attracting students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For instance, China welcomed 500,000 international students in 2019, positioning itself as the top destination in Asia (Wen and Hu, 2023). Japan ranks second, hosting 279,274 international students in 2023 (JASSO, 2024), with a target of reaching 400,000 students by 2033. Malaysia and Singapore are also noteworthy, hosting 63,000 and 55,000 foreign students, respectively (SETS, 2023). In Taiwan, the total number of international students in 2021 reached almost 93,000, compared to 129,207 in 2018. To attract and retain overseas students, Taiwan has invested £132 million and aspires to enrol 320,000 international students by 2030 (SETS, 2023). While not all international students in these countries pursue their degrees through English, the number of international students is likely correlated with the availability of EMI programmes. In other words, an increase in international student enrolment may drive the demand for EMI courses, and a larger offering of EMI courses may contribute to the rise in the number of foreign students. On the other hand, a few studies have examined the factors that contribute to academic success in EMI contexts, particularly in these emerging Asian settings. Researchers such as Rose et al. (2019) and Thompson et al. (2022a, 2022b) have identified a significant correlation between English language proficiency and EMI academic performance.

Apart from the EMI policy, two other policies that are related to English have been prominent throughout Asia (Hamid and Ali, 2022). The first policy involves the incorporation of English into the national curriculum at an early stage (Baldauf et al., 2011; Sun and Rong, 2021; Zein and Butler, 2022). English, as the primary foreign language, plays a crucial role in education and employment in several Asian countries, including South Korea, Japan, China (Sun and Rong, 2021), and Vietnam (Hoang, 2020). Some education systems have introduced English at the primary school level, such as South Korea (Ra, 2019), China (Zein, 2022), while others have introduced it from Grade 3, such as Japan and Vietnam. In the ASEAN region, all member states begin English language teaching at the primary level, except for Indonesia (Kirkpatrick, 2017). The other policy exemplifies what scholars have referred to as language tests functioning as the *de facto* language policy (Menken, 2008). This refers to the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which has emerged as a global policy in language education, in national educational systems such

as in Japan (Oshie Nishimura-Sahi, 2022), Malaysia (Ahmad Afip et al., 2019), Thailand (Foley, 2019), and Vietnam for English language teaching and learning at various educational levels and for assessing students' proficiency. The Council of Europe (2001) developed the CEFR to establish standards to be achieved at different stages of teaching and learning modern languages, initially with a focus on Europe. However, it has increasingly gained acceptance in many other countries worldwide, particularly in non-English speaking Asian countries such as China (CSE), Japan (CEFR-J), Malaysia (CEFR-M), Thailand (FRELE), and Vietnam (CEFR-V). Although the CEFR is recognised as one of the most notable recent developments in second language education, as it views the curriculum as a dynamic process (Graves, 2008), its implementation is a complex undertaking (Piccardo, North, and Maldina, 2019).

Vietnam serves as a prominent case study within the Asian context, particularly in relation to ASEAN due to the integration of three dominant English language policies in the national language reform. The incorporation of EMI and the adoption of the CEFR are viewed as strategic measures by the GoV to enhance students' English proficiency and facilitate internationalisation (Le 2012; Tran and Nguyen 2018; Tri and Moskovsky 2019). Therefore, this research critically examines the integration of CEFR into the national language policy and the subsequent implementation of a CEFR-based English curriculum within Vietnamese higher education on the national, institutional, and classroom levels. Consequently, it is imperative to discuss the summary of CEFR (2001) and its Vietnamese counterpart (CEFR-V) in detail in section 4.2, as they have significant relevance to the present study.

4.1.2 English teaching and learning

In the majority of countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language, educational materials and textbooks that are based on English-speaking countries, particularly British and American English, are utilised (Matsuda, 2003). Moreover, most students have an aspiration to acquire what is known as 'Standard English', or English as a Native Language, and native English teachers are held in high regard (Hall, 2011). Additionally, it has been observed that most textbooks continue to focus on the lives, lifestyles, and language varieties of native speakers (Hall, 2011: 214). This tendency arises

from critical concerns regarding how the English language might perpetuate practices of commodification, commercialisation, westernisation, and domination within higher education (Bruce and Bond, 2022: 28). Block and Cameron (2002: 21) also mention the idealisation of the native speaker as an individual who possesses flawless, innate knowledge of the language and culture, thereby being considered the ultimate English teacher. In certain locations, native English speakers are even recruited to teach the language without having relevant educational or linguistic qualifications (Singh and Han, 2008: 220).

GoV implemented the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project in 2008, which involved the invitation of native speakers to teach English in Vietnam and the provision of scholarships for Vietnamese teachers to study in English-speaking countries. Additionally, various curricula and textbooks are imported from English-speaking countries, along with the adoption of certain models and approaches. The consequences of this decision have a significant impact on the instruction of the English language. Textbooks that centre around English-speaking countries portray the positive aspects of their culture, which may attract and influence non-native students. It is problematic that students aspire to belong to communities that do not truly exist, resulting in frustration when confronted with this reality.

Regarding language varieties, the choice of which English variety to utilise in the classroom presents another challenge for teachers. In the expanding field of Global Englishes, non-native English-speaking countries are more influenced by standard varieties than native ones. Recently, there has been a contentious debate about the relevance of ELT curricula and criticism of the prevalence of native-speakerism (Rose, McKinley, and Galloway, 2021). In terms of methodology, the CLT and recently developed methods are widely regarded as the most effective approaches. This is because they allow students to use the language in a more authentic and realistic way through exposition and engaging in communicative activities. The role of the teacher in these methods is that of a facilitator, providing guidance to students by giving feedback and promoting autonomy. The development of the four language skills takes place in various contexts, with students engaging in collaborative group work to discuss different topics.

CLT, TBLT or TEIL were introduced in Asia, as alternatives to the 'outdated' grammar-translation method and teacher-centred approaches for teaching second/foreign languages. However, the adoption of these methods can be challenging for Asian teachers and students as the more interactive roles are fundamentally different from the traditional teacher-centred teaching and passive learning styles prevalent in Asian, specifically Vietnamese, educational contexts. A central debate in EFL education in Asia revolves around the suitability of these approaches for teaching English to Asian students, whose learning styles and strategies are assumed to differ from those in other developed Western countries. Traditionally, EFL teaching and learning styles in East Asia have predominantly emphasized a grammar-translation approach in conjunction with extensive rote memorization (Liu and Littlewood, 1997). Research has shown that the implementation of CLT has encountered several difficulties, including resistance from both learners and teachers, inadequate knowledge and skills among teachers, large class sizes, limited teaching materials and resources, the influence of grammar-based examinations, and cultural factors (Chang and Goswami, 2011; Chen, 2020; Doeur, 2022; Feng and Kim, 2023; Han, 2022; Hassan and Gao, 2021; Hiep, 2007; Huang, 2016; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Liao, 2000; Ngoc and Iwashita, 2012; Wong, 2012; Yoshihara et al., 2019).

In the Vietnamese educational context, which has drawn influences from neighbouring nations and has deep-rooted Confucian traditions, teacher-centredness and rote learning are highly valued. The so-called outdated grammar-translation method and other traditional, subject-based, teacher-centred pedagogical approaches have dominated language teaching in Vietnam, primarily due to the use of grammar-based textbooks and Confucian practices. Even in higher education, where English-language textbooks have been imported and communicative curricula have been introduced, the outdated methods still hold a favourable position. Recent research in Vietnam has provided evidence of teacher-dominated teaching practices that contradict the emphasis on student-centredness (Nguyen et al., 2016; Tran and Duong, 2015; Trinh, 2016; Vo, 2017).

The recent language teaching and learning reform in Vietnam aims to shift towards a learner-centred and communicative task-based approach in order to standardise students'

English communicative competences. However, this presents challenges not only for Vietnamese teachers but also for students. They must adapt to new classroom roles to effectively implement curricula based on the CEFR and communicative approaches. This, in my opinion, is one of the main obstacles to the successful implementation of the new English curriculum at the tertiary level. Further insights into the culture of language learning in Vietnamese higher education will be provided in section 4.3.3.

4.2 The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and CEFR-V

4.2.1 The CEFR and its implementation

It is essential to mention CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and its implications, as this research examines the CEFR-based English curriculum in the context of Vietnamese higher education. Over the past two decades, Europe has experienced a significant surge in ELT. The number of courses taught in English has increased by 1,000% since 2002, from a mere 700 English-taught undergraduate and MA programmes to more than 8,000 EMI programmes in 27 European member states (Wachter and Maiworm, 2014). This growth can be attributed to the expansion of European Union (EU) membership and internationalisation. The Council of Europe (2001) developed the CEFR, a framework aimed at establishing standards to be achieved at various stages of teaching and learning modern languages. Initially designed and primarily used in Europe to describe the accomplishments of learners of foreign languages, the CEFR has gradually gained adoption by many other governments worldwide, including Asian countries and Vietnam in particular. Its implications have been observed in the reform of national curricula. The CEFR has garnered significant interest from educators and individuals directly involved in language teaching and testing, providing a positive impetus to language education in Europe and beyond (Byram and Parmenter, 2012).

The basic theory of language in the CEFR uses the concept of 'plurilingualism', which emphasises the importance of 'communicative competence'. The main benefits of the framework include planning not only language learning curricula in terms of their purposes, goals, objectives, content, and assessment criteria, but also 'self-directed learning' (Council

of Europe, 2001: 6). The CEFR (ibid.: 9) has adopted an 'action-oriented approach' in which learners, as individuals and as social agents, develop a range of competences, both general and communicative language competences, in the fulfilment of a task. This forward-looking vision (Piccardo and North, 2019) of the CEFR has been further defined and articulated in the recent publication of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). The objectives of language teaching and learning are derived from the learner and their social needs, together with the tasks, activities, and processes that the learners have to go through in order to fulfil those needs.

The most frequently used components of the CEFR were the common reference levels of language proficiency, including the global scale, the self-assessment grid, and the scales of illustrative descriptors. The CEFR was found to be highly valuable and detailed in the design of curricula and syllabi, as well as in testing and assessment. However, it was considered less user-friendly and comprehensible to the majority of current teachers. Additionally, its philosophy of promoting plurilingualism was seen as promising but not easily applicable in real-life situations (see also Piccardo, North, and Goodier, 2019). Furthermore, the textbooks, courses, and examinations designed to align with the CEFR tended to be more impressionistic than systematic in nature. Lastly, implementing a standardised approach based on the CEFR proved to be challenging.

Another criticism is that the CEFR possess difficulties in applying it in language tests which also relates to how the links between language tests, examinations and the CEFR are justified (Figueras, 2007). Valax's study (2011), a survey of frontline professionals in France, the UK, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia, concluded that the CEFR promises considerably more in the area of language curriculum design than it is capable of delivering. Furthermore, Broek and Ende (2013: 10) emphasized 'general principles and measures to be implemented by authorities responsible for language education at national, regional and local level which includes creating conditions to provide an effective use of the CEFR'. Accordingly, the particular measures place emphasis on the convenient and consistent usage of the framework 'by taking the responsibility to facilitate and coordinate cooperation between all relevant stakeholders involved in language education' (ibid.: 10).

4.2.2 The CEFR-V in Vietnamese education

CEFR-V, the Vietnamese rendition of the CEFR, serves as an extensive legislative instrument for the standardization of English instruction. Its primary objective is to replace the prior three levels of competence (A, B, and C) within the Vietnamese educational framework (GoV, 2008). CEFR-V comprises three stages and six levels, which are similar to the CEFR, but are denoted with different names (see Table 4.1).

Stages	CEFR-V Levels	CEFR Levels
Elementary	Level 1	A1
	Level 2	A2
Intermediate	Level 3	B1
	Level 4	B2
Advanced	Level 5	C1
	Level 6	C2

Table 4.1: CEFR-V and CEFR Levels

This adoption is commonly acknowledged as a 'quick fix' approach aimed at reorganising the language teaching and learning system in Vietnam (Doan and Hamid, 2019). Its main objective is to improve the level of language proficiency among Vietnamese young learners, enabling them to successfully compete for employment opportunities in both global and local markets. The Vietnamese version of translation, with minimal alterations, serves as an essential reference for all stakeholders involved in language teaching and learning in Vietnam (Pham, 2017). The implementation of the CEFR will be further discussed in Chapter 6, which examines the implementation of the national policy.

Also, in 2016, the GoV issued the Vietnam National Qualification Framework, which includes a recommendation for different target levels of English competency for students. As evident from the data presented in Table 4.2, non-English major university students will attain a proficiency level of B1 (Level 3) in English, whereas EMI university students are expected to achieve a proficiency level of B2 (Level 4) upon completion of their studies.

Education Level	CEFR-V	CEFR
Primary Graduates (Year 5)	Level 1	A1
Lower Secondary (Year 9) and Vocational College Graduates	Level 2	A2
Upper Secondary School Graduates (Year 12)	Level 3	B1
Non-English Major University Graduates and Master Graduates	Level 3	B1
English Major College Graduates, EMI Graduates, and PhD Graduates	Level 4	B2
English Major University Graduates	Level 5	C1

Table 4.2: The Target English Proficiency Level

4.3 Education in Vietnam

4.3.1. A brief history of curriculum development

This section provides an introduction to the history of curriculum development and highlights some of the achievements in Vietnamese education since 1986. This marks the beginning of the Vietnamese Communist Party's economic reforms and the implementation of the open-door policy, known as 'Doi Moi.' These reforms have led to significant economic growth and integration into the global economy. The general education system in Vietnam has achieved notable success, with improvements in education quality to a certain extent (General Secretary, 2013)¹². According to the World Bank Report 2018, Vietnam is among the two East Asia-Pacific countries that have made impressive developments in their education systems. Additionally, Vietnam's PISA¹³ results for 15-year-old students have been highly positive, comparable to those of developed countries such as Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea (OECD, 2016). However, the 2013 resolution also highlighted several weaknesses in Vietnamese general education, such as lower-than-expected quality and effectiveness, lack of continuity between education levels and methods, theoretical rather than practical education, and

¹² Resolution No. 29/2013-NQ/TW of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam outlines efforts to improve literacy rates, expand teacher preparation and education, and make education more accessible (regardless of ethnicity or gender).

¹³ In 2012 Vietnam joined the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

outdated and imprecise methods of education, testing, and assessment (General Secretary, 2013). To address these issues, the future of Vietnamese education should focus on valuing learners' capacities and personal qualities (ibid.). Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive reform of the general education programmes to develop learners' qualities and competences (Nguyen, 2017). According to Resolution No. 88,

reform of the general education curriculum and textbooks should make radical and comprehensive changes in the quality and effectiveness of general education, combining teaching knowledge, teaching people, and orienting careers. It should contribute to transforming the education system from a knowledge-oriented one to a comprehensive education system with the goal of developing learners' qualities and competences, promoting harmony of mind and body, and maximising the potential of each student (Congress XIII, 2014).

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Vietnamese education is facing challenges and negative effects. Recent research findings indicate the need to create a learning environment that encourages students to develop both physically and mentally in harmony. This will help students become active and confident learners who engage in career-oriented and lifelong learning (Nguyen, 2017). The GoV (2017) advocates changing the policies, content, and methods of education and vocational training to generate human resources that can follow new technological production trends. This includes a focus on promoting training in STEM¹⁴, foreign languages, and universal information technology (GoV, 2017). Specifically, educational objectives must pay attention to building 'basic skills and knowledge, creative thinking, and adaptability to the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution' (GoV, 2017). These directives have important implications for the need to continually improve and develop the education system in order to meet these challenges.

In higher education, Vietnam has undergone various reforms over the past two decades. In 2005, the GoV introduced a resolution on the Higher Education Reform Agenda for 2006-

¹⁴Four specific disciplines, namely, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are collectively shortened as STEM.

2020, which aimed to address challenges related to educational network and expansion, academic personnel and teaching methodologies, quality assurance, and management mechanisms. One of the key strategies identified for the advancement of higher education was the adoption of materials and curricula from foreign countries in 'advanced programmes' (Nguyen and Tran, 2018). To implement this agenda, Decision 121 was issued in 2007 to plan the establishment of universities and colleges. Subsequently, the significant policy reform came in the form of the 2012 Law of Higher Education, followed by Decision 37 in 2013, which made revisions to Decision 121 in order to align with the goals and targets set to 'promote national unity and strengthen the economy' (Ngo and Tran, 2023:55). However, many of these goals are not anticipated to be achieved by 2020. In 2018, the GoV passed a revised Higher Education Law to update the 2012 Law, with the aim of creating a more adaptable governance structure and granting greater managerial autonomy to HEIs, particularly top-tier universities capable of self-financing. In 2019, the GoV issued Decision (69/QD-TTg), approving the Programme on Quality Improvement for Higher Education for the period of 2019-2025. This programme encompasses five main principles and strategic directions¹⁵.

Curriculum development continues to follow a content-based approach, which has resulted in inadequately structured training programmes. These programmes have a strong emphasis on theoretical knowledge and insufficient attention to developing the generic skills that employees need to excel in the digital economy era. Since 2006, the adoption of the credit-based system¹⁶ has aimed to establish a student learning outcomes-based system¹⁷ that sets minimum knowledge and competencies required at the undergraduate and postgraduate

¹⁵ The five main principles and strategic directions outlined in the Programme on Quality Improvement for Higher Education for 2019-2025 are as follows: (a) ensuring government plays a stewardship role and establishes a supportive regulatory framework for the development of higher education; (b) enhancing diversification of income sources and maximising the efficient utilisation of resources; (c) promoting internationalisation and fostering stronger engagement with employers; (d) ensuring equity and competition among HEIs; and (e) strengthening quality assurance (QA) by making QA conditions and information accessible and transparent to learners and the community for informed oversight. (Prime Minister's Decision 69/QD-TTg, issued in 2019).

¹⁶ Vietnam's credit system is based on student learning, following the European model. In a standard academic semester, students are required to complete at least 14 credits, which are further divided into smaller modules.

¹⁷ MOET Circular No. 07/2015/TT-BGDDT

levels. Subject-specific learning outcomes¹⁸ are among the recent curricular reforms in higher education. While a few HEIs have implemented innovative pedagogical practices, lecturing remains the dominant method of teaching and learning. The traditional teacher-led model, where lecturers verbally deliver the material while students take notes, places more emphasis on lecturing than on student learning and skills development; although some Vietnamese HEIs and their faculty have introduced innovative teaching and learning activities, such as student presentations, group discussions, active learning, experiential learning, and blended learning, these practices remain rare.

4.3.2 Internationalisation through English communication

There has been a significant demand for English and other foreign languages in Vietnam since the implementation of the open-door policy in 1986. This can be attributed to Vietnam's efforts to enhance economic and political relationships with Asian countries and the rest of the world. The need for English became even more urgent after Vietnam's participation in regional and international organisations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995, the World Trade Organisation in 2007, and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015. As a result, English has become the cornerstone of the national language policy and is the most popular foreign language taught in schools, universities, and language centres across the country. It is a compulsory subject not only at the general education level but also for undergraduate and graduate students in tertiary education. However, the rapid process of internationalisation, a strategic step taken by the government to keep up with regional and international developments, has posed challenges in enhancing the existing, admittedly low standards in English teaching and use.

As a result, intercultural communicative competence has been recognised as a crucial component of EFL teaching and learning in the government planning document (GoV, 2008). This recognition has led to the need for changes in curricula, courses, methodology, and materials to effectively meet the demands placed on English education in Vietnam. International cooperation in education has been considered a key element in educational

¹⁸ Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) (Decree No. 1982/QĐ-TTg 2016).

reform, particularly since the implementation of the Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020 (GoV, 2012). This policy has facilitated transnational partnerships, programmes, and educational models with foreign countries in Vietnamese universities (Ngo and Tran, 2023). As of 31st December 2021, there were a total of 408 joint training programmes, of which 222 programmes received approval from MOET (2022). These programmes were undertaken in collaboration between 85 Vietnamese higher education institutions and universities from 26 different countries. Notably, the United Kingdom emerged as the leading country, offering a total of 101 joint training programmes. Consequently, Vietnam has become more open to borrowing different models or approaches from Western contexts, which have significantly different values and learning cultures compared to Vietnam's.

It is also important to mention the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an intergovernmental organisation consisting of ten Southeast Asian countries, in this research because of its significant impact on English teaching and learning in Vietnam. ASEAN has recognised English as its sole official working language or lingua franca in communication (Kirkpatrick, 2007) due to the need for modernisation and international communication. English is now being introduced as a compulsory subject in the primary curriculum in all ten ASEAN countries, with the exception of Indonesia. Experiences from ASEAN countries such as Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia have shown that the most effective way to improve English quality in HEIs is to create bilingual environments in which English is the medium of instruction for science and technology (Vu and Burns, 2014, Ngo and Tran 2023).

The GoV has emphasised the goal of improving learners' ability to communicate in multicultural and multilingual educational and professional settings (GoV, 2008). Recent developments in ELT in Vietnamese universities are shifting the focus towards English as a soft skill that is essential for communication, study, and employability. Project 2020 aims to assist Vietnamese graduates in becoming proficient in at least one foreign language, primarily English (GoV, 2008). It emphasises that the desired minimum level of English proficiency is level 3 in the CEFR-V or B1 for non-English majors, and level 5 or C1 for English majors. Moreover, the GoV has encouraged key tertiary institutions, and ultimately all HEIs,

to adopt English as the language of instruction in 'advanced programmes'. By 2020, this should account for 20% of intensive training programmes (GoV, 2008). Additionally, tertiary institutions have been urged to teach fundamental science subjects, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and some specialised subjects, in English during the senior years. Universities have been granted more autonomy to revise their English curriculum in order to enhance their graduates' English proficiency for effective multilingual and multicultural communication, aligning with the needs of society and the business community.

4.3.3 English teaching and learning in higher education and challenges

The current state of English teaching and learning in Vietnamese institutions will be discussed in this section, focusing on teaching practices that aim to enhance students' communicative competence in a multilingual and multicultural context. In Vietnamese higher education, English is introduced on a national level in the form of a discipline, EMI, and as a subject. In the first category, students study English as a main discipline, either in English linguistics or ELT methodology, which prepares them for careers as teachers, translators, interpreters, or researchers. The second category requires English to be the language of instruction, while in the third category, English is a compulsory subject. In general education, the textbooks used prior to Project 2020 were primarily grammar-based, with the belief that grammar can be systematically taught as a set of rules to be mastered and applied by learners. As a result, EFL teachers in Vietnam have placed more emphasis on introducing grammatical structures, vocabulary items, and developing the four language skills. Traditional pedagogical approaches, such as grammar-translation methods and teacher-centred practices, have long been dominant in the classroom. Communicative activities and productive learning environments have been scarce, as the designed activities primarily focus on improving students' linguistic competence. Consequently, despite several years of schooling, students' English proficiency remains remarkably low. These textbooks and traditional approaches have proven inadequate when considering the new philosophy of foreign language teaching, which leans towards a learner-centred pedagogy with the teacher serving as a facilitator who provides creative contexts for language learning. In addition to the extensive period of English learning in general education (ranging from seven to ten years), tertiary students are also required to take English courses, earn a

specific number of credits, and obtain an English certificate to fulfil the graduation requirement. In higher education, textbooks predominantly imported from England or America have been widely adopted in recent decades. However, Vietnamese EFL instruction appears to primarily focus on providing students with linguistic knowledge (Tran and Dang, 2014), rather than enabling them to use that knowledge in a local context. Learning activities are often limited to the classroom (Nguyen, 2007), and the instruction is characterised as 'examination-oriented.' Written grammar-based exams have posed challenges for language teachers, hindering them from implementing communicative practices. Many students' main objective in learning English is to achieve high scores in exams or obtain certificates. Consequently, their spoken English proficiency remains unsatisfactory, despite the integration of all four language skills in textbooks and the recommendation of a communicative approach in the syllabus.

To promote the spread of English and improve the quality of English teaching and learning in Vietnam, the Vietnamese Prime Minister issued a Decision in 2008 approving the 10-year National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Education System from 2008 to 2020. The National Foreign Languages 2020 Project was established to implement this policy and has been recognised as the national language teaching and learning reform, focusing on developing and refining the 10-year foreign language curriculum for general education and intensive foreign language programmes for vocational schools, colleges, and universities. In terms of English standards, Project 2020 explicitly adopts the 6-level testing system developed by the CEFR (see 4.2) as the standard for assessing the quality of English learning in Vietnam and encourages Vietnamese educational institutions to actively develop and implement bilingual programmes. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) released a circular on a unified language proficiency framework (KNLNN or CEFR-V), which is aligned with the CEFR's six levels of proficiency and recognised as the Vietnamese version of the CEFR. The Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) (MOET, 2015) was also developed based on this six-level framework for test-takers throughout the national education system. Nguyen and Hamid (2020: 10) describe this practice of borrowing as an example of 'the long-established tradition of borrowing foreign models for domestic purposes in Vietnam.' The nation has witnessed significant efforts to support this goal, such as rewriting textbooks, restructuring

undergraduate programmes, and standardising the curriculum for English-medium courses (Bui and Nguyen, 2016). Many curricula and syllabi have been designed, approved, and implemented after more than a decade of project implementation. However, on 16 November 2016, the MOET announced that 'the government had failed to achieve the goals of the national foreign language scheme for the 2008-2020 period' (MOET, 2016). Consequently, a new phase, 2017-2025, of the 2020 Project was launched by the GoV in late December 2017. The policy's rationale, design, technologies, and implementation will be discussed in detail in section 6.1.

This political decision for Project 2020 has led to the top-down imposition of a new curriculum that promotes learner-centred, communicative task-based teaching, specifically targeting English communicative competence. The education system for schools is described as being centrally managed, with a newly developed curriculum, while higher education institutions (HEIs) have been granted more autonomy to create their own English curriculum that best suits their students and circumstances, in order to meet their immediate needs and long-term objectives. However, there are challenges in initiating and translating the language policy into institutional curriculum plans. Determining what and how to teach has become one of the most difficult issues in Vietnamese higher education, as each institution is responsible for finding their own answers. This may lead to diversity due to different perspectives, but also to chaos (Hoang, 2010). ELT in Vietnam is facing a number of challenges, including a shortage of competent English teachers, inadequate teaching methodologies, subpar materials, underperforming students (MOET, 2019), and inconsistent learning and teaching practices.

EMI and CEFR were selected as an innovative approach to enhance English proficiency and internationalise higher education in Vietnam, without the development of context-appropriate quality assurance systems (Mohamad Uri and Abd Aziz, 2018; Tran and Nguyen, 2018). As a result, the EMI strategy and Western CEFR standard appear to have shifted Vietnam from existing challenges to unforeseen and complex issues, commonly referred to as 'macro-(governmental), meso-(institutional), and micro-(classroom) level issues' (Nguyen et al, 2017:37). The implementation of EMI in Vietnamese higher education has been evaluated as unsatisfactory and 'unlikely to be feasible in the current Vietnam context' (Le,

2012). EMI programmes, which involve teaching discipline-specific content in English, have been mandated in several universities as part of the government's National Foreign Languages 2020 project and Higher Education Reform Agenda. However, the policy on EMI is implemented and regulated in an ad hoc manner, posing challenges for institutions in adapting programmes designed in Anglophone countries to local requirements. In this new, or what Galloway and Rose refer to as 'emerging' EMI context, classroom educators face a range of challenges (Pham et al., 2023) such as increased preparation burdens, limited resources, pedagogical issues, and the constraints of their own English language proficiency as well as that of their students. Sahan et al. (2022) highlight the need for further research to guide bottom-up policy implementation, consultation with key stakeholders on EMI policy implementation, and exploration of the suitability of 'English-only' approaches to EMI, along with raising awareness of Global Englishes and translanguaging practices. Given the concerns in the previous studies about students' limited language proficiency and its consequential effects on the achievement of EMI courses (Pham and Barnett, 2022; Vu and Burns, 2014), there exists a significant gap in the research concerning the implementation of EAP preparation courses within EMI programmes and their efficacy in equipping students for content study in English. Additionally, in relation to other ELT curricula in higher education, there remains a deficiency of studies that offer critical insights into how language policies are operationalised within institutional contexts by administrators and translated into the curriculum by practitioners in the classroom, thereby involving both teachers and students as essential participants. Additionally, there is a need for a productive English curriculum model in Vietnamese higher education, not only for EAP in EMI programmes but also for compulsory ELT courses, as many institutions have struggled with rewriting textbooks, restructuring undergraduate English programmes, and establishing standardised or effective curricula to enhance students' English proficiency.

Vietnam has placed a high priority on foreign language education, particularly English, by implementing various policies aimed at improving the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the national education system (MOET, 2014: 1). Additionally, educational institutions have received feedback from partnering entrepreneurs and the wider society, indicating that students possess strong professional knowledge but lack adequate work skills and proficiency in foreign languages (Tran and Marginson, 2018; Ngo and Tran, 2023).

According to the World Bank's survey data (2019), approximately 60 per cent of firms reported difficulties in recruiting employees with foreign language skills. Many students have missed out on employment opportunities not due to their professional competence, but because of limited proficiency in foreign language communication. This further highlights the discrepancy between the ELT curricula and the current globalised society's use of English.

In terms of application, the new English language curriculum at the undergraduate level in public institutions in Vietnam represents a significant change in language teaching and learning principles, as mentioned in the introduction. This change raises several issues. Firstly, teachers are required to quickly adopt and implement new curricula, often from Western sources, and new teaching practices, despite many of them being unprepared. Secondly, the top-down implementation of this change without a thorough needs analysis is concerning. It was assumed that all teachers would see the benefits of the change and readily implement it, without considering the realities in the classrooms. Lastly, little attention was given to the role of teachers' beliefs and perceptions, which can greatly influence the success or failure of curriculum change.

Recent research on Vietnam's English education has reported various contextual and pedagogical challenges (Albright, 2019; Bui and Nguyen, 2016; Grassick, 2019; Le and Barnard, 2019; Le et al., 2017; Ngo, 2019; Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2019; Ngo and Tran, 2023). In terms of context, challenges such as large class sizes, mixed-level classes, heavy teaching workloads, limited class time, a gap between policy goals and implementation, outdated textbooks, lack of learning facilities and reference materials, traditional teaching approaches focused on examinations, inadequate English practice environment, and low levels of learner motivation have been identified. This research study prioritises issues in teaching and learning English and the consequences of adopting models and approaches, considering the role of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as both catalysts and outcomes of internationalisation in the Vietnamese higher education context.

4.3.4 The institutional contexts

The selected institutions in Vietnamese higher education serve as prominent representatives of the two directions of English teaching in higher education in Vietnam: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programme, and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Both institutions are public universities located in the northern region of Vietnam. They adhere to the regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) regarding programmes, qualifications, and various teaching and learning activities. Figure 4.1 displays the locations of these two institutions within the national education system, as well as their member universities and faculties, which were involved in the research which I conducted. These two English education contexts provide suitable case studies to explore the ways in which English education can contribute to the success of an EMI programme and enhance the employability of graduates.

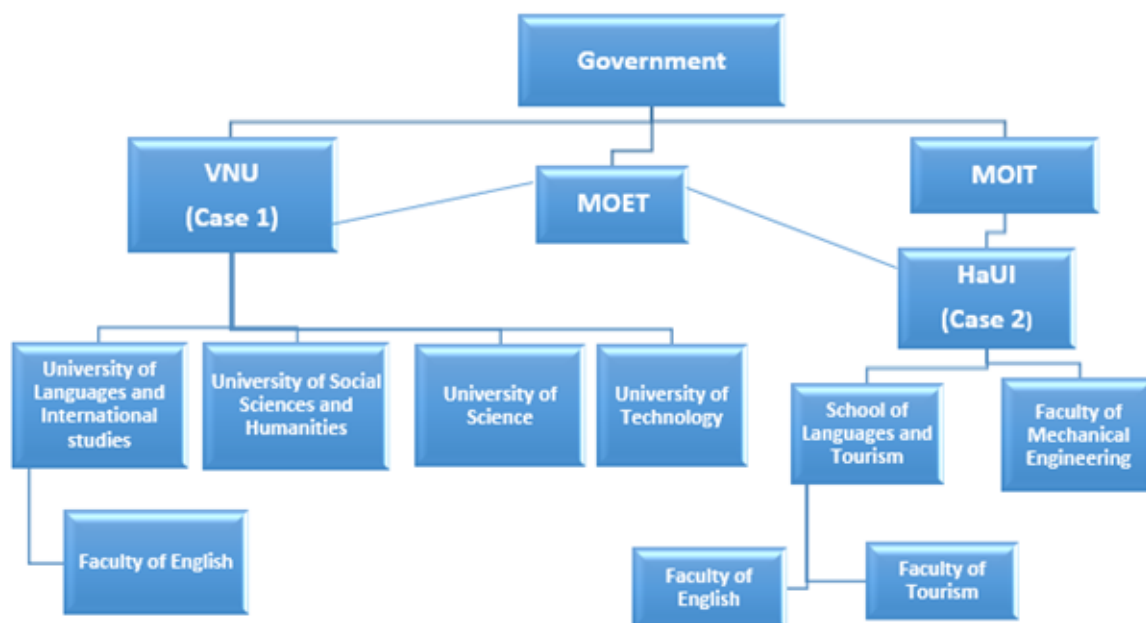


Figure 4.1: Simplified Structure of Case 1 and 2 in Vietnamese Higher Education

4.3.4.1 Background information about VNU and the university language teaching reform

The first case, officially established in 1993 in Hanoi through the merger of three well-established public universities, is a government-funded institution. Presently, it comprises

ten member universities and faculties, enrolling approximately fifty thousand students (VNU, 2023). As one of the two national universities, the President of this institution is responsible for directly reporting its activities to the Prime Minister. Consequently, it is considered one of the key higher education institutions chosen to implement 'advanced programmes' that utilise English as the medium of instruction. These programmes were initially funded by the government starting in 2011 but have been operating without funding since 2016. Furthermore, the university has been designated as one of the six test centres for English testing through VSTEP as part of the implementation of Project 2020. Additionally, several English teachers from this institution have been chosen as trainers in the teacher training programmes, aimed at enhancing language proficiency and teaching methodologies for educators across the country during the initial phases of Project 2020.

Since the establishment of VNU, each member university has established its own language department to implement a distinct English curriculum, catering to both language and non-language major students. The curriculum for non-English major students typically includes general courses, followed by discipline-specific English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. This approach is tailored to meet the needs of students according to their majors, with the aim of developing both reading and translation skills to comprehend specialised materials. In 2008, in line with the Vietnamese government's new national language policy, VNU, as a leading institution, initiated its inaugural English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programme. This programme was part of a project to develop and implement undergraduate degree programmes of international standards (VNU, 2009b). The EMI programme was developed based on existing prioritised programmes, which were previously referred to by various names such as the Advanced Programme, Strategic Programme, and Talent Programme. These programmes were consolidated into a single programme known as the International Standard Programme (ISP) (VNU, 2009a, 2011), with EMI serving as the umbrella term for all English-instructed undergraduate programmes.

In 2009, significant changes were implemented in the English language curriculum and university structure due to the new national language policy (Project 2020). This policy led to the relocation of all language departments to ULIS, which took on the responsibility of foreign language instruction at VNU. Specifically, the Faculty of English was tasked with

managing and offering English courses to non-English major students at all levels. The Faculty of English Language Education focused on training pre-service English teachers, while the Faculty of Culture and Linguistics provided training for interpreters.

Aside from the structural changes, several methodological changes were introduced to the English curriculum. These changes included the adoption of the CEFR as the standard for all language courses. Additionally, a five-course curriculum, based on the CEFR, was implemented for all non-English major students. Furthermore, the responsibility for teaching ESP courses was transferred to content lecturers in their respective disciplines. Moreover, new EMI programmes (ISP), were established at member universities. These changes aligned with the national initiative, which will be further discussed in section 6.1. In this case, the focus is on EAP preparation courses in EMI programmes. The data were collected from a group of EAP teachers and students.

4.3.4.2 Background information about HaUI and the university curriculum reform

The second case study pertains to Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI), a specialised institution renowned for its scientific programmes. Established in 1893 and backed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, HaUI places a strong emphasis on applied scientific research and education, boasting an enrolment of over thirty thousand students (HaUI, 2024). It stands as one of Vietnam's foremost universities dedicated to practical learning, offering an extensive array of disciplines, educational approaches, and academic levels. To fulfil the requirements for graduation, students in this institution are mandated to complete English language courses, accumulate a specific number of credits, and obtain an EOP B1 certification.

In 2011, a top-down policy from MOET was issued to universities to enhance students' English communication skills and improve the quality of language teaching and learning. This has led to a revolution in language teaching and learning, which is now established as a strategic goal. Consequently, administrators are concerned about how to change policies and perceptions, from staff training to curriculum implementation and arrangements for English classes. The biggest concern in this university is how to find solutions and focus on

them to improve the quality of language teaching and learning. In response to the national language revolution and the need for a new curriculum that emphasises competency-based skills required by the labour market, a series of language policies have been issued at the institutional level. These policies are based on the institutional context, situations, and goals, aiming to meet the needs of students, entrepreneurs, and society.

Since 2012, HaUI has implemented multiple language projects different from the current one, aiming to meet the needs of entrepreneurs and institutional leaders in enhancing students' English proficiency. Initially, the institution collaborated with various foreign companies for an online English teaching programme, establishing blended learning courses. Consequently, the university relied entirely on this enterprise for online programmes that were incompatible with imported textbooks and not tailored to the institution's students and teachers. A solution to this problem was found through collaboration with a Vietnamese company, which designed an online programme supported by institutional teachers. Similar issues arose in other countries' innovations due to 'inadequate conditions in the university and for the preparation of teachers in the implementation of the policy' (Scott, 2018: 32). In 2015, HaUI implemented a curriculum reform, introducing a new version of the blended learning English programme. The return of doctoral teachers from abroad, with research projects related to blended learning, language assessment, and the application of information technology in foreign language teaching and learning, motivated the institution to develop its own blended learning programme. This new curriculum emphasised the use of language for communication purposes, derived from the social context. The objectives focused on 'doing with the language' rather than 'learning about the language' and emphasised performance. English was taught as a compulsory subject alongside other subjects at the university, with the course duration determined by the university administration. To enhance students' English proficiency and their ability to use English confidently in their future careers, a formal needs analysis was conducted to investigate the needs of students, entrepreneurs, and teachers before designing the new programme. Consequently, a new CEFR-based EOP curriculum, focusing on competency-based language teaching, was designed and implemented over six terms at the university.

4.4 Education in the UK

4.4.1 History of curriculum development

In recent decades, the education system in England has undergone significant reforms and changes related to standardisation, regulation, and auditing. During this period, there has been a decline in the social status of teachers, but a growing recognition of their crucial role in ensuring educational quality (Scott, 2016: 131). In England, there was an increasing discourse around the idea of a common or core curriculum in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1987, the Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, introduced the first version of a legally mandated national curriculum in England and Wales. This curriculum required schools to primarily teach centrally prescribed subject-specific content (Halpin, 2010: 258). The implementation of this curriculum, under the Thatcher Government following the Education Reform Act 1988, aimed to address issues of equal opportunities. Its goal was to ensure that all students, regardless of gender, ethnic background, or geographical location, have access to a similarly robust and relevant curriculum and study programmes (DES¹⁹, 1987: 4).

Meanwhile, the implementation of a national curriculum in Northern Ireland took place in 1992. In Scotland, a framework known as the Curriculum for Excellence was introduced in 2010, providing teachers with guidance on the content to be covered. Following the introduction of the national curriculum in England, the Labour Government introduced the National Literacy Strategies in 1998 and the National Numeracy Strategies in 1999. These initiatives aimed to establish national objectives and standards in the curriculum (Scott, 2016: 131). Currently, the national curriculum in England is structured into four key stages and encompasses core subjects along with other foundation subjects as prescribed in Sections 84 and 85 of the Education Act 2002.

¹⁹ DES: Department of Education and Science

There are various subjects taught at different stages of education, such as mathematics, sciences, English, physical education, and computing, which are included in the curriculum at all levels. Maintained schools in England are required to adhere to the national curriculum, while schools in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales follow their own respective curricula. The concept of 'Core Knowledge', introduced by E.D. Hirsch, was enthusiastically embraced in England during the national curriculum reforms of 2014, particularly by numerous free schools and academy chains. These reforms aimed to emulate the successful education systems of countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, the Canadian province of Alberta, and the American state of Massachusetts in international assessments. The government argued that the new curriculum does not dictate 'how to teach', but rather focuses on 'the essential knowledge and skills every child should have', allowing teachers the freedom to tailor the curriculum to meet their students' needs. The goal was to incorporate the best practices from both international and domestic schools, enabling students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for success in the real world. As Gibb (2015: 14) notes, Hirsch's advocacy for a 'knowledge-rich curriculum' had a significant impact on shaping the current National Curriculum. In summary, the English education system has undergone significant changes in recent decades due to successive governments' assessment-driven reform processes, resulting in 'revaluations and devaluations of educational standards for schools, teachers, and students' (Scott, 2016: 132).

4.4.2 The context of English language teaching and learning

The United Kingdom is undoubtedly a linguistically diverse nation, with a multitude of languages spoken within its borders. This rich linguistic diversity is evident in schools, where an increasing number of pupils speak languages other than English as their first language. English remains the primary language for 91.1% of UK residents, although this percentage has decreased since 2011 (Office for National Statistics 2021). The remaining 8.9% use English as a lingua franca within migrant communities or do not speak English at all.

Official statistics indicate a significant rise over the past two decades in the number of pupils classified as English as an Additional Language (EAL). In the academic year 2022/23, approximately 20.2% of all pupils in English schools did not have English as their first language

(UK DfE, 2023), compared with 18 percent in 2015/16. It is important to note that EAL is not a measure of proficiency. Many of the 20.2% who speak a different language as their main language are proficient in English, while others have limited or no proficiency in the language. Due to the lack of a specific EAL curriculum, support for EAL students is often integrated into the regular delivery of all subjects. Teachers also consider the individual needs of these students and may offer additional support through one-to-one or small group tuition.

Other areas of English language teaching in the UK encompass the instruction of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in private language schools, the provision of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in universities, and the delivery of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in government-funded programmes. The teaching of EFL, EAL, and ESOL in the UK promotes the utilisation of British English. Within the EFL teaching domain, the majority of students comprise young adults from diverse locations worldwide, who arrive in the UK to participate in short, intensive courses. Additionally, there is a greater influx of young learners during the summer months. Conventionally, junior students outnumbered adult learners. Nonetheless, in a continuous reversal of the pre-pandemic pattern, individuals below the age of 18 constituted only 9% of the student population (English UK, 2022). Prior to the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, English UK reported an annual influx of approximately 500,000 international students arriving in the UK to study English (English UK, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). However, these overall statistics experienced a sharp decline throughout 2020 and 2021 as a consequence of Covid-19, with an 83.6% reduction in the number of English language students in 2020 and an additional 35.7% decrease in 2021 (English UK, 2022).

In the field of EAP, there are over 100²⁰ institutions, primarily located in the UK, that have EAP units (as stated on BALEAP²¹'s website). EAP not only serves as a part of the support system for international students but also contributes to the marketing strategies of institutions in their competition for international students. This language support module is

²⁰ This figure does not include non-member universities of BALEAP.

²¹ BALEAP, The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, is a global vibrant community of EAP professionals with many different areas of activity.

often provided at an additional cost, thus contributing to the overall commercialisation of higher education. However, the employment situation for EAP teaching staff is highly unstable in a significant number of institutions. The immediate future seems uncertain for them, as they are often employed on an hourly basis, zero hours contracts, or fixed-term contracts. It is highly likely that the size of the EAP sector will decrease in the upcoming years due to the increasing level of job insecurity across the sector, while private providers strive to gain a larger share of the market (Bruce and Bond, 2022: 167).

The other area of English language teaching, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), receives funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). This area focuses on English language learning for adult migrants, who require English skills for daily communication. ESOL, which first implemented a national Adult ESOL core curriculum in 2001, is primarily offered by further education colleges and independent training providers as part of Skills for Life courses (Foster and Bolton, 2017: 6). ESOL funding has declined over the past decade, and the participation rate in ESOL courses has followed a similar downward trend. The number of participants dropped from nearly 180,000 in 2009-10 to just over 100,000 in 2015-16 (ibid.: 7-8).

4.4.3 The EAP curriculum in UK higher education

EAP has become an important result of internationalisation, which involves creating support systems to prepare students for pursuing an English-taught degree (Ding and Bruce, 2017). In the UK, EAP typically takes the form of an English module that is commonly taken during pre-sessional courses, the International Foundation Year, or alongside a university course. This module aims to assist both UK-based and international students who are planning to study or are already studying at university in transitioning to using academic English in educational settings. In the UK, tertiary-level EAP courses are classified into pre-sessional, in-sessional, and Foundation programs. Firstly, pre-sessional provision is mainly offered to students who have not met the required English language proficiency standard for entry into their prospective degree program, typically those with IELTS scores of approximately 5 or 5.5, or even lower. Many students from various countries may need to enhance their English skills and familiarize themselves with studying at university before commencing their

studies in the UK. Pre-sessional English (PSE) courses are designed specifically to prepare international students for their university studies. Many UK universities offer courses accredited by BALEAP, an organization that establishes stringent standards to ensure the quality of PSE courses in academic English and study skills for non-native speakers. In other cases, universities develop their own programs and assessments. The second form of EAP is International Foundation Programs (IFPs), which are year-long preparatory pathways for international students who wish to pursue undergraduate degrees in the UK.

PSE courses and IFPs are the most prevalent EAP programmes in which students pay high fees. These courses can be offered either independently by an EAP unit or, more commonly, in partnership with a specific school or organisation, and are contingent upon successful completion of the programme. Qualified instructors assist these students in developing the English language and academic skills necessary for pursuing a degree at the tertiary level. The objectives of these courses are to enhance students' English language skills to meet the language requirements, enabling them to feel more confident in their English proficiency and actively engage in their chosen university programme. These full-time English programmes also cultivate strategies and study skills essential for success in higher education in the UK. Additionally, these courses foster students' independence as learners, a crucial skill for studying at British universities. More specifically, they provide students with opportunities to acquaint themselves with the university's facilities, resources, and the surrounding area, facilitating their adjustment to the new environment and facilitating interaction with other students.

Within its significant role as a support provision for developing students' readiness and proficiency in using English in academic settings (Hadley, 2015), there exists a set of English standards or skills that students are expected to attain. The English language proficiency standards necessary for admission into degree programmes are outlined by nearly all UK higher education institutions (HEIs) in relation to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Hyatt, 2012). Candidates in PSE courses and IFPs generally need to successfully complete their respective courses in order to secure progression to their degree studies. In certain UK HEIs, this is achieved through an external examination such as IELTS; in many others, there is an internal examination that approximates the required IELTS

proficiency level, and in some cases, there is an assessment of activities designed to mirror academic assignments. Given the high stakes attached to the outcome of PSE courses and IFPs, these assessments are often referred to as high-stakes evaluations (Hyatt, 2012; Hyland, 2009). In such circumstances, the provider of PSE courses and IFPs may assume the role of a gatekeeper, responsible for determining which candidates may proceed and which must defer. An alternative to the high-stakes proficiency test is an assessment approach focused on learning, which requires students to demonstrate their achievement of course learning outcomes through the completion of assignments and tasks during the programme. There appears to be a misalignment between the IELTS score recommended for degree-level study and the IELTS score required to obtain a student visa for the purpose of pursuing a degree. A recent survey of institutions' entry requirements (Simpson, 2022) discovered that the majority of institutions' pre-sessional provisions are largely similar in terms of programme length and level, as summarised in Table 4.3.

Pre-sessional programme durations (sample n=15)		
Course duration	IELTS deficit allowed	Number of institutions
5 or 6 weeks	½ a band	13
10 weeks	1 band	1
10 or 11 weeks	1 band	9
No programme	n/a	1

Table 4.3 Pre-sessional Programme Durations (Simpson, 2022)

The final type of EAP programmes in the UK are in-sessional EAP courses, typically known as free EAP classes or assistance provided by university English language centres or writing resource centres. These English courses or support services are frequently available throughout students' degree programmes and do not involve any form of evaluation.

4.4.4 The institutional Context

My Research Case 3, as an additional case study, examines the implementation of the EAP curriculum, that is pre-sessional courses offered to international students in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The selected university for this study boasts a rich history of almost two centuries of providing courses and is widely recognised for its commitment to high-quality teaching and a student-centred approach. Within this institution, various EAP courses are offered to international students, tailored to their individual IELTS scores. Importantly, it should be noted that these courses are not credited towards a degree programme.

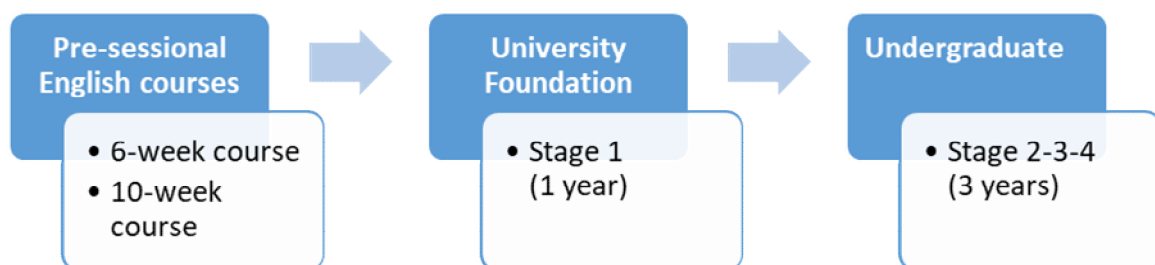


Figure 4.2: Undergraduate Pathway

PSE courses cater to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, offering international pathway programmes that aim to equip them for further studies in undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees at this university.

The institution has recently undergone a reconfiguration in response to the inefficient execution of the EAP curriculum in recent years. As noted by Scott (2018: 33), altering a university curriculum invariably involves modifying the existing status quo. In light of this, experienced EAP instructors have been recruited to revamp the EAP curriculum to better suit the needs of the present students and institutional environment. This case study will analyse the implementation of pre-sessional courses provided to a select group of international students.

Pre-sessional Course duration	IELTS requirement for PSE course (Upon students' course requirement)		
	IELTS 6.0 overall (No less than 5.5 in any section)	IELTS 6.5 overall (No less than 6.0 in any section)	IELTS 7.0 overall (No less than 6.5 in any section)
10-week course	IELTS 5.0 overall (No less than 4.5 in any section)	IELTS 5.5 overall (No less than 5.0 in any section)	IELTS 6.0 overall (No less than 5.5 in any section)
6-week course	IELTS 5.5 overall (No less than 5.0 in any section)	IELTS 6.0 overall (No less than 5.5 in any section)	IELTS 6.5 overall (No less than 6.0 in any section)

Table 4.4: Pre-sessional English Courses

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter situates the research within the social, political, and educational contexts of the UK and Vietnam. It emphasises the significance of the context in relation to Vietnam's development and its people, specifically in terms of the English language. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction is proposed as a crucial strategy for higher education reform in Vietnam. Furthermore, the proliferation of English is supported by top-down policies. There is an urgent need to examine the implementation of language policy in Vietnamese higher education and a desire for a globally oriented teaching and learning framework. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the implementation of the national language policy in two state universities in Vietnam and the curriculum implementation in one state university in the UK. The study will involve various stakeholders and analyse diverse data sources using a mixed-method approach, which will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. Additionally, the methodological and theoretical foundations of this study will also be discussed. To ensure anonymity, all names, including those of institutions and participants, will be replaced with pseudonyms.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGICAL and ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter provides details about the institutions visited, the selection criteria for participants, and their profiles. Additionally, it explains the reasons for selecting the sample population, the educational establishments, and the study environments. The chapter elucidates the construction, piloting, revision, and distribution of questionnaires, interviews, and observations, along with the actual data collection and analysis procedures. The final section addresses crucial aspects of qualitative research, including validity and reliability, and outlines the ethical considerations of the study.

5.1 Theoretical framework and rationale

5.1.1 Ontology and epistemology

It is contended that the selection of methods in conducting educational research often prioritises the 'how' over the 'why'. This oversight hampers the alignment between the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of the research. Consequently, it is imperative not only to address the practical considerations of 'what' and 'how', but also to articulate the motivations behind conducting the research to comprehensively address and understand the underlying complexities of educational phenomena.

This section aims to provide a step-by-step explanation of the reasoning behind the research design by discussing ontology and epistemology. The selection of methodology and data collection approaches will be mentioned in subsequent sections. Ontology refers to the 'study of being' and explores the nature of reality, while epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge and various ways of learning and knowing (Crotty, 2014: 10). Scott and Morrison (2005: 85) suggest that epistemology pertains to how educational researchers can acquire knowledge about the reality they aim to describe. This aligns with Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) description of epistemology as the study of what constitutes knowledge and how it can be obtained. The relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology (strategy) and method is such that ontological beliefs influence epistemological decisions, which, in turn, inform the adoption of strategies and methods by empirical researchers (Scott, 2010: 24). In my study, the ontology primarily focuses on the human world of

meanings and interpretations. The epistemological orientation of this study is primarily constructivist, as participants in the research contexts interpret and implement the curriculum change in their own unique ways, influenced by their identity, background, and experience. As an interpretivist researcher, my approach involves constructing and interpreting meaning based on the analysis of data regarding different interpretations of beliefs, perspectives, and practices among research participants. In educational settings like classrooms, meaning is created collaboratively by teachers and students. This means that deterministic cause-and-effect relationships, typical in natural sciences, cannot be established within the context of classrooms. Knowledge in this context is subjective, and my goal as a researcher is to investigate how individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences and surrounding events. In doing so, I aim to comprehend, explain, and interpret social reality from the diverse perspectives of the participants. Therefore, the constructivist perspective provides a valuable framework for understanding social reality and the role of individual perspectives.

Scott and Morrison (2005: 170) propose four paradigms in educational research: Positivism, Phenomenology, Critical Theory, and Postmodernism. Phenomenology places significant emphasis on interpreting the meaning of phenomena and focuses on human behaviour and interpretation. Phenomenological approaches aim to understand phenomena from the teacher's perspective (Carless, 2001: 266) and the nature of their lived experience. According to Richards (2003), the objective of phenomenological research is to grasp the essential meaning of human experience and to focus on our self-understanding as active, meaning-making participants in the human world. In the case of teaching and learning English in the three universities, phenomenology examines the meanings individuals derive from a shared experience (Croker, 2009: 15). Given that phenomenology focuses on exploring experience, it is appropriate to identify and interview individuals who have had this experience. In the UK context, direct observation was not feasible due to restricted access to language centres, and surveys could not be conducted due to the limited number of EAP teachers and students. Consequently, this UK research uses interviews to gather data on human experiences and construct realities based on individual perspectives (Dörnyei, 2007). In the two universities in Vietnam, the research was conducted in multiple phases (discussed further in 5.2.2), following a group of English teachers and students, utilising

surveys, interviews, observations, and field notes to capture their implementation of the new curriculum. A phenomenological approach, consistent with constructivist epistemology, can provide valuable support for this research in describing the shared meaning of a concept or phenomenon across multiple individuals through their subjective experiences (Creswell, 2012)

In my study, I aimed to explore the experiences and processes of meaning-making among English language lecturers in public sector universities in the UK and Vietnam. This exploration took place within the context of externally imposed curriculum changes and social and institutional ideologies. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions of change, as well as their implementation of change in the classroom, are central to the educational reform process. Therefore, conducting an in-depth exploration of this field was necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and practices related to teaching, learning, and change. Additionally, I aimed to examine the personal and contextual factors that may impact implementation. By utilising the constructivist view, I will be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of various aspects of curriculum change implementation and teachers' beliefs and practices. This will provide clarity on the crucial factors necessary for the successful implementation of change and reform.

5.1.2 Research paradigms and methodological approaches

Creswell and Creswell (2023) argued that the selection of appropriate methods in a study depends on the research problem or issue at hand. This study aims to explore the factors and challenges involved in implementing new English curricula through empirical investigation of attitudes, perceptions, teaching and learning practices, and experiences. Considering the complexity of understanding the ongoing process of realised innovation and the implementation of language teaching approaches in multilingual and multicultural contexts, the adoption of a case study approach (Yin, 2017) appeared particularly suitable.

A case study is a type of empirical research that examines current phenomena within their real-life context, particularly when it is challenging to separate the phenomena from the context (Yin, 2017). When the research inquiry revolves around 'how' or 'why' questions,

when the focus is on contemporary events occurring in a real-life setting, and when researchers have limited control over the events under study, the case study approach is the preferred method of research. In this study, a multiple-case design was utilised to develop an understanding of a phenomenon across three university sites in two countries, involving policymakers, administrators, teachers, and tertiary-level students. The multiple-case approach allowed for an independent investigation of the phenomenon within each site, as well as an examination of the phenomenon across sites. This approach employed a replication logic, with insights from each site contributing to the questions and understanding of subsequent sites. Overall, the multiple case study method is considered to be more robust than a single-case design (Yin, 2017).

In qualitative research, the data is primarily in textual form, although numbers may be used to supplement, complement, and support it. The objective of qualitative research is to identify and comprehend behaviour and attitude within a specific context. It primarily focuses on understanding the unique and distinct aspects, without necessarily seeking or claiming to generalise findings to other contexts (Croker, 2009: 9). However, some qualitative researchers argue that case study data can serve as a basis for conceptual or theoretical generalisations or transferability beyond the specific case (Scott and Morrison, 2005: 18). In this sense, qualitative researchers pay close attention to the context in which the research is situated and the individual's interaction with that context. Croker (2009:16) notes that certain researchers, particularly in the field of education, prefer to combine or integrate elements from both qualitative and quantitative research, especially when studying teachers, learners, or language users. This is because they are considering both a broad macro-perspective and a context-sensitive micro-perspective (Dörnyei, 2007: 29). Utilising both top-down and bottom-up analysis in a mixed-methods approach can lead to a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of an issue compared to employing just one approach. A mixed-method, integrated approach can shed light on both what is occurring and why it is happening (Croker, 2009; Dörnyei, 2007; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Nunan, 1992). However, integrated approaches may present some potential issues for researchers, particularly in terms of timing (when to gather the data and in what order), weighting (deciding which element is more prominent), and mixing (or combining together) the various strands (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009).

In this study, qualitative data were collected concurrently with quantitative data in accordance with Ivankova and Creswell's (2009) methodology. The purpose of gathering qualitative data was to provide an explanation or exploration of the numerical data that was collected first. This was achieved by conducting interviews with a new sample, which served to authenticate the findings (see Figure 5.1). The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches occurred when the interview questions were derived from the quantitative data. The qualitative findings were then utilised to refine, explain, clarify, and extend the quantitative findings, while the quantitative findings were used to crystallise and summarise the qualitative. The equal weighting of the two methods was facilitated by the questionnaire, which consisted of a combination of open and closed items. This design allowed for the simultaneous collection of qualitative and quantitative data. As a result, both the approach and the data collection tools themselves were integrated in a manner consistent with the mixed-methods approach, ensuring internal authentication and verification of the data. The findings obtained from each instrument are presented in Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine.

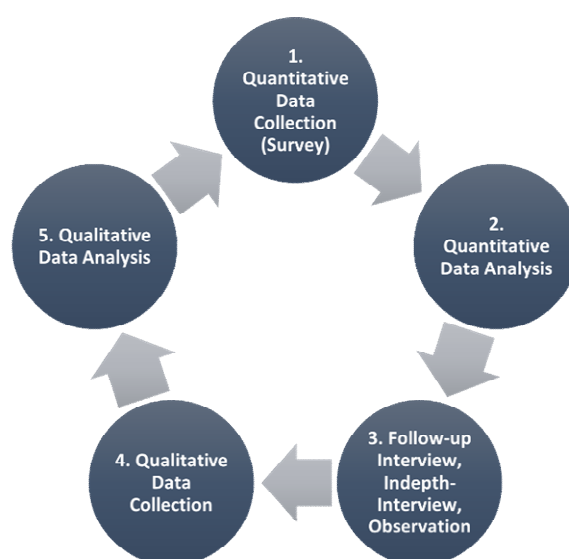


Figure 5.1: Mixed-methods Research Design (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009)

In summary, this study employed a mixed-method case study approach, primarily leaning towards a qualitative approach that emphasised personalised and specific text-based data. However, it also incorporated statistical data to summarise and illustrate trends and

themes, thus integrating some quantitative approaches into a mixed-methods survey for the two cases in Vietnam. The decision to adopt a mixed methods design was based on the advantages outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), which emphasised the use of two data sources to provide a comprehensive narrative, minimise weaknesses, and maximise the strengths of each method. Additionally, this design allowed for the qualitative data to further elucidate the quantitative findings. These reasons are discussed in more detail in Sections 5.2 and 5.4 below. Given the focus of this study on examining language teaching and learning approaches, specifically with regards to supporting EFL learners in their communication of the target language, the CLT approach - which has the potential to develop communicative competence as discussed in Chapter Four - was one of the teaching approaches investigated among various others.

5.2 The mixed method design (Case 1 and Case 2)

5.2.1 Description of mixed method design

There has been a noticeable increase in the utilisation of mixed methods in various research domains, including education, health, business, and psychology, over the past two decades. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007: 123) present a clear definition of mixed methods research as 'the type of research in which a researcher... combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.' Essentially, mixed methods research entails the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data and methodologies. This approach has been referred to as the 'third research paradigm' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14) and the 'third methodological movement' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003: 5).

The choice of research design should be guided by the research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2018). As mentioned in section 5.1, this study leans towards a qualitative approach, placing emphasis on personalised and text-based data. However, it also incorporates quantitative elements to summarise and illustrate trends and themes in the two cases in Vietnam, thus adopting a mixed-methods approach. This involves using descriptive statistics

derived from closed-response questionnaire items and quotations, as well as examples from open-response questionnaire items and semi-structured interviews. The research in Vietnam followed a framework consisting of three distinct, sequential phases. The first phase, referred to as the static phase, collected documentary data to establish an empirical foundation for the subsequent dynamic phases (phases 2 and 3). The second phase involved gathering and analysing the quantitative data obtained through the survey questionnaire. Lastly, the third phase encompassed the collection and analysis of qualitative data through interviews, observations, and fieldnotes. The third phase built upon the findings of the first two phases. While the first phase provided a general overview of the intended curriculum, the second phase took into account the perceptions and engagement of teachers and students, as well as personal and contextual factors. The third phase added greater depth to the findings by exploring participants' insights into the intended curriculum and various aspects of teachers' curriculum implementation, including challenges faced and modifications made. Furthermore, to allow for the qualitative data to enhance the depth of the quantitative findings, the data from the second phase informed the subsequent data collection phase. This involved selecting participants and determining the information to be elicited from them. Specifically, the third phase focused on questionnaire items that required further explanation (e.g., a teacher's rating of factors influencing implementation or difficulties encountered), greater depth (e.g., a teacher's attitudes towards the implementation process), or an in-depth investigation into aspects of the key concepts of interest that could not be captured by the survey (e.g., the temporal aspect of teacher motivation or curriculum adaptations in response to challenges).

There are, however, potential challenges that arise from employing a mixed method design. Firstly, this approach demands a significant amount of time and resources, owing to the extensive volume of data that needs to be collected, processed, and analysed. To address this hurdle, I meticulously planned the field trip well in advance, ensuring that the maximum number of participants could be reached during each visit to the research sites. Furthermore, I arranged for logistical support at each university selected for data collection (for more details on the field trip, please refer to section 5.5). Additionally, I processed the questionnaire data concurrently with their distribution. The second challenge in implementing the explanatory design is the elevated risk of errors and the need for a

diverse range of skills. Consequently, I familiarised myself with both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, and analysis approaches. Furthermore, I honed my proficiency in utilising relevant computer software programmes to assist with the management and analysis of mixed data (SPSS 27 for quantitative data and Nvivo 12 for qualitative data).

5.2.2 Operationalisation of the research design

The research design, which incorporates the triangulation strategy, is operationalised into a comprehensive framework that guided the execution of the current study, as depicted in Figure 5.2 below. The data collection process comprises three distinct and sequential phases: a static research phase (Phase 1) involving the gathering of documentary data (such as policy documents, curriculum, textbooks, syllabi...), and dynamic research phases (Phase 2 and 3).

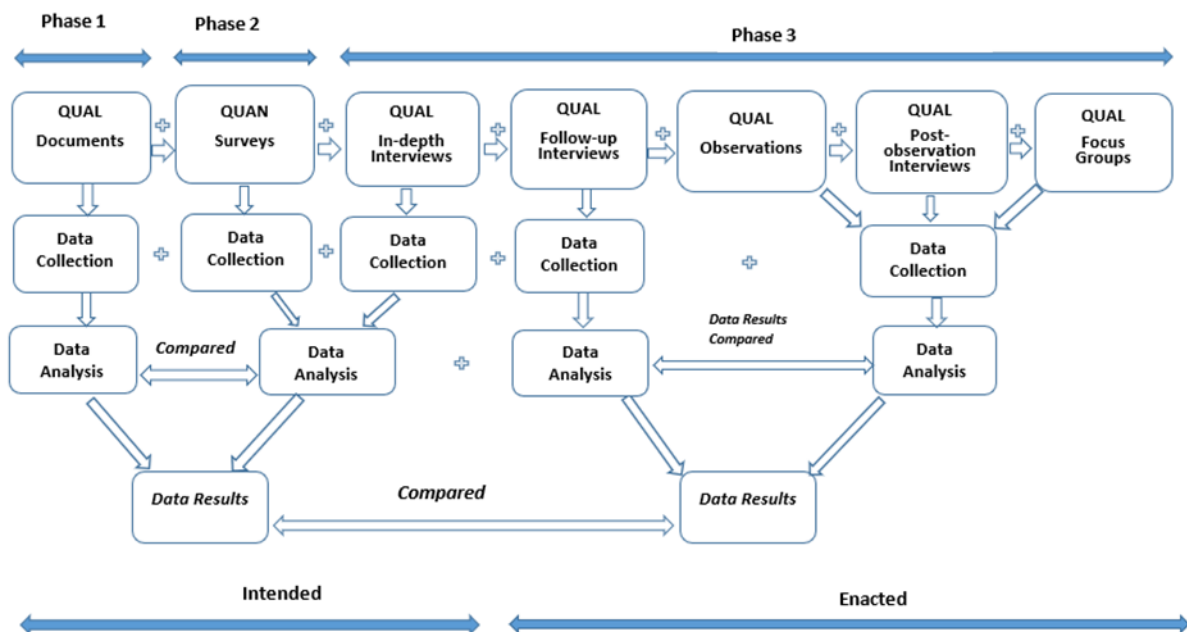


Figure 5.2: The research design

Phase 1 has two aims: (i) to investigate the planned curricula, and (ii) to establish a strong empirical basis for the subsequent dynamic phases. Therefore, the static research phase, aimed at addressing research question one, was initially carried out to fully situate the

research within the context of curriculum design, background, textbook content, and pedagogy employed prior to the dynamic phase. In other words, the preliminary findings from collecting and analysing document data significantly contributed to establishing a solid empirical foundation for the dynamic phases, including identifying concerns during English lessons, formulating interview questions, and designing the questionnaire. Additionally, it provided potential explanations for students' behaviour or responses in practical research, facilitating in-depth analysis.

Phase 2 - the quantitative phase - involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data from teachers and students through a survey questionnaire to address research questions 2 and 3. Phase 3 - the qualitative phase - involves conducting an empirical study through interviews and observations. This phase has three objectives: (i) to gain deeper insights into the intended curricula, (ii) to provide a more comprehensive exploration of the broad quantitative findings obtained in Phase 2, and (iii) to thoroughly investigate the implementation and practices that were not captured by the Phase 2 data, specifically addressing research questions 1 and 4. The first objective of Phase 3 was pursued through interviews with policymakers and administrators, the second objective was accomplished by conducting follow-up interviews with selected survey participants from Phase 2, and the third objective was fulfilled through longitudinal data collection involving eight teachers, which included observations, post-observation interviews with these teachers, and focus groups with students. The longitudinal data collection in the second subset of Phase 3 is suitable for describing the teaching practices and difficulties faced by teachers, as well as the changes they made to the curriculum. Triangulation was utilised in the data analysis to augment the overall validity and inform the general findings. Details of the triangulation will be further discussed in 5.6.3 (p. 158).

5.3. The selection of universities and research participants

5.3.1 The three universities

The research initiated with a case study at a university in Vietnam employing the CIPP Evaluation Model. However, this model was later deemed inadequate following the decision to incorporate a case study from the United Kingdom for comparative analysis, as detailed in section 2.1.2. In the initial pilot study conducted at the Vietnamese university, Scott's curriculum model was considered for its potential to establish a robust pedagogical framework pertinent to the Vietnamese context while promoting a more globally oriented approach in ELT. Consequently, I proposed the execution of two case studies in Vietnam (instead of one) and one case within the Japanese context after applying for an Academic Exchange at Waseda University. During my visit to Tokyo, which can be characterized as the second pilot study, I conducted an interview with the head of the Education Department regarding ELT in Japanese higher education and engaged in several classroom observations. The data collected during this visit indicated the feasibility of conducting a case study at a university in Japan, thereby enriching the cross-case analysis and generating broader contextual insights. Nonetheless, subsequent field trips aimed at gathering data from three university case studies in Vietnam and the UK necessitated modifications to my data collection techniques in the UK case (refer to sections 5.4 and 5.5) and ultimately led to the cancellation of the Japanese case. This decision is regarded as the most regrettable aspect of this study. The extensive data amassed from two Vietnamese universities required considerable time for transcription and analysis. In contrast, the data collection procedures in the UK demanded more time and effort than initially anticipated (discussed further in section 5.5.2). Despite the potential contributions of the fourth case in Japan, I ultimately decided against pursuing it due to constraints related to time and budget. This decision was challenging; however, I deemed it to be the most appropriate course of action for my research.

The three case studies in this research were selected based on certain criteria and their uniqueness in other aspects. These three HEIs are located in Hanoi, Vietnam, and in London, United Kingdom, which are the capitals of their respective countries and have a large number of higher education institutions. The two cases in Vietnam were chosen because of their privileged positions in terms of national curriculum enactment. These institutions are the leading ones that have responded promptly and proactively to the reform (see 4.5.3 for detailed institutional contexts). As discussed in the introductory and contextual chapters,

the foremost challenges in language instruction and acquisition within Vietnamese higher education pertain to curriculum content and pedagogical approaches aimed at improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. The two universities represent two directions of English teaching at the tertiary level: EAP for study in EMI programmes and EOP for employability as a compulsory subject. These initiatives are regarded as pioneering efforts to enhance the quality of instruction and students' communicative competencies in the context of an increasingly multilingual and multicultural environment. Furthermore, these HEIs must be public universities and have the same education system, especially considering the Vietnamese higher education context. Public institutions in Vietnam are required to strictly adhere to government policies as they are monitored and funded (either partially or completely) by the state. Both of these institutions are located in Hanoi, where I have been a resident, student, and teacher for a long time. Therefore, conducting these case studies at my home universities allows me to provide a thorough description and rich information, particularly due to my familiarity with the research participants. This minimises the information and cultural gaps and also saves time since data collection can be done concurrently at the two institutions. The last case in the UK is a university where English is taught as EAP for international students before they begin their degrees. It not only represents the 'traditional' EMI context in an Anglophone country but also engages in the implementation of curriculum change, see 4.4.4 for more details of the institutional context. Additionally, one of the reasons I chose this UK university is because there are Vietnamese students enrolled in the EAP course and subsequently participating in my research project. This allows me to take advantage of the similarities in the end users of change for comparative analysis.

5.3.2 Research participants

The primary stakeholders in this study are key figures in tertiary English education in Vietnam and the UK. These stakeholders encompass curriculum policymakers, administrators, EFL teachers, and students.

Policymakers are individuals responsible for drafting, designing, and revising the curriculum, materials, and nationwide English test, as well as other language policies at the national

level. To address the language policies, intended curriculum, and their expectations regarding their guiding roles in the implementation process, I conducted interviews with two policymakers in Vietnam. One interviewee was an official from Project 2020 management, the Project Manager. The other interviewee was an official from the Testing Team, known as Test 1. In addition to these interviews, I analysed corresponding language policy documents.

Administrators are individuals who establish the rules and regulations pertaining to English teaching and learning at the institutional and departmental levels. For this study, I selected five administrators for open-ended interviews. These administrators included two rectors and three departmental heads from two universities in Vietnam, identified as Admin 1-5. Through these interviews, I aimed to uncover university regulations, administrators' perceptions of the language policies, their mediating roles in adapting the curriculum, and their support for teachers during the implementation process. Moreover, I also included six other administrators who were also teachers from the testing team (Test 2-3) and building team (Build 1-4) in these two cases. These administrators played key roles in designing the curriculum, syllabus, and assessment protocols at the institutional level, particularly in the compilation of new EOP textbooks and EOP tests for EOP students in Case 2.

EFL teachers are individuals who deliver the English curriculum in the classroom. For the surveys, I randomly selected 200 EFL teachers from two universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. Then, with their agreement, eighteen of them (T1-T18) were chosen for follow-up interviews and post-observation interviews to clarify the quantitative data and observation results. The aim of this data collection, which included qualitative and quantitative measures, was to understand teachers' perceptions of the language policies and the intended curriculum, as well as their preparation for the implementation process. Additionally, the factors that could impact their teaching skills and willingness to design, plan, and implement this English curriculum were examined. In the UK case, one out of the three teachers (T19) responded and agreed to participate in two in-depth interviews (T19.1 and T19.2). Due to the limited number of participants, I did not collect quantitative data in the UK.

For ***classroom observations and post-observation interviews***, a total of eleven teachers, both experienced and novice, were invited. Subsequently, seven of them were selected based on their agreement to examine what teachers actually do behind closed classroom doors, how they implement the curriculum in practice, and the reasons behind their actions. This process allowed for the identification of factors that truly influence teachers' skills and abilities in designing, planning, and implementing this English curriculum.

Students were the largest group of participants in this research, with a total of 349 students from three universities. They were included in the study because of their importance as the end users of change (see section 2.5) and their significant influence on language policy (see section 1.3) in the context of Vietnam. Questionnaires were conducted with 400 randomly selected students (S) from two universities in Vietnam, and 72 of them were invited to participate in focus groups after taking part in the questionnaires. In the UK context, the number of students was limited due to the nature of the pre-sessional course, which caters to students who have not yet met the English language proficiency standard. As a result, five out of ten invited students agreed to participate in in-depth interviews instead of focus groups, allowing the researcher to gather as much data as possible within the constraints of the limited number of students.

5.4 Data generation techniques

5.4.1. An overview

Subsidiary Questions	Phase	Intended /Enacted	Research Techniques	Research participants
1a. What are the language policies and intended curricula at the national levels?	Phase 1 and 3	Intended curriculum	Document and policies In-depth Interviews	Polymakers: Project manager (1) and National Testing team (Test 1)
1b. What are the language policies and intended curricula at the institutional levels (in terms of curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and assessment standards)?	Phase 1 and 3	Intended	Document and policies In-depth Interviews	Administrators (Admin 1-5), Testing Team (Test 2-3), Building Team (Build 1-4)
1c. What are the roles of policymakers and administrators in the implementation process of the national language policy?	Phase 1 and 3	Intended and Enacted	Document and policies In-depth interviews	Polymakers (2) Administrators (Admin 1-5)
1d. What are administrators' perceptions of the policy and how do they interpret it within institutional contexts?	Phase 3	Intended and Enacted	Document and policies In-depth interviews	Administrators (Admin 1-5)
2a. What are teachers' beliefs and perceptions of the new curriculum?	Phase 2 and 3	Intended	Questionnaires Interviews	Teachers (130) Teachers (T1-T19)
2b. What are the pedagogical and assessment practices? (both online and face-to-face lessons, inside and outside the classroom)	Phase 3	Enacted	Questionnaires Interviews Observations Focus Group	Teachers (130) Students (344) Teachers (T1-T19) Students (S61-S65) Teachers (O1-O7) Students (S1-60)
3a. What are the internal (personal) and external (contextual) factors that account for the implementation gap?	Phase 2 and 3	Enacted	Questionnaires Interviews Observations Focus Group	Teachers and Students
3b. What are the difficulties that teachers and students faced during the implementation process?	Phase 2 and 3	Enacted	Questionnaires Interviews Observations Focus Group	Teachers and Students
4a. What changes did teachers make to the curriculum in response to things not working?	Phase 2 and 3	Enacted	Questionnaires Interviews Observations Focus Groups	Teachers and Students
4b. What are the implications for curriculum change in ELT?	Phase 3	Intended Enacted	All above	All above

Table 5.1 Techniques used for subsidiary questions

The range of data collection instruments available for qualitative research is quite extensive. With a combination of various question types, these instruments can be effectively used to generate a comprehensive and in-depth dataset on a wide range of subjects and issues. Different data collection methods enable researchers to concentrate on different aspects of a research question. Table 5.1 provides a concise overview of the diverse methods and techniques employed to collect and analyse data in relation to the subsidiary questions.

This section provides an overview and critical evaluation of the methods employed in this study, along with an explanation for their selection. The subsequent two sections delve into the specific objectives and procedures involved in the mixed data collection and analysis, as well as the analytical techniques employed.

5.4.2 Document review

A wide range of documents were included in this research, including official national curriculum and policy documents, as well as official documents produced by institutions involved in curriculum change within the higher education systems of Vietnam and the United Kingdom. These documents include Project 2020, the 6-level National Foreign Language Reference Framework (CEFR-V), the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP), national and institutional policies, curriculum standard documents delineating the aims and curriculum contents of tertiary English education in both countries, and the textbooks containing teaching and learning materials and activities, along with the teacher guidebooks that offer valuable teaching resources in the three institutions. Additionally, information available on the government, Project 2020, three universities, and online program websites was collected. This data source was collected prior to and during the pilot trip in August 2017 and analysed as background knowledge to understand the curriculum change and reform. Document review and analysis constituted the first stage of data analysis, which was conducted prior to the empirical research in the three institutions in order to explore knowledge at the macro, meso, and micro levels. The macro level examines the overall framework of the national intended curriculum, while the meso level focuses on the structure of intended curricula in the three institutions, the process of meaning structure of teachers, institutional management, and contexts. The micro level

concentrates on curriculum standards, pedagogic and assessment standards, and how they are conceived and implemented from national policies into the institutional curricula, syllabuses, textbooks, and online programs. Document analysis is crucial in this research as it not only identifies the primary structure of intended curricula and research contexts, but also the prominent presence of English in strategic policies, including information indicating that the three cases are international institutions. Therefore, this highlights the multicultural and multilingual context of teaching, learning, and research. Another reason for analysing documents before the empirical research is that they provide significant support in designing questionnaires and interview topic guides.

5.4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires offer a convenient and efficient means of gathering extensive and diverse information from a wide range of individuals across the globe (Hopkins, 2014). They yield quantifiable data that is straightforward to analyse. *Closed-ended questions*, which limit respondents to a set range of responses, can be utilised. *Likert scales*, for instance, allow participants to indicate their reactions on a 4-3-2-1 scale (Brown, 2011), particularly when measuring beliefs or attitudes. Alternatively, *open-ended questions* or sentence completion tasks may be included. Often, a combination of both types is employed. However, due to the necessity of simplicity and generality in order to accommodate remote completion with minimal supervision, questionnaires can result in unreliable and invalid, as well as superficial data (Dörnyei, 2007) if respondents fail to comprehend certain questions. Additionally, reading ability may pose challenges for respondents (Hopkins, 2014). In this study, which involved both English and Vietnamese-speaking teachers and students at the tertiary level, the researcher assumed that literacy levels would not present an issue, as questionnaires for students were provided in both languages. Questionnaires prove to be the most practical method of data collection, allowing for comparison among participants across various teaching and learning contexts. Considering that the researchers were unfamiliar with the majority of the hundreds of participants, this approach ensured efficient and dependable data collection.

The survey is a widely used method for collecting information from individuals about their ideas, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, needs, motivations, and behaviours. This method has been extensively employed in social science research and in the field of English as a second or foreign language education. In order to serve as one of the main data collection tools, the survey was carefully designed to be comprehensive and inclusive, aiming to gather as much information as possible in a single document. In this particular study, the lecturer questionnaire was developed to examine EFL teachers' perceptions, regarding the tertiary English curriculum and its implementation. It also sought to explore their views on the communicative language teaching approach, the testing systems known as VSTEP and CEFR as Proficiency Scales, the personal and contextual factors that impact the implementation process, as well as the teachers' opinions and self-efficacy in curriculum implementation. Additionally, the questionnaire aimed to collect other relevant factual information about the participants' classroom practices and demographic profiles (Figure 5.3). The final version of the lecturer questionnaire consisted of 66 questions divided into six sections (refer to Appendix 3 for both printed and online versions).

Section 1: Teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum and CLT	• Adapted • 10 closed-ended items • 4 open-ended items
Section 2: Teachers' perceptions of CEFR and VSTEP	• Self-developed • 6 closed-ended items • 4 open-ended items
Section 3: Factors affecting teachers's curriculum implementation	• Self-developed • 17 closed-ended bipolar items • 5-point Likert scale
Section 4: Teacher's opinions and self-efficacy in curriculum implementation	• Self-developed • 10 closed-ended items, 5-point Likert scale • 10 closed-ended items, 100-point numerical rating scale
Section 5: Implementation activities	• Self-developed • 11 questions
Section 6: Teachers' demographics	• Self-developed • 11 questions

Figure 5.3: Summary of the lecturer questionnaire design

The student questionnaire was designed to incorporate various types of questions, including closed-ended, open-ended, multiple-choice, and Likert-scale questions. The questionnaire encompassed a broad range of topics, covering learners' demographic profiles, learning purposes, locations of English language usage, nature of language usage, evaluation of the language class, students' attitudes towards the new curriculum, factual information about participants' classroom practices, sources influencing students' English awareness, free comments, and contact information for potential follow-up studies (Figure 5.4). Initially drafted in English, the questionnaire was subsequently translated into Vietnamese to ensure accessibility for Vietnamese participants (please refer to Appendix 4 for both printed and online versions).

Learner profile	• Adapted • 3 closed-ended items and 1 open-ended items
Content areas	• Self-developed • 1 open-ended item
Learning purposes	• Adapted • 2 closed-ended items 5-point Likert scale
English-using activities	• Self-developed • 10 closed-ended items, 5-point Likert scale
Places for using English	• Self-developed - 1 question
Sources affecting students' English awareness	• Self-developed • 5 questions
Implementation activities	• Self-developed • 5 questions
Students' attitude towards the new curriculum implementation	• Self-developed • 1 with 10 items
Free comments and contact for follow-up study	• Self-developed • 2 open-ended questions

Figure 5.4: Summary of the student questionnaire design

Both lecturer and student questionnaires were administered online using UCL Opinio, a web-based survey tool provided by University College London. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, a trial study was conducted with a sample of experienced Vietnamese teaching professionals. Feedback from 5 participants was used to revise the questions. The

questionnaires were then distributed to participants either via email with a link from the researcher's email account or in hard copy form at the beginning of the field trip, in order to maximise response rates. In total, 130 teachers and 344 students completed the questionnaire over a period of three months. The overall return rate was 82%, which was calculated based on the number of responses obtained and the number of valid questionnaires sent out. The rate of valid responses was slightly lower at 79%, as 14 students and 5 teachers had missed answering one or several questions in the hard copy versions. This issue did not occur in the online surveys, as participants were unable to complete the questionnaire without answering all of the questions. It is important to note that this data generation technique was only used in the two Vietnamese cases, and not in the UK case due to the limited number of teachers and students in the EAP programme within the UK context.

5.4.4 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews play a crucial role in research as they allow researchers to collect information about a phenomenon directly from different types of respondents, thus aiding in achieving the research objectives. According to Cohen et al. (2007), interviews are a flexible data collection tool that can incorporate various sensory methods, such as verbal, written, spoken, and auditory. In this particular study, the objective of the interviews was to obtain detailed insights from policymakers, administrators, EFL university students (limited to the UK context), and their teachers. The aim was to identify findings related to teachers' teaching approaches and the use of the target language in the classroom, with a focus on enhancing communicative competence. Open-ended interview questions were chosen for this purpose. Individual interviews were preferred as they offered the opportunity to capture diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to the field and the specific studies under investigation, thereby facilitating comparisons and contrasts (Gale et al., 2013). Careful consideration was given to the design of the interview questions to ensure they served the purpose of this study; however, it should be noted that these versions of the questions shared some similarities.

The instruments were utilised during the interviews as an interview guide approach, in which I delineated the questions. This list served as a guide to ensure that consistent lines of inquiry were pursued with each interviewed individual. There was no requirement to adhere to a specific order when following these questions. The interview protocol for Policymakers (Manager of the Project 2020, one from the national testing team – Test 1) comprised of five dimensions, chosen based on the varying positions and departments of each participant (refer to appendix 5). The first dimension encompassed the reasoning behind the curriculum design, textbook compilation, nationwide test for tertiary English education in Vietnam (the CEFR and the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency - VSTEP), and any modifications made to the curriculum. The second dimension of the interview questions delved into the appropriateness of the curriculum, VSTEP, CEFR, and the underlying principles guiding their design. The third dimension explored the practicality of the curriculum and tests, along with investigating the clarity of the purposes for which the English test results are utilised. The fourth dimension of the interview questions focused on the communication strategies employed by each decision-making organisation to disseminate the curriculum, as well as the extent to which EFL teachers were expected to adhere to its implementation. Furthermore, I sought to uncover the perspectives of policymakers regarding the impact of the VSTEP and CEFR on teachers, students, and the university itself. The fifth dimension addressed teachers' language proficiency in delivering the curriculum, students' English proficiency, and the repercussions of their failure in the high-stakes standardised national English test.

The interview protocol involved conducting interviews with a total of 11 administrators from different departments within the university. The administrators included rectors, department heads, as well as members of the testing and building teams. The interview questions were organised into nine dimensions, which are detailed in appendix 6. The first dimension focused on the specific regulations that the university has in place regarding national language policies. This dimension explored topics such as CLT, learner-centred teaching approaches, and the use of proficiency scales such as the CEFR, VSTEP, or IELTS in tertiary English education. The aim was to understand the rationale behind these regulations. The second dimension of the interview questions examined the clarity and appropriateness of the university's regulations. This dimension aimed to assess how well

these regulations were understood and perceived by administrators within each university. The third dimension explored the Tertiary English Curriculum and its practicality and clarity for classroom teaching and learning at the tertiary level. The fourth dimension focused on textbooks and how well they aligned with the syllabus. This dimension aimed to understand how effectively the textbooks represented the content and objectives of the curriculum. The fifth dimension delved into the impact of proficiency tests such as the CEFR, VSTEP, and IELTS on universities, teachers, and students. The focus was on the washback effect that these tests had on English language education. The sixth dimension of the interview questions addressed teachers' language proficiency in delivering the curriculum. This dimension aimed to highlight the importance of in-service teacher training as a key component of professional development for teachers in Vietnam. The seventh dimension explored the involvement of EFL teachers in the development of the syllabus and textbooks. The aim was to understand the extent to which teachers were engaged in the curriculum design process. The eighth dimension focused on the support provided by the university to teachers in order to enhance student learning. This dimension aimed to assess the resources and assistance available to teachers to improve their teaching practices. The ninth and final dimension raised the challenges that department heads face in implementing the English curriculum within their respective universities. This dimension aimed to understand the practical difficulties and obstacles faced by administrators in ensuring effective implementation of the curriculum.

The interview protocol involving 19 EFL teachers from three universities (T1-T19) is categorised into eight dimensions (refer to appendix 7). Five of these dimensions are identical to those in the administrator interview protocol, including: (i) the clarity and appropriateness of the syllabus with the CLT approach; (ii) the tertiary English syllabus; (iii) English textbooks; (iv) the English Tests - VSTEP, CEFR, and the IELTS as Proficiency Scales; and (v) challenges encountered. The remaining three dimensions consist of demographic information concerning teachers' language learning experience, educational background, and teaching experience, teacher training received from the department, and the rationale behind the use of English and Vietnamese in teaching, as well as the student-centred approach.

For the UK context, the eight dimensions were adjusted to align with the specific goals of Case 3, as described below: (i) the clarity and appropriateness of the syllabus with suggested or teachers' preferred teaching approaches; (ii) the English syllabus; (iii) English textbooks; (iv) assessment and testing; (v) challenges faced; (vi) educational background; (vii) teaching experience; and (viii) support received from the department or institution. Due to the impracticality of conducting classroom observations in the UK context, the interview was conducted twice with the teacher to shed light on teaching practices and obtain more comprehensive answers from the initial interview. Additionally, in order to gather the maximum amount of data from a limited number of students, I opted to conduct in-depth interviews with five students in the UK context instead of focus-group interviews. The in-depth interview protocol for students remains the same as that for focus group interviews, which will be further elaborated upon in the following section.

5.4.5 Focus Groups

The focus group was selected for several reasons. It serves as a valuable research tool for generating themes and topics that can be further explored through subsequent interviews. The group dynamic promotes participant interaction and allows for the emergence of diverse perspectives. Moreover, it yields a substantial amount of data within a short timeframe and is also cost-effective in terms of time (Cohen et al., 2005). In student focus-groups, a guide containing a list of indicative questions was utilised. This guide encompassed seven dimensions, namely: (i) demographic information regarding students' language learning experience, language proficiency, and academic majors; (ii) perceptions of the importance of English; (iii) English textbooks and supplementary materials; (iv) encountered difficulties; (v) teaching methodologies and extracurricular activities; (vi) roles of teachers and students; and (vii) an exemplary teacher/student model (see Appendix 8).

Ten focus groups were conducted in March and April 2018 with second-year and third-year students in Cases 1 and 2 in the context of Vietnam. All participants had completed a questionnaire that was administered in early 2018. The aim was to have 4-6 participants from the same discipline in each mini-group to encourage maximum participation (Krueger

and Casey, 2014). A total of eighty participants were invited for interviews (eight for each group) to account for any potential no-shows. Ultimately, sixty students (S1-S60) participated in ten groups conducted in Vietnamese (three groups for Case 1 and seven groups for Case 2).

5.4.6 Classroom observations

Classroom observations were utilised to capture the enacted curriculum as classroom practice assumes a central role in curriculum delivery and student learning. Observations and descriptive notes can offer direct insights into teacher and student practice and behaviour. In the context of this research, observations and notes could support an investigation into how teachers address issues such as student behaviour, classroom management, and classroom control. They can be recorded in video or audio format, thus creating a permanent record, although some teachers may perceive recording as invasive (Hopkins, 2014). Nevertheless, observations can yield both quantitative and qualitative data depending on their focus and purpose. However, to obtain a diverse range of responses, the researcher may need to visit multiple universities. In this study, classroom observation was deemed impractical within the UK research context, and therefore, it was not considered as a data collection method for the UK case. However, it was utilised in the other two cases in Vietnam, where observations proved to be a valuable means of shedding light on teaching practices in language classrooms.

A total of 22 classroom observations were conducted, involving eleven lecturers (O1-O11), resulting in over 30 hours of data. It is important to note that the number of actual classroom observations exceeded this figure, as I was present for the entire 10-week semester. The primary goal of video recording, however, was not to capture facial expressions or body gestures. Rather, the recorded data aimed to assist the researcher in documenting class details, such as identifying specific speakers in interactions between lecturers and students, and understanding various teaching situations. Each classroom observation, comprising both video and audio files, is designated by the lecturer's name for ease of recognition and management during the transcription and analysis process.

5.5 Data collection

In all stages of data collection, a standardised procedure was employed to administer each data collection instrument. This adherence to standardisation is of paramount importance as it mitigates the potential introduction of bias to the study resulting from inconsistent procedures (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, to ensure a systematic and high-quality data collection process, this study meticulously considers the attainment of ethics approval and follows specific procedures for collecting data using the instruments detailed in the preceding section. The ethical considerations and the specific data collection procedures are delineated below.

5.5.1 Ethical considerations

In the course of conducting empirical research, it is widely recommended that ethics be regarded as 'a foremost concern rather than an afterthought and should take precedence in the researchers' agenda' (Creswell, 2012: 23). Given that the present study involves human participants, the researcher must address ethical considerations prior to, during, and after the study. Ethical applications were meticulously devised and submitted for approval to University College London, the institution where the researcher was affiliated, prior to the collection of any data.

In the applications, all potential ethical issues regarding data collection, data reporting, and data storage were effectively addressed. For example, the researcher ensured that the participants' voluntariness, information privacy, and confidentiality were guaranteed. All participants were given a participation information and consent form (see Appendix 1 and 2), which clearly outlined the study's purpose, potential risks, participants' requirements, and how their information would be utilised and safeguarded. This form was developed according to the standards prescribed by University College London. Respect for the data collection sites (the universities where the researcher visited) and the participants (teachers and department heads) was maintained throughout the data collection process. This involved obtaining permission to access the research sites prior to data collection, minimising disruption to the normal working schedule, and allowing individuals complete

freedom to withdraw from the study at any point, even after signing the consent form. Overall, the study conscientiously consulted and adhered to relevant literature and guidelines for ethically conducting empirical research, particularly the standards established by University College London, where the researcher was affiliated.

Despite the serious efforts made to address the validity and reliability issues discussed in the previous section, there are still several limitations in the methodology of the present study that need to be acknowledged. Like other studies with a mixed methods design, this study is limited by the inherent concerns of both quantitative and qualitative research.

On the quantitative side, the study is constrained by the use of self-report, cross-sectional questionnaires. One potential issue with using self-report instruments at a single point in time is common method bias. This refers to the contamination of data that occurs when a single data collection method is applied to informants with different preferences for data provision methods (Chang, Witteloostuijn, and Eden, 2010). In this study, although participation was voluntary, there may have been influences that affected the responses of individuals who were less comfortable with paper-based self-report questionnaires. As a result, the measures may have been somewhat affected. This common method bias issue is further compounded by the presence of social desirability in the self-report instrument (Tremplay et al., 2009: 223). This refers to individuals underreporting certain behaviours, particularly deviant ones, due to their natural inclination to deny engagement in socially undesirable actions (Tremplay et al., 2009). Consequently, scores provided by participants in this study on negative attributes such as teachers' opinions and confidence (questionnaire items 41 through 42) may contain some measurement error due to this issue.

On the qualitative side, a limitation of the study may arise from the use of interviews to collect data. Informants may not fully remember or may simply not have been aware of certain patterns in their lives that are relevant for the research. To mitigate this weakness, I attempted to address the issue by sending the list of interview questions to the participants (policymakers, rectors, department heads, and teachers) for their consideration prior to conducting the interviews. By doing so, participants have additional time to reflect on the questions, potentially recalling more ideas than can be covered in a single interview session.

5.5.2 The procedures of data collection

5.5.2.1 *Data collection in Vietnam*

The schedule for university visits and the data collection plan were organised based on the consent of the leaders, their availability for face-to-face interviews, the timing of EFL staff meetings, and the geographical locations of the universities. In Vietnam, two universities situated in Hanoi City were visited concurrently. I did not anticipate encountering any difficulties in gaining access to the universities and participants, nor did I expect to be concerned about ‘absorbing the culture’ (Gillham 2000, 28). This experience underscored my insider or ‘returning native’ positionality as a Vietnamese teacher and researcher, which also facilitated my ability to effectively assess the context. All visits were arranged prior to my arrival in Vietnam.

After receiving ethics approval, I planned a field trip to Vietnam to collect various types of data for my study, including documents, quantitative data (survey responses), and qualitative data (interviews with policymakers, rectors, department heads, teachers, and students, as well as observations). In preparation for the field trip, I contacted policymakers, university rectors, and English department heads at the targeted universities through an initial email. The purpose of the email was to introduce myself, explain the objectives of the study, and request permission and support for my data collection field trip to their institutions. Additionally, I extended an invitation for them to respond to a series of interview questions. The email contained attachments such as the questionnaire, information on participation and consent, as well as a list of interview questions for the leaders to review. Successfully establishing effective communication with the manager of Project 2020, two rectors and two department heads facilitated the official commencement of data collection at their respective universities during the three-month field trip.

The data collection procedure undertaken in Vietnam consisted of three distinct phases (refer to Figure 5.2, p.130). Phase 1 and Phase 2 involved the examination of documents and quantitative data, which included surveys administered to teachers and students. The

primary aim was to gather comprehensive information regarding language policy and intended curricula at both the national and institutional levels, as well as the participants' perceptions of curricula. The implementation of Phase 3 comprised three distinct steps. Firstly, interviews were conducted with policy makers, rectors, and department heads to gain a deeper understanding of the intended curricula and their perceptions. Following this, follow-up interviews were arranged with teachers who had participated in the initial survey to conduct a more comprehensive exploration of the extensive quantitative findings gathered during Phase 2. Lastly, classroom observations and post-observation interviews were carried out with the observed teachers, whilst focus groups were formed with the observed students, facilitating a comprehensive investigation into the implementation and practices involved. In order to maximise efficiency and data collection, the decision was made to simultaneously collect these types of data throughout the three phases. Between February and April 2018, various data collection methods were employed, including the collection of public documents, interviews with policymakers, rectors, department heads, teachers, and students, as well as the administration of surveys and classroom observations with teachers and students.

In Vietnam, universities that obtained consent from the department head and conducted prior staff meetings were given priority for visits. During the initial week of the field trip, I conducted interviews with the policymakers, rectors and department heads at a mutually convenient time. Simultaneously, the teachers were provided with a questionnaire survey during their staff meetings or trainings, under the guidance and coordination of the department heads. Furthermore, efforts were made to distribute the questionnaires to the teachers in their staff room or during their break time. In such cases, the teachers had the choice to either return the completed questionnaire in person on the same day or leave them with the department assistant, so that I could collect them during my next visit. Additionally, the online version of the questionnaire was shared on social network groups that catered to tertiary EFL teachers, in order to encourage voluntary participation from eligible teachers. This approach significantly contributed to the improvement of the response rate.

In Phase 2, it was determined that conducting interviews and observations with the same participants would be the most optimal approach for gathering data from multiple sources. To identify potential participants, a questionnaire and a university contact list were utilised. Subsequently, the participants were contacted via email, phone or in person. However, obtaining consent from certain teachers took longer than anticipated. In-person meetings were necessary to provide additional information about the research project and clarify their role. The interviews were primarily conducted in the classroom following the observations, although some follow-up interviews took place in the staff room or a restaurant during lunchtime. A few interviews were held in a nearby coffee shop or at the university for the convenience of the participants. The duration of the interviews varied from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the level of participant engagement in the conversation. It is important to emphasise that some interviews ended up with long conversations that exceeded the 90-minute limit specified in the consent form, as the participants were willing to share their experiences in the implementation of change. The interviews conducted with certain participants with whom I have a pre-existing familiarity yielded significantly richer information that would be challenging for an outsider to acquire.

The unit of observation in the study was a complete session, corresponding to a single class period lasting 50 minutes. Based on my insider professional positionality as a teacher, classroom observation data were collected using both manual and electronic methods (Nunan and Bailey, 2009). Each class observation was video recorded from a camera positioned at the back of the room, while audio was recorded using a device placed near the lecturer. Initially, some teachers expressed hesitancy and were not willing to be recorded during their classroom sessions. However, after engaging in a discussion about the use of the data and assuring them of anonymity, they eventually changed their minds. During the classroom observations, I sat at the back of the class, taking notes on general information and noteworthy events, while also playing the role of a researcher participant. Initial analysis of the questionnaire and interview data was conducted prior to the observations to facilitate triangulation.

All student focus groups were conducted in the classroom following the observations for the sake of convenience. The students were selected from the observed classes to ensure triangulation. Additionally, I took advantage of the students' availability by selecting other students as substitutes for those who did not attend.

5.5.2.2 Data collection in the UK

Data from the UK was collected in late 2018, following the field trip to Vietnam, which presented more complications. My positionality in the UK grants me outsider status as a researcher. This research context and my positionality influenced certain methodological decisions. One issue that I might not have been aware of as a researcher with outsider status is that seeking approval from universities would be challenging. In fact, I expended considerably more effort in the UK than in Vietnam in contacting various institutions to obtain permission for data collection. During the preparatory phase, I initiated contact with department heads at the targeted universities through an introductory email. The purpose of this email was to introduce myself, clarify the objectives of the study, and solicit permission and support for my data collection activities at their institutions. In my initial attempt to engage a prominent UK global institution with a significant number of potential participants for my research, I received a positive response from the department head. However, this opportunity ultimately proved unsuccessful due to the institution's high demand as a research site. My research aims to generate a substantial amount of data involving numerous administrators, teachers, and students, and the institution was unable to accommodate additional studies at that time. Conversely, a subsequent attempt to contact another university yielded positive results, resulting in two interviews with an EAP teacher and five interviews with EAP students. By the time I gained access to this institution, only ten international students who did not meet the language requirements were mandated to attend the course, thereby precluding the possibility of quantitative data collection in this instance, for both teachers and students. The challenges encountered as a researcher with outsider status prompted discussions with my supervisors and modifications to the data collection strategies employed in the UK, resulting in methodological imbalances and disparities in participant numbers across the three case studies. I was concerned that the methodologies employed were not consistently applied

across both contexts. Nonetheless, given the UK case study's function as a reference point for the principal investigation of the two university cases in Vietnam, alongside its emphasis on curriculum implementation at the classroom level to address inquiries regarding the content and methods of instruction in accord with the demand for a more globally-oriented approach in ELT, I opted to proceed with this case study. The data gathered from this context could be effectively utilised to address the research questions. These challenges extended the duration of data collection in the UK and ultimately led to the cancellation of the Japanese case.

In the UK case, although three teachers were contacted via email or telephone to participate in the interviews, only one responded to the invitation. Consequently, two comprehensive interviews were conducted with this teacher to gather extensive data. The first in-depth interview was conducted with the teacher (T19) to attain a profound understanding of the intended curricula and his perceptions. Following the initial analysis of the first interview, a second interview was arranged with the same teacher to conduct a more thorough exploration of the preliminary findings, collect any missing data from the first interview, and focus more on the teachers' practices during the implementation process, including his justification for employing different pedagogical and assessment practices, the challenges faced, and the modifications he made or would like to make for elements that were not effective. Both interviews were held in a nearby coffee shop for the convenience of the participant. The duration of the interviews was approximately 90 minutes, attributable to the teacher's high level of engagement and his willingness to share ideas and experiences.

In this Case, I opted not to conduct a focus group due to the limited number of students (as noted in section 5.3.2). Instead, I conducted five in-depth interviews with EAP students (S61-S65) in the latter half of 2018 to maximize data collection. All five interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with the Vietnamese students and in English with other international students. The interviews took place on the university campus for the convenience of the participants. With permission, all interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis using NVivo (see section 5.6.3 for a detailed description and appendix 9 for a sample of interview transcripts).

5.6 Data Analysis

This section begins with an overview of the purposes and sequence of the mixed data analysis process in the study. It then outlines the specific procedures and techniques employed to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. The final part of the section discusses the strategies for linking quantitative and qualitative outcomes to address the research questions, as well as the measures taken to ensure the validity of the mixed data and results.

The data analysis procedure in this study followed three distinct steps proposed by Creswell and Clark (2018) for research that uses a mixed methods design. As mentioned earlier in Section 5.3.2, these steps were carried out in a sequential and linear manner. First, the quantitative data were analysed using quantitative techniques, followed by the analysis of qualitative data using qualitative techniques. The third step involved analysing and interpreting the integrated results. The following three subsections will elaborate on each of the three steps mentioned above and discuss the strategies used to validate the mixed data and results.

5.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire survey were analysed using SPSS 27, a software package provided by University College London. The analysis process involved screening and cleaning the data, preparing the variables for analysis, and selecting and applying the appropriate statistical techniques.

Initially, the raw data from the completed questionnaires were converted into numerical values suitable for quantitative analysis. The responses and their corresponding numeric values were entered into an SPSS data sheet. Subsequently, the dataset underwent a thorough screening and cleaning procedure to identify and rectify any data entry errors. Incomplete responses were excluded from the final dataset. Finally, the data preparation

stage involved ensuring that the variables were ready for analysis. The three independent variables comprised multiple indicators, necessitating the calculation of total scale/sub-scale scores, while the dependent variable had a single indicator and could be directly used for analysis.

The quantitative data analysis in this study encompassed two levels, employing the corresponding statistical techniques. Initially, descriptive statistical techniques were applied to investigate the overall trends in the data. The descriptive findings (such as mean, standard deviations, frequency, and range of scores) served three purposes: (i) establishing the profile of the sample, (ii) addressing descriptive research enquiries, and (iii) assessing the conformity of assumptions underlying the techniques employed in the subsequent stage.

At the second level, the Pearson product-moment correlation technique was selected due to its effectiveness and wide usage in examining the relationships between variables. This study employed Pearson correlation to examine the correlation between three demographic factors (age, experience, and qualification), as well as other factors acting as independent and dependent variables, such as teachers' personal and contextual beliefs, teachers' attitudes towards the new curriculum, teachers' implementation self-efficacy, and teacher confidence in implementing the new curriculum.

5.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

This section provides a detailed description of the qualitative data analysis that followed the quantitative data analysis mentioned earlier. The process of analysing qualitative data consists of two main steps, which are discussed below.

According to Creswell (2012), the initial preparation of the qualitative data for analysis involves organising the large amount of data, transferring it to textual files, and determining whether manual or computer-assisted analysis is more appropriate. Following Creswell's advice, I categorised the qualitative data into different types: public documents, interviews, and observations. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim and translated into

English. Along with the documents, they were saved as Word files and imported into NVivo for analysis. Due to limited financial resources, I personally translated all the Vietnamese transcripts into English, as I am proficient in both languages. The use of computer-assisted analysis through NVivo was beneficial for this study, as it allowed for efficient storage, coding, indexing, tracking, and visualisation of unstructured and non-numerical data.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a method that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). This method was chosen for the study because it is a widely used, generic approach across qualitative research (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Ryan and Bernard, 2000). It enables a detailed and complex description of the data, which facilitates interpretations of various aspects related to the research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2006). After transcribing each interview, I carefully reviewed the data and made a summary of the main ideas and comments. I identified themes and recorded them in memos. Additionally, I created a list of codes and analytical categories associated with different dimensions of the interviews. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to section 5.4.

In the analysis of the observations, I reviewed my field notes and watched/listened to video- and audio-recorded lessons. I then compared the different analyses of the interview data to identify common themes and find further evidence to support them. The qualitative analysis of teachers' and students' perspectives provided insights into how curriculum policies were understood and implemented in the classroom.

5.6.3 Validity, reliability and triangulation

The mixed-method findings derived from the analysis of two databases were integrated in order to address the research questions. The qualitative findings are used to provide additional explanation and depth to the quantitative findings (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The procedures implemented to ensure the validity of the data, findings, and conclusions in this research are similar to those utilised in other mixed methods research. The validity of this study is established by combining the evidence of the validity and reliability of the quantitative data and findings, the validity of the qualitative data and findings, and the

accuracy and appropriateness of the measures taken to integrate the two forms of data and findings (Creswell 2012; Creswell and Creswell, 2023; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006).

The concept of triangulation was originally introduced into the research methodology framework by Denzin (1978) to refer to the inclusion of multiple perspectives on a researched phenomenon by utilising a variety of data sources, investigators, theories, or research methods to corroborate interpretations. Under this original meaning, the term has since been adopted to denote (i) a general strategy to effectively enhance research validity (i.e., the trustworthiness, accuracy, and usability of research findings and conclusions) (Dörnyei, 2007), (ii) a mixed methods research design that simultaneously collects both quantitative and qualitative data and integrates them to support findings (Creswell, 2012), or (iii) the process of confirming evidence from different individuals (e.g., principals and students), types of data (e.g., interview transcripts, observational field notes), and data collection methods (e.g., observation and interviews) to ensure the accuracy of findings in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012, Creswell and Creswell, 2023). According to Silverman (2014:91), triangulation signifies the utilisation of 'multiple theories, methods, observers, and empirical materials to produce a more accurate, comprehensible, and objective representation of the object of study.'

In this study, triangulation is employed as a general strategy to enhance research validity. Therefore, not only were multiple methods (both quantitative and qualitative) used, but evidence from multiple data sources, various data types, and different data collection instruments were also generated to support the research findings. Five sources of data were used in this study, including teachers and students (representing the targeted population), heads of English departments at two Vietnamese public universities, policymakers, and documents. To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, four instruments were employed: survey questionnaires, interviews, documents, and observations. These various data sources contributed to the interpretation of the study's findings. The primary data source consisted of information gathered from teacher and student participants through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Furthermore, secondary or supplementary data was obtained from public documents, policymakers, and heads of English departments.

Classroom observations provided additional insight into the behaviours and attitudes of both students and teachers, thus supporting the information gathered from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. This method, known as 'triangulation,' aims to enhance the validity of the findings by subjecting them to multiple tests and perspectives, rather than relying solely on a single method, source, or type of data (Dörnyei, 2007).

As can be seen from figure 5.2, the findings obtained from the surveys conducted in Phase 2 and the in-depth interviews with administrators in Phase 3 were triangulated with supplementary data extracted from public documents and interviews with policymakers. The purpose was to identify any discrepancies between the national language policy and the interpretations of administrators at the institutional level. Furthermore, the findings derived from observations, post-observation interviews, and focus groups were initially triangulated with data from surveys and follow-up interviews to investigate the correlation between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices. Additionally, these findings were also compared with data acquired from documents and interviews with policymakers and administrators to gain insights into the implementation gap at the classroom level.

5.7 Chapter summary

The chapter provides a detailed description and justification for the research approach, methods, and strategies utilised in the study, as well as any perceived methodological limitations. Data from diverse participants were obtained through a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations using various techniques. These data will offer a comprehensive portrayal of the constructed reality, encompassing both the intended and enacted curriculum in the UK and Vietnam. The emphasis will be placed on the end users, namely lecturers and students who have implemented the curricula within these two contexts. Subsequent chapters will present the empirical findings pertaining to the constructs and phenomena of interest. Initially, the outcomes of interviews with policymakers in the Vietnamese higher education setting will be disclosed to illustrate the language policies and intended curriculum at the national level. Subsequently, the findings from interviews with administrators, exploring their interpretations and translations of the

national policies and curriculum within their institutional contexts, will be presented. Finally, the results obtained from teachers and students, through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, will be showcased to demonstrate the extent to which the curriculum is effectively implemented.

CHAPTER 6

EAP CURRICULUM IN VIETNAM (Case 1)

This study was conducted to gain insights into the pedagogical practices employed by teachers in three cases to achieve the curriculum objectives. This particular case focuses on inquiries related to the position, impact, and role of the EAP preparation course in EMI programmes, as well as the perceptions of practitioners regarding the EAP curriculum and its implementation in the emerging EMI context of Vietnam, which may differ from the EFL context. The initial section of this chapter presents the findings from interviews conducted with national policymakers, which primarily concentrate on English curriculum reforms in higher education at the national level. Subsequent sections then delve into the extent to which institutions and departments have transitioned from a content-focused disciplinary approach with high-stakes examinations to a new curriculum that integrates broader institutional goals and active learning theories into standards, pedagogy, and evaluation practices. An analysis of the triangulated data has been carried out through questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, interviews, and correspondences involving two policymakers (one manager of Project 2020 and one Leader of the Testing Team - VSTEP), four administrators (one Rector, one Departmental Head, and 2 team leaders), 39 English lecturers (including two team leaders, one from the testing team and one from the building team), and 53 EMI students in a prominent comprehensive university in Hanoi.

6.1 The national language policy

This section presents the findings derived from policy documents and interviews conducted with officials from the MOET, including one manager from Project 2020 and one manager from the Testing Centre (VSTEP). These findings complement the background information and contextual knowledge provided in chapter five of the Project 2020. The focus of these findings lies in the objectives of the project and the key aspects of English education at the tertiary level in Vietnam. These aspects encompass (1) the guidance for English education, including syllabuses, teaching materials, and teaching and learning approaches, and (2) the assessment methods employed, particularly the national English test (CEFR-V and VSTEP). From the synthesis of both participants' perspectives and documentary evidence, four themes have emerged: policy rationale, policy design, policy technologies, and expected

implementation. Each theme addresses different facets of the curriculum, such as syllabuses, teaching materials, teaching and learning approaches, and assessment.

6.1.1 Rationale of the Policy

The first theme, namely the rationale for the policy, offers fundamental justifications for the policy documents. These justifications are intended to comply with the higher education reform requirements, thereby aiming to enhance the quality of English language teaching and improve students' English proficiency. Backed by a substantial budget, the 2020 project plans, which have been described as 'ambitious in both nature and scale' (BC report, 2017), seek to significantly increase the number of Vietnamese English speakers and foster students' competency in multicultural and multilingual communication (GoV, 2008). This proactive response is driven by the growing demand for English in both the Vietnam education system and the job market.

Foreign language learning programs in higher education are proactively developed by universities to meet national qualifications frameworks. Universities have the autonomy to develop and promulgate curricula for all subjects, not just foreign languages. (Project Manager - Interview)

Interview data confirmed that tertiary English education in Vietnam was significantly influenced by the Vietnamese government, specifically the Ministry of Education and Training. It was observed that the direction of English education at this level was aligned with the national development needs and social demands. The implementation of the National Foreign Language Project was anticipated to:

... deliver comprehensive reforms in the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the public education system. It aimed to implement new foreign language curricula at all levels of education so that by 2015, there would be a considerable advance in the workforce's foreign language competence, especially in areas of priority. Additionally, by 2020, the majority of Vietnamese graduates from post-secondary institutions would become independent and confident users

of foreign languages. They would be able to study and work in a multilingual and multicultural environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage for Vietnamese people in the course of the country's industrialisation and modernisation²². (GoV, 2008: 1)

The first phase, which started in 2008, used a top-down approach focusing on the goal of ensuring that all high school graduates reach at least CEFR level B1 in their chosen foreign language(s) by the year 2020.

Foreign language teaching is compulsory from year 3, with the aim of students achieving a B1 level upon high school graduation. This provides tertiary students with a solid foundation of language skills to continue their studies at the university level, enabling them to conduct research and study using foreign languages. (Project Manager - Interview)

Conversations with officials from MOET have provided valuable insights into the current status of Project 2020. The project is presently in its second phase and has undergone seven significant modifications. Since December 2017, Project 2020 has been subject to adjustments and enhancements across several areas. These include the promotion of innovation, the integration of foreign languages into social activities and early education, the incorporation of foreign language instruction into other academic subjects, the utilisation of advanced technology in language teaching and learning, the establishment of a supportive language learning environment, the assurance of English proficiency and teaching competence among language and science educators, the enhancement of national testing and assessment capabilities, the prioritisation of assistance to underprivileged areas, and the promotion of the role of foreign language centres in extracurricular language learning. One new focus is on materials, resources and online interaction for the Vietnamese population (BC Report, 2017)²³, especially in developing listening and speaking

²² Translated into English by the researcher.

²³ *An evaluative report on the Project 2020 Vietnamese National Open Online Learning Centre proposal*. This report was commissioned as part of a collaboration with the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training and the British Council to inform the next phase in the plans of Project 2020.

skills (Project Manager - Interview). This second phase of the project has a new timeline, extending until 2025, to help learners achieve the same overall target of increased language proficiency levels.

6.1.2 Policy Design

Policy design is recognised as the second theme, which focuses on teaching English in a way that enables students to communicate confidently in the language through communicative language or task-based language teaching methods. To support these efforts, a new National Foreign Language Assessment Centre was established to house the national language proficiency framework. In line with international standards, the MOET released a circular on 28 January 2014, introducing the unified language proficiency framework known as CEFR-V (or KNLNN in Vietnamese). This framework aligns with the CEFR, which comprises six levels of language proficiency. The adoption of the CEFR as a comprehensive legal document for benchmarking English language instruction was chosen due to its widespread use and acceptance in many countries (Test 1 - Interview). Consequently, all essential examinations are now aligned with the CEFR, ensuring consistency and comparability.

Because many people use it, we also use it. Therefore, to determine whether Vietnamese language ability is better or not, it must be based on the same measurement framework (Test 1 - Interview).

Decision 1400 (GoV, 2008) has already established the required benchmark for English proficiency for students and teachers at all levels of education. This decision is uncontroversial as it is imposed from the top-down. The framework itself is a 'near translation of the CEFR's can-do statements' (Ngo, 2018a) and an adapted version of the CEFR framework specifically designed for the Vietnamese context (Test 1 - Interview).

There are several positive aspects to the adoption of this new framework. First, it demonstrates that Vietnam emphasises the importance of developing and evaluating all four language skills for learners. It has played a decisive role in promoting methodological innovations and new approaches to designing teaching programmes, particularly the

development of a communicative approach to improving students' ability to communicate. The framework places a strong emphasis on spoken and written communication at each level and claimed to be aligned with the objectives of Project 2020. The goals of the project and the detailed descriptors in the framework highlight the need to focus on students' communicative competence. However, the specification of diverse linguistic and cultural contexts was not clarified in the framework, and there is a lack of published information regarding the alignment process. In higher education, it is necessary to prepare students for multilingual and intercultural communication in academic or professional settings. In addition, the framework provides a clear and sequential pathway for learners' progress across national education levels. However, this top-down and 'extremely ambitious' (Kirkpatrick, 2011: 103) approach has some limitations. There is limited scholarly evidence (accessible to the public) supporting the established correlation between proficiency levels and education levels. Furthermore, since the framework was originally developed for European contexts, further research is needed to validate its implementation and achievement of objectives in the Vietnamese context despite the MOET's efforts to adapt it. Several important questions need to be addressed, such as the timeframe for students to attain the required proficiency level in the new curriculum, the assessment methods schools can use for testing students, the costs of implementing the new curriculum in schools (and its funding), and the types of support teachers will require to implement the new curriculum.

In conjunction with the CEFR-based framework, the MOET has implemented a compulsory exit testing policy. According to this policy, students who do not pass the final examination are considered ineligible for graduation. The Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) was developed as an innovative assessment tool for foreign language proficiency (Test 1 - Interview) and as a cost-effective method of communicative testing (Nguyen et al., 2014). VSTEP was specifically designed to meet the needs of testing English language usage in the Vietnamese context (Test 1), but it did not incorporate Vietnamese values and learning culture into its framework. The MOET provided funding for its development, and subsequently, it became the property of the state after receiving approval. The test can be taken to fulfil English proficiency requirements for undergraduate

graduation, postgraduate English teacher registration (VSTEP 3-5), and admission to the civil service (VSTEP 2).

This is the first standardised English language proficiency testing system in Vietnam. It is a valuable testing tool for Vietnamese language users, developed by Vietnamese experts. In other words, it is specifically designed to assess the language proficiency of Vietnamese people within the Vietnamese context (Test 1).

This test includes four components (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) that have been designed to assess English proficiency levels from Level 3 to Level 5 (KNLNN) (equivalent to Levels B1-C1 in the CEFR). These levels are considered appropriate for individuals aged 15 and above. Specifically, VSTEP's Listening and Reading sections evaluate various sub-skills related to reading and listening comprehension (e.g., understanding main ideas, making inferences, and capturing specific details). Both sections exclusively employ multiple-choice items with four options which demonstrates the limited opportunity for interaction and real language use. VSTEP's Writing section requires candidates to complete tasks involving email or letter writing, as well as a short essay. On the other hand, the Speaking section consists of a brief interview, a problem-solving task, and a topic development task based on suggested ideas provided in a mind map.

The second goal is much more ambitious, aiming to enhance the resilience and capacity of the Vietnamese people through testing and evaluation. I comprehend that assessments have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process. Therefore, by establishing a system of testing and evaluation conducted by Vietnamese individuals, we can also develop a system of training programmes led by Vietnamese experts (Test 1).

And if Vietnamese people envision a profile of a Vietnamese language learner who needs to have foreign language abilities, as described by the VSTEP system, it will have an impact on the teaching process and the development of such a programme. Additionally, if it has this effect, it would create a comprehensive competency framework that is more suitable for the Vietnamese context, encompassing

everything from teaching to testing. Our overarching goal is to strengthen our internal capacity in terms of assessment and the development of language teaching and learning materials (Test 1).

The Project 2020 assigned the task of building a proposed computer-based assessment model for the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) in 2017. This decision was prompted by the increasing prevalence of technology in various aspects of life. The completion of the modernisation of VSTEP IBT in 2017 aimed to harness the potential benefits provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution in order to evaluate the abilities of contemporary individuals (Test 1). This shift in format is driven by the necessity for a thorough evaluation of language proficiency as mandated by policymakers. Another change in direction involves the ongoing process of gradually enhancing the capabilities of the examination board. Consequently, there will be further improvements aimed at ensuring compliance with all standardisation regulations (Test 1), with the objective of refining all standardisation procedures for the VSTEP exam. To illustrate, both examiners and test takers, along with the organisers and participants involved in the examination process, have received training and completed specialised staff training programmes. As a result, all VSTEP test organisers will need to undergo additional training and strengthen their skills to ensure the quality of each examination (Test 1).

6.1.3 Policy technologies

The third theme, policy technologies, relates to the seminars and training programmes designed to develop highly qualified tertiary educators who are capable of achieving CEFR level 5, as well as the publication and dissemination of the Vietnamese Standardised Tests of English Proficiency (VSTEP).

Teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of the new foreign language programme. Foreign language teachers at various school levels are trained and nurtured to meet the requirements of implementing the general education programme in foreign languages (Project Manager).

Project 2020 has allocated up to 85% of its budget towards the retraining of English teachers in both language proficiency and pedagogy. To accomplish this ambitious task, the MOET has instructed five key regional foreign language institutions to conduct initial assessments of teachers' proficiency on an unprecedented scale in the country's history of English education. Pedagogically, Project 2020 promotes the widespread application of student-centred approaches in the English curriculum, with the goal of enhancing students' creativity and engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, the Project has facilitated innovative curriculum development and English teacher education by sending teachers abroad to improve their English proficiency and research skills. The MOET (2010) has issued official letter 2196/BGDDT-GDDH, which outlines the training output standards for tertiary students. According to this letter, all tertiary graduates must achieve a B1 level according to the CEFR or level 3 (VSTEP).

The GoV has embarked on a new stage of Project 2020, which spans from 2017 to 2025. This extended phase, initiated in December 2017, along with nine modifications, represents a significant measure that grants the government additional time to accomplish the objectives outlined in the national foreign language programme. Moreover, it facilitates students in attaining the desired level of language proficiency. Similar to the prior phase (2008-2016), the current initiative encompasses three primary goals: the renovation of foreign language education across all levels of education, the enhancement of learners' foreign language skills, and the improvement of the nation's human resources quality in the context of integration (GoV, 2017). At the tertiary level, the second phase adopted an institution-based curriculum model in which MOET's curriculum structure provided the main components of all undergraduate degree courses in the education system, including the total number of credits required and programme duration, while universities were responsible for interpreting and expanding on this MOET framework. In other words, institutions were able to develop their own English curriculum based on their specific situation to best address the identified learning needs of their student population and social needs (Project Manager). Several tertiary institutions have officially established and implemented English proficiency standards for their students, both English majors and non-English majors. Many curricula and syllabi have been developed, approved, and implemented in higher education. The MOET has initiated the assessment of the curriculum, following a decade of project

implementation. However, the evaluation process has only commenced with a thorough examination of the curriculum specifically developed for English teacher training (Project Manager).

6.1.4 Expected Implementation

Policy enactment, which is always subject to individual interpretation and complex interactions among the actors involved, can be observed in the actions of teachers (Ball et al., 2011a; Maguire et al., 2015; 2018), school headteachers (Singh, Heimans, and Glasswell, 2014; Singh, Pini, and Glasswell, 2018; Smardon, 2018; Wenner and Settlage, 2015), and middle-level education administrators (Singh et al., 2013). One of the main themes identified in relation to teachers' English competency and understanding of the new syllabus is the expected implementation. Teachers were required to participate in a country-wide screening test based on the CEFR to assess their English language competency. The MOET stipulated that elementary school English teachers should attain at least the fourth highest skill level (B1) in the CEFR, while those in secondary schools should achieve the third highest level (B2). Tertiary level teachers were required to attain the fourth highest level (C1) or a score of 7 in the IELTS. From 2011 to 2013, a nationwide assessment was conducted for all English teachers in Vietnam, with a total of 44,995 teachers being tested. The results were alarming, as over 83%, 87%, and 91% of teachers in primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools, respectively, failed to meet the required benchmarks (Nguyen, 2013). Consequently, this large-scale assessment and disappointing outcomes caused significant stress and pressure among teachers (Dudzik and Nguyen, 2015; Le, 2015). Following the initial assessment, thousands of teachers were sent to take intensive courses in both English (400 hours for each CEFR-based level) and teaching methods at the five key regional foreign language centres in major cities for several months, after which they had to retake the exams. This meant that 90% of English teachers had to temporarily leave their jobs to attend training, which had a profound impact on their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, these intensive courses were found to be problematic in the sense that they were primarily designed to prepare teachers for proficiency tests rather than enhance their ability to teach English (Le, 2015; Mai, 2018).

The primary objective of the project was to ensure that all high school graduates attain a CEFR level B1 in their chosen foreign language(s) by the year 2020. This would be accomplished through the implementation of a new National Curriculum for English, and the introduction of English as a foreign language in schools three years earlier than before (commencing in Grade 3 instead of Grade 6). These modifications were designed to address the nationwide demand for foreign language learning (Project Manager). At the tertiary level, it was anticipated that all foreign language students in institutions would reach a B1 or level 3 (CEFR-V - VSTEP) in order to obtain a university degree. VSTEP constituted a standardised, non-curriculum base system, and all institutions were required to enhance their training programmes to facilitate students in meeting the specified benchmark. The language testing policy has been implemented, signifying that this examination format would be disseminated nationwide, and recognised and accepted by all institutions and organisations in Vietnam. Comprehensive language training programmes were expected to be formulated based on the standard proficiency measured by the VSTEP examination:

Our ambition, of course, is for VSTEP to become widely utilised throughout Vietnam and gain recognition from other countries. This would mean that it can serve as a comprehensive alternative to other standardised tests (Test 1).

In terms of policy, the government's document states that VSTEP is officially recognised and implemented nationwide. However, it is uncertain whether users will actually choose to utilise VSTEP or prefer other assessment options like IELTS or Cambridge (Test 1).

It is evident that English assessment is tightly regulated by the central government, but there are limited attempts to enforce the promulgated regulations. Additionally, more high-stakes exams have been placed under the direct management of local and central governments, leading teachers to model assessment classroom practices on high-stakes tests (Vu, 2017). As of the end of 2019, very few universities and colleges had applied the English output standard for their graduate students, even for English-major students. This was because the rate of students achieving a standard level of English equivalent to B1 was low, at about one third. This meant that applying the standard would result in a majority of

students being unable to graduate. Consequently, a number of universities have devised temporary solutions, which scholars have referred to as 'policy evasion' (Perryman et al., 2011: 190), in an attempt to assist students in graduating. These solutions can include internal output testing systems (Ngo, 2018; Nguyen, 2019) or the use of international standardised test results such as IELTS, TOEFL, or TOEIC instead (T.L. Lam, 2019; Nguyen and Gu, 2020; Tran, 2015). Consequently, this has resulted in chaos in higher education teaching and learning due to the questionable quality of the internal exit tests and significant discrepancies among institutions' requirements for the international standardised tests. Until 2024, up to 34 higher education institutions throughout the country are authorised to administer English proficiency examinations in accordance with Vietnam's 6-level Foreign Language Competency Framework. Nevertheless, it is imperative to conduct regular evaluations to maintain the quality of these examinations across all testing centres nationwide.

6.2 Intended EAP curriculum at institutional level

In the realm of education, the curriculum is often seen as a broad outline of the learning plan. However, two key resources that teachers can rely on to structure their instruction and facilitate student learning are curriculum materials and knowledge about curricular purposes and structures. Curriculum materials provide teachers with a range of student activities that are specifically designed to help students achieve specific objectives. On the other hand, knowledge about curricular purposes and structures gives teachers a solid foundation to select and modify materials in a way that aligns with the original intentions of the curriculum.

The distinction between curriculum and pedagogy is often blurred, as in day-to-day classroom interactions, curriculum and pedagogy have a mutual impact on each other. In terms of models, curricular change generally aims to replace content-driven curricula with process- and objective-driven curricula. This shift aims to generate applicable knowledge rather than mere reproduction, which is relevant to learners. However, different countries employ different terminology, emphasizing this distinction to varying degrees. In this regard,

the adoption of Scott's curriculum model in terms of curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and assessment standards served as a comprehensive conceptual map for examining the curriculum within a university case and across cases.

The utilisation of curriculum by teachers has been extensively studied in various areas of education. One consistent finding from these studies is the existence of a discrepancy between the intended and implemented curriculum. This discrepancy refers to the difference between how curriculum materials are envisioned by curriculum designers for instructional planning and delivery, and the actual instructional practices employed by teachers.

At this stage of the study, a comprehensive analysis has been conducted on the intended and implemented curricula in the three university cases in order to detect any incongruities related to curriculum standards, pedagogical standards, and assessment standards. Various factors and challenges that have contributed to these discrepancies, along with potential solutions, have been identified in this research, which involves teachers and students as the end-users of the curriculum implementation, as well as other relevant stakeholders. In this institution, information regarding the intended curriculum was derived from institutional documents, 39 teacher questionnaires, and in-depth interviews conducted with four administrators.

6.2.1 The design of the EAP curriculum in the EMI programme

At a broader scale, a national curriculum delineates the objectives of the national education system, whilst a curriculum at a narrower scale represents the objectives and study areas of an institution or the syllabus of a specific subject. In the case of the EMI programme, it appears to be more intricate. The curriculum documents provided by MOET and member universities were accessible on their respective websites. Although they were claimed to be based on foreign partner universities, they still maintained some of their traditional characteristics. There were five essential components: general information about the degree programme, overall objectives, programme duration, total credits, admission requirements, degree type, grading system, and course list. The total credits varied from

140 to 172 for each degree course, with the entire programme spanning from four to five years. Vietnamese (L1) served as the administrative language and medium of instruction for certain courses, whilst the remaining courses were to be delivered in English (refer to Figure 6.1). Students whose English proficiency was below IELTS 5.0 were required to take English preparation courses (English A1-C1) for at least their first year, which were aligned with CEFR levels. Once students achieved a minimum of IELTS 5.5 (VNU, 2017), they could proceed to the degree courses, which were conducted in English. Upon completion of the programme, students were expected to provide evidence of achieving a score of at least IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent).

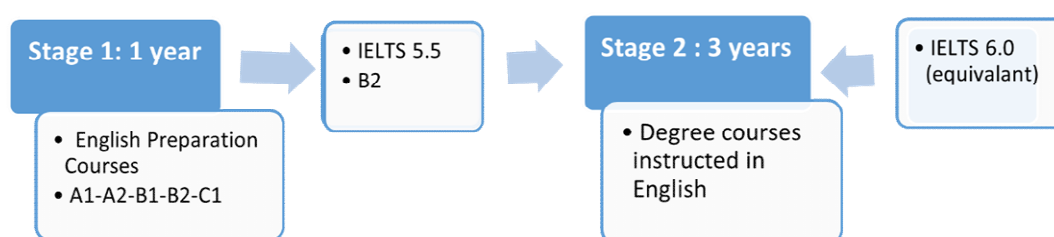


Figure 6.1: Four-year undergraduate EMI programme in Case 1

In 2016, significant changes were made to the structure of English preparation courses due to the discontinuation of government funding for all EMI programmes. This led to the expansion of the EAP curriculum, which now spans a period of 2 years. One member university expressed concerns regarding the duration of the initial year, which was solely dedicated to English learning. Their argument proposed the inclusion of some content subjects alongside English teaching. Consequently, the language learning programme underwent a transformation from an intensive study programme spanning 2 semesters to a 4-semester programme (Figure 6.2). The requirement for students to dedicate 20 hours per week to studying English was reduced to a mere 10 hours per week. Additionally, students were no longer required to travel to ULIS for EAP courses; instead, they could receive language education on their own university campus, where they could also engage in the study of other specialised subjects.

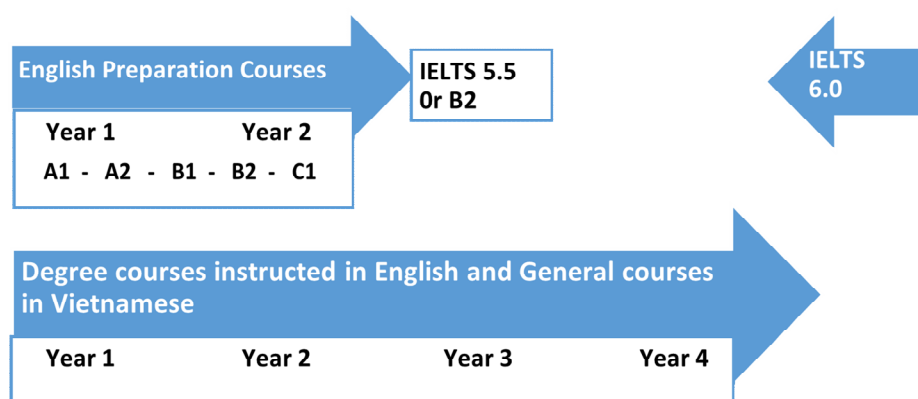


Figure 6.2: Four-year undergraduate EMI in Case 1 (2016)

6.2.2 The EAP curriculum standards

The English preparation course was originally scheduled to take place at this institution in the first year as an intensive two-semester programme. It was effectively executed during the initial five years of its implementation. As Scott (2021) points out, the reform involves various processes such as amendment, modification, correction, and revision. In this university case, some member universities have adopted new policies since 2016 which allowed for the extension of this English preparation programme to year 2. This means that students have two years to complete their English route in order to be ready for their content subjects in English. These policy changes, together with the cessation of government financial support, have resulted in a significant modification of the teaching and learning pedagogy, teachers' and students' attitudes and motivation, and the effectiveness of these English courses, which will be discussed thoroughly in this chapter.

The course is divided into 4 general English subjects, from GE 1 to GE 4, and its required English proficiency level is B2, level 4 in VSTEPS or 5.5 in IELTS. The total length is 600 hours over 60 weeks, with 10 hours of English lessons per week, continuously for two years. During this time, students not only study English but also learn other subjects in Vietnamese and some content subjects in English, even if their English does not meet the requirement. Students who do not pass the final exams of English at the end of Year 2 are required to do an extra 120 hours of study and retake the final exams.

The syllabus template used in this university follows the Conceive - Design - Implement - Operate (CDIO) framework, which has been provided by the MOET to tertiary institutions. Each course syllabus includes essential elements such as the course title, required textbooks and additional resources, students' responsibilities, and teaching content. Additionally, the teaching schedules also include information on teaching methodologies, time allocation, and evaluation methods. During the curriculum development process, the team of educators focused on ensuring that students successfully achieve the programme's objectives. They carefully determined the appropriate content for each course level, including functions, topics or themes, tasks, grammar structures, vocabulary, and cultural aspects, all of which contribute to the desired outcome level of the course. However, the specific objectives or aims for each course were not stated explicitly in the syllabus document. The syllabus emphasised a learner-centred approach and teaching practices such as pair work, group work, vocabulary, and feedback, with the aim of fostering students' confidence and enhancing their communicative competence. However, the academic objectives were only briefly mentioned in the last two syllabi, specifically related to academic vocabulary and academic essays in preparation for the IELTS exams. The syllabi did not explicitly address academic skills, study skills, and self-directed learning strategies, which are crucial for enhancing students' confidence and achieving success in their EMI programme across all four courses. Most notably, the significant objective of preparing students for confident communication in a multilingual and multicultural context, as stated in the language policy, was not adequately addressed in this institutional curriculum. The syllabus placed significant emphasis on the learner-centred approach and teaching practices such as pair work, group work, vocabulary, and feedback that aimed at fostering students' confidence and enhance their communicative competence. However, the academic objectives were only briefly mentioned in the last two syllabi, specifically concerning academic vocabulary and academic essays in preparation for the IELTS exams (see Figure 6.). The syllabi lacked explicit mention of academic skills, study skills, and self-directed learning strategies that are pivotal for enhancing students' confidence and attaining success in their EMI programme across all four courses. Most notably, the crucial objective of preparing students for confident communication in a multilingual and multicultural context, as stated in the language policy, was not adequately addressed in this institutional curriculum.

IV. Teaching approach:

- IELTS orientation and test familiarization.
- The Learner-Centered Approach is used.
- Lesson should be planned based on students' needs and their characteristics.
- Feedback for students' performance should also be given timely and regularly to build up their confidence and improve their performance.
- For reading and listening lessons, students will be taught and trained with basic skills needed to deal with reading and listening activities.
- For speaking, students' pronunciation will be checked and corrected.
- Pair and group-work activities should be applied and encouraged together with the individual ones.
- Vocabulary will also be built up on the theme basis in order to improve the quality of students' talk.
- For writing, lessons about basic types of academic essays should be planned.
- Academic vocabulary will be taught and provided to students to better their writing.
- At the end of the semester, mock tests will be provided so as to help students get familiar with the real test.

Extract 6.1: Teaching Schedule for GE 4

The administrator asserted that there was no necessity to compile a new series of textbooks; instead, it was recommended to capitalise on the strengths of textbooks from English-speaking countries. The administrator acknowledged that no textbook is without flaws and cannot cover all aspects, therefore it is the responsibility of the teacher to select and adapt valuable content from different textbooks. However, this task is not simple (Admin 1). The administrators decided to include course textbooks obtained from English-speaking countries to ensure authenticity. Specifically, the teaching materials used in this preparation courses, ranging from GE 1 to GE 4, were acquired from England. The *New English File* series were selected as the course textbooks for the first two modules based on their comprehensive and up-to-date content, as well as their adherence to the CEFR standards.

The textbooks and other teaching materials for the first two courses were chosen because their contents are new and updated. These materials also include a variety of handouts and supplementary activities, which can greatly support both teachers and students. Most importantly, the design of these books matches the course's output requirements. (Build 1)

Given that the new curriculum aims to enhance students' communicative competence and their ability to use English for academic purposes or as a tool for studying other subjects, the language functions are organised according to specific topics or themes, serving as the

guiding principle for each syllabus. As a result, the syllabus follows a topical-functional structure and employs a task-based approach. Nonetheless, various teaching and learning strategies are implemented to provide learners with ample opportunities to engage in communicative activities. While teachers are encouraged to stick to the syllabus, they are also permitted to make adjustments to meet the specific needs of their students by incorporating additional teaching materials. Furthermore, an online learning programme is utilised as a supplementary resource for learning English, although it is not officially included in the syllabus.

Students were encouraged to purchase their online learning accounts and complete the online tasks, which do not contribute to the overall percentage of any test results. This could potentially lead to a low participation rate among students in this online program and a decrease in their motivation to learn, as they would have to pay additional fees for it. (Build 1)

The remaining two courses, General English 3 and 4, were designed with a primary focus on the IELTS, as it is a prerequisite for students to achieve a minimum score of 5.5 in this specific examination. In order to enhance students' language proficiency and fully equip them for the IELTS test, a selection of skill-based and IELTS-specific textbooks have been chosen. These include Tactics for Listening, Let's Talk, Weaving It Together, Reading Maker, the Collins English for Exams series (Listening for IELTS, Speaking for IELTS, and Reading for IELTS), and The Best Preparation for IELTS.

6.2.3 The EAP pedagogic standards

The English curriculum has undergone a notable pedagogical shift, catalysed by a new directive issued by the university administration. This directive advocates for the implementation of an intensive language teaching and learning approach within a designated timeframe. Unlike the former curriculum, which featured mixed-level English classes, the current curriculum segregates students into high and low-level English courses. The allocation of students to their respective course levels, whether high or low, is

determined by their performance in placement tests administered at the commencement of the course.

In the past, foreign language teaching for non-English major students used to take a significant amount of time. Students were required to study a foreign language until their third year. At that point, I had a strong desire to prove a thesis advocating for the necessity of offering an intensive and concentrated foreign language course, which would allow students to quickly acquire proficiency and then focus on other subjects. (Admin 1)

The administrator deemed this mode of teaching and learning to be a crucial regulation for EAP students. This entails students attending a language university (in this case ULIS) for intensive English study. ULIS assumes responsibility for the provision of lecture halls, teachers, materials, learning programmes, and teaching and learning equipment. In addition to the designated 20 classroom hours per week, ULIS also organises a wide range of extracurricular activities in English, thereby enabling students to immerse themselves in a foreign language environment. Moreover, ULIS leverages its pool of English majors to develop a buddy programme, wherein one English major is paired with three EAP students to form a group. Outside of regular school hours, these language majors serve as tutors for EAP students. These extracurricular activities foster a conducive learning atmosphere, which 'encourages EAP students to learn and utilise English as a second language on a daily basis' (Admin 1). In the first five years, there existed a substantial EAP community, consisting of approximately 20 to 24 classes concurrently, with 24 head teachers providing support to students encountering learning difficulties. Following every six-week examination period, head teachers are tasked with identifying curriculum inadequacies and addressing any challenges faced by their students, in an effort to provide the necessary assistance.

I really like the saying by Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan, who signed the Foreign Language Project 2020, that 'If we continue to treat English as a subject only in the national education system, then the project definitely won't work'. When learners treat English as just a subject, they will only learn to pass that subject. However, if

they consider English as a tool to learn something else and then use it in their future jobs and careers, their learning attitude will be so much different. (Admin 1)

The intensive foreign language policies implemented by ULS for the EMI programmes in the first five years had proven to be successful, as indicated by the results. According to the administrator, approximately 60% of EMI students reached level 4 (B2) or higher after completing 600 hours of teaching in the first year of EAP curriculum implementation (Admin 1). The remaining 40% of students required an additional 120 hours of English learning, and 15% of them achieved the pass mark, resulting in a total pass rate of 75%, which was considered significant at that time. Among the successful students, around 30% even reached level 5 (C1). In the following years, the pass rate remained consistent at around 75% to 78% after 600 hours of instruction, and typically reaching around 85% with the additional 120 hours of support. This trend continued until the policy change in 2016.

This particular pedagogy has undergone changes since 2016. Funding was discontinued and the duration of the EAP courses was extended to 2 years. As a result, the courses are no longer intensive, with only 10 hours of learning per week instead of the previous 20 hours. Furthermore, students no longer attend ULS for English learning; instead, they study at their own university campus where they simultaneously focus on other specialised subjects. All extra-curricular activities, such as buddy programmes or English contests, have been eliminated, resulting in a compromised 'good language learning environment.' Nevertheless, the most significant issue is the lack of funding for this 'strategic project' since 2016. Initially, the government provided funding for this pilot project for a specific number of years. After running for 5 years on the state budget, the programme continued with financial support from tuition fees. However, due to the significantly low current tuition fee, support payments are no longer provided, consequently resulting in a decrease in the motivation and enthusiasm of teachers (Admin 1).

6.2.4 The EAP assessment standards

The assessment consists of formative and summative assessment procedures in order to gauge students' performance. Formative assessment is to be conducted as an on-going process, while summative assessment is conducted at the end of a particular term. As mentioned above, students are required to take the placement test at the beginning of the preparation course so they can take part in the course that is suitable for their level of English proficiency.

In the past, there were students with different abilities in the class. Now, students are required to take a placement test and are divided into two different levels: low and high. (Admin 2)

Previously, learners were allowed to go to university independently, study on their own, take care of themselves, and prepare by themselves. They just needed to pass the final exam. However, students did not have sufficient self-discipline and had other concerns. They only studied before the exams and did not pass. (Admin 1)

Another very important change was that the national university only accepts foreign language certificates (VSTEP) issued by the University of Languages and International Studies, Hanoi National University.

6.3 Teachers and learners' profile

6.3.1 EAP teachers' demographic Information

The survey study collected demographic information pertaining to the characteristics of teachers. These characteristics included age, gender, number of years teaching, employment status, location where teachers completed their highest education, educational qualifications, teaching method(s) taught at university, English proficiency, and number of teaching periods per week. Out of the total of 55 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from VNU, 39 surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 70.91%.

Demographic Variables	Value	N=39	%
Institution		VNU	100%
Age	Under 25	1	2.56%
	25-29	6	17.95%
	30-39	28	71.79%
	40-49	4	10.26%
Gender	Male	2	5.13%
	Female	37	94.87%
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	4	10.26%
	6-9 years	20	51.28%
	10-15 years	13	25.64%
	16-25 years	5	12.82%
Employment Status	Permanent employment	19	48.72%
	Fixed term contract : >1 school-year	16	41.03%
	Fixed-term contract : ≤ school-year	4	10.26%
Qualifications	Bachelor's degree	2	5.13%
	Master's degree	34	87.18%
	Doctoral degree	3	7.69%
Highest education place	In a Vietnamese institution	30	76.92%
	In an international institution in Vietnam	6	15.38%
	Overseas	3	7.69%
Teaching Method taught	Grammar – translation method	3	7.69%
	CLT method	30	76.92%
	Both	6	15.38%
First Language	Vietnamese	39	100%
	English	0	0%
EMI Ability	Average	3	7.69%
	Good	15	38.46%
	Very Good	18	46.15%
	Excellent	3	7.69%
Weekly Teaching Hours	Less than 10 hours	9	23.08%
	10-14 hours	18	46.15%
	15-20 hours	12	30.77%
	More than 20 hours	0	0%

Table 6.1. Demographic Descriptions of the Survey Participants

6.3.1.1 Demographic Descriptions of teachers

As indicated in Table 6.1, the majority of teachers were female (94.87%), while males only accounted for 5.13% of the teacher workforce. This rate reflects the gender imbalance among language teachers, a pattern observed in various institutions across Vietnam. The prevalence of female teachers significantly outweighs that of their male counterparts. Only 20.56% of the survey participants were under the age of 30, indicating that a small percentage (10.26%) of the EAP teachers in this case had less than 5 years of teaching experience.

The level of teachers' educational attainment is influenced by their pre-service training and additional qualifications acquired in-service. The quality and quantity of teachers' initial education are crucial in shaping their work and should inform their further education, training requirements, and teaching development. A low level of formal education or inadequate quality may result in increased needs for professional development upon entering the profession. Conversely, comprehensive formal education may stimulate a greater interest in further education and training to enhance the skills acquired during the initial education.

Table 6.1 presents a summary of teachers' highest level of formal education completed, the location where they obtained their highest education, and the teaching methods they were taught at university. This provides a framework for interpreting teachers' professional development and on-the-job training. The table reveals the percentages of teachers at three main levels of formal education, with the highest reported qualification being a Master's degree (87.18%). Teachers with Bachelor's degrees and Doctoral degrees represented 5.13% and 7.69%, respectively.

Furthermore, many teachers are pursuing higher education at the tertiary level, which can lead to a Master's degree or an advanced research qualification such as a PhD. This may reflect the university's qualification requirements for becoming a teacher (Master's degree) or for advancing through the teaching career structure (e.g., a specific promotion

requirement). Additionally, teachers engage in qualification programmes like training workshops and short-term courses as part of their continuous professional development.

All teachers are Vietnamese, and the majority of them (92.3%) were taught using CLT methods at university. This figure indicates that most teachers are familiar with the CLT method since they were students and may not encounter difficulties in understanding and implementing it. While only a small number of teachers completed their education in another country outside Vietnam (7.69%), 92.3% of the surveyed teachers believed that their abilities and knowledge in using English as a medium of instruction at this university are good or better, and some even described it as excellent. However, teachers who pursued their education overseas appeared to be more confident and had greater belief in themselves compared to other teachers.

6.3.1.2 Teachers' job experience and contractual status

In general, teaching can be seen as a stable career option that offers strong job security (OECD, 2018). This aspect of teaching can be appealing to those already in the profession as well as those considering entering it. However, it also poses a potential risk of complacency and inflexibility if the majority of the teaching workforce consists of older, risk-averse individuals. According to Table 6.1, 48.72% of teachers hold permanent positions. Permanent employment is considered a benefit of choosing a teaching career, as it signifies recognition for their efforts and can serve as a motivator for teachers to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. On the other hand, 41.03% of teachers are employed on fixed-term contracts, and only 10.26% of these teachers have contracts lasting less than one year. In this case, the use of fixed-term contracts is part of a system that evaluates the performance of younger teachers before granting them permanent employment. In fact, among those on fixed-term contracts lasting less than a year, over one-quarter are in their first two years of teaching, and three-quarters are in their first five years. This approach is consistent with systems that require some period of fixed-term contract employment before granting permanent status (OECD, 2018). Furthermore, 89.74% of teachers have more than 6 years of teaching experience, with 25 years being the maximum, while only 10.26% have 1 to 5 years of teaching experience. While experience can lead to issues such

as resistance to change and a lack of innovation, which may be less prevalent in a younger teaching population, it also brings significant benefits to the teaching profession. These include greater maturity in the role and increased opportunities for on-the-job learning (OECD, 2018; Mante and O'Brien, 2002).

6.3.2 EAP students' characteristics and previous learning experiences

The student questionnaire survey for this case was completed by a total of 53 eligible students. The first five questions in the survey aimed to gather background information about the students, such as their gender, major, English background, and mother tongue. The respondents came from various disciplines, including Computer Science, Telecommunication and Electronics Engineering, Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Hydrology, and Oceanography. These majors are preferred by Vietnamese male students, which explains the dominance of male students in this EMI programme, amounting to 77.36% in contrast to females. All the respondents were enrolled in the same EAP courses at the university and used the same English textbooks selected based on the typical features of EMI programmes. 98.11% of the respondents spoke Vietnamese as their first language, with only 1.89% (one student) being non-Vietnamese.

This section also provides insights into the diversity of the student population and their common characteristics. Students in the EMI curriculum come from various socio-economic backgrounds, resulting in different personalities, learning styles, and English abilities. The most prominent difference observed in this case is students' English proficiency. The EMI programme accommodates English students ranging from true beginners to B1 level. Tertiary students in Vietnam typically commence their university studies at the age of eighteen and appear to acknowledge their weaknesses. In fact, the majority of high school graduates who took English classes at this university stated in the interviews that they are aware of their low level of English proficiency, even after several years of schooling. Most students interviewed admitted that their communicative ability in English ranged from three to five out of ten, and some students even had no English skills at all. Regarding English learning experiences prior to entering university, the majority of participants (91.23%) studied English as a mandatory subject in school. Three of them took additional English

classes in language centres or with English tutors, and only one student attended an English-medium school. It is evident that English teaching and learning activities primarily occurred within the classroom setting, with students rarely using English outside this environment. These statistics explain why only a minority of students could speak English proficiently. The average duration of English learning for the surveyed students is 8.98 years, with the longest duration being 12 years. This implies that most participants commenced learning English in the first year of secondary school.

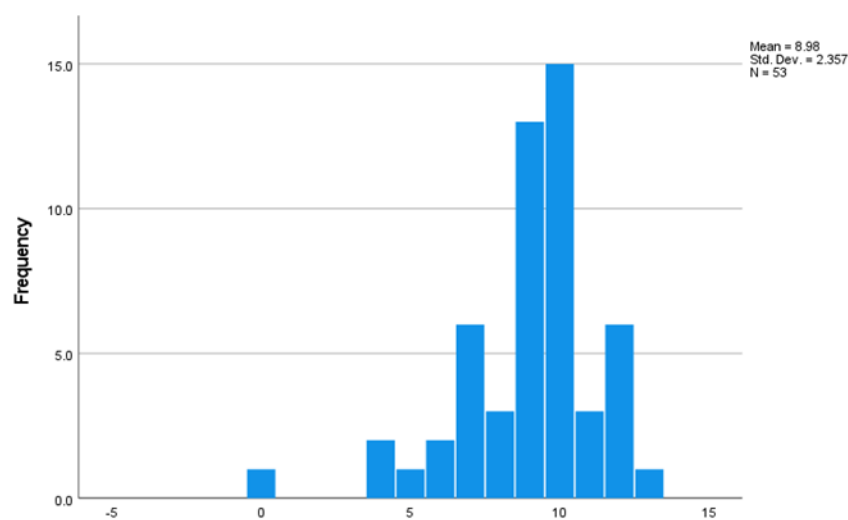


Figure 6.3: Years of learning English before university

Fifteen out of the eighteen interviewed students expressed dissatisfaction with the English language learning and teaching activities, as well as the resources provided in the language classroom at the school level. They believed that these activities lacked engagement and appeal, leading to a loss of motivation. Furthermore, the students perceived the activities as unproductive and a waste of time and energy for both themselves and their teachers. Student 10 (S10) confirmed this sentiment by revealing that he had been learning English for ten years as a mandatory subject prior to university. However, he only began to intensely study the language in the last two years, when he selected it as one of his subjects to gain admission to university. English teaching at the school level followed a traditional method, with minimal or no incorporation of English teaching techniques, aids, and modern technology. The focus was primarily on grammar and writing, while communicative skills

received little attention. Many students criticised the teachers' presentations, noting that they were lengthy and lacked a communicative approach. Students listened to lectures passively, and they also argued that their school English teachers did not place sufficient importance on the English language, thereby providing inadequate instruction. The students found the classes monotonous, with passive classmates and teachers who assigned little else other than grammar exercises (S2, S6, S14, S17). Consequently, their English proficiency level, particularly in terms of communicative competence, was low, which was acknowledged by the majority of the students interviewed. This discrepancy created a gap between their school education and their subsequent university or college experience. A small number of students shared positive experiences of learning English through specialised English programmes that involved native English teachers and employed communicative approaches. Consequently, their communicative competence in English was significantly higher compared to other students and their proficiency in English was nearly sufficient for the EMI programmes.

6.4 Teachers and students' conceptions of the EAP curriculum

This section presents the findings acquired to address the research question concerning teachers and students' perceptions of the English curriculum in terms of its clarity, appropriateness, and practicality in the teaching and learning process. The section examines the level of teachers' awareness regarding the EAP curriculum, their comprehension of it, and the requirements or expectations placed upon them as language instructors in order to attain the curriculum objectives. The analysis investigates whether teachers possess a profound understanding of crucial aspects of the curriculum, such as its goals, the role(s) of the teacher, the underlying principles that guide pedagogical strategies and techniques, supporting materials, and assessment. Teachers' perceptions and understandings of the curriculum can significantly impact how they structure their classrooms, select strategies or activities, and interact with students. Given that the EMI curriculum has been implemented since 2011, the majority of teachers were acquainted with the principles and practices of this advanced programme. The findings reveal that teachers held varied perspectives regarding the curriculum - certain aspects were clear and significant, while others were

perceived as confusing and problematic. This was evident through teachers' contradictory statements, misconceptions, and inflexible interpretations of the curriculum.

The subsequent sections provide a comprehensive analysis and discussion of how the teachers perceived the clarity and utility of the curriculum. Firstly, the findings regarding the teachers' perspectives and comprehension of the syllabus are presented, followed by their views on the principles of CLT, as well as CEFR and VSTEP as the official testing scales.

6.4.1 Teachers and students' perceptions of the status of English and needs

As stated in Section 4.5, English holds a significant position not only in general education but also in tertiary education in Vietnam. The students' attitudes towards English can be influenced by their own perceptions or recognition of its significance. The objective of this section is to ascertain the students' perspectives on the importance of English and their motivations for studying it. Subsequently, the discussion chapter will examine the correlation between these perceptions and the levels of student motivation, which is widely regarded as one of the main factors determining success or failure in language acquisition (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 344).

Table 6.2 presents a comprehensive overview of the various reasons that underline the significance of studying English. Notably, the analysis highlights the top three reasons as identified by the students: achieving success in their respective fields of study (84.91%), meeting the requirements of the EMI programme (83.02%), and securing promising employment opportunities that necessitate proficient English skills (81.13%). Additionally, 43.4% of the participants expressed their motivation to learn English for the purpose of pursuing overseas educational opportunities. Furthermore, among the respondents who provided alternative responses in 'Others', four emphasised the importance of English for effective communication, two specifically mentioned the utilisation of English for leisure activities such as listening to music, playing games, or watching movies, while the remaining two expressed their fondness for the language as their primary motivation for learning English.

Reasons	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Because it is a requirement of the program	44	83.02%	53
Because good English helps me to succeed in my major	45	84.91%	53
Because I can get a scholarship to study abroad with good English	23	43.4%	53
Because I can get a good job with good English in the future	43	81.13%	53
Others	8	14.55 %	53
SUM	156		

Table 6.2: Reasons for the importance of English study

Students also confirmed the importance of studying English in their focus-group interviews. All of them agreed that English played an essential role in their lives for various reasons that were similar to the ones in the survey. In addition, they emphasised the use of English as a tool to access new sources of knowledge in the era of globalisation, helping them become international citizens and be part of the global community.

It is one of the most popular languages in the world, so I want to learn it in order to integrate well into society. (S9)

English is essential in acquiring knowledge. Technology is constantly evolving, and the most advanced and up-to-date information is available in English. (S10)

I need a stable and widely used language to access a vast source of advanced and up-to-date knowledge. (S16)

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 present the findings regarding the perception of students and teachers on the importance of different areas in English language learning. The results displayed in these tables indicate that, in general, teachers and students shared similar perceptions, as they both considered all language areas to be highly important in learning English (Mean = 5.25 and 5.3 on a six-point scale). Notably, both teachers and students highly valued Speaking as the most important skill, followed by Listening, Vocabulary, and Reading. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Grammar was rated the lowest in importance by both groups. Evidently, teachers and students at this university recognised the crucial role of communicative skills in the teaching and learning of English.

English areas	1 (None)	2	3	4	5	6 (Very Important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	0	1	0	5	25	22	5.26	0.79	53
b. Listening	0	0	0	1	18	34	5.62	0.53	53
c. Speaking	0	0	0	1	17	35	5.64	0.52	53
d. Writing	0	0	2	14	21	16	4.96	0.85	53
e. Grammar	0	0	4	17	20	12	4.75	0.9	53
f. Vocabulary	0	0	1	9	18	25	5.26	0.81	53
SUM	0	1	7	47	119	144	5.25	0.73	318

Table 6.3: Importance of English areas (students)

English areas	1 (None)	2	3	4	5	6 (Very Important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	0	0	0	3	21	15	5.31	0.61	39
b. Listening	0	0	0	1	24	14	5.33	0.53	39
c. Speaking	0	0	0	1	17	21	5.51	0.56	39
d. Writing	0	0	0	3	23	13	5.26	0.59	39
e. Grammar	0	0	0	10	18	11	5.03	0.74	39
f. Vocabulary	0	0	0	2	20	17	5.38	0.59	39
SUM	0	0	0	20	123	91	5.3	0.6	234

Table 6.4: Importance of English areas (teachers)

However, the findings presented in Table 6.5 shed light on the perception of students regarding the English language in their EMI courses. It is evident that students considered the Reading skill to be of utmost importance in attaining success in their respective majors, as indicated by a mean score of 3.32 on a four-point scale. Following closely behind, the Listening and Speaking skills were also deemed significant, with mean scores of 3.08 and 3.0 respectively. On the other hand, the skill of Writing received the lowest rating, with a mean score of 2.6. In summary, the EMI students in this institution demonstrated a profound appreciation for language skills, with Reading, Listening, and Speaking skills being highly valued, while Writing was considered to be moderately important.

English skills	1 (Least Important)	2	3	4 (Most Important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	3	5	17	28	3.32	0.87	53
b. Listening	3	11	18	21	3.08	0.92	53
c. Speaking	4	15	11	23	3	1.02	53
d. Writing	10	13	18	12	2.6	1.04	53
SUM	20	44	64	84	3	0.96	212

Table 6.5: Importance of English skills in major's success

Furthermore, the findings of the survey indicated that all 53 students (100%) who participated in the study had identified their language course goal as being at the B2 level (or IELTS 5.5). This suggests that all students had a clear and measurable objective for their language course. The majority of students (81.82%) obtained information about the English requirement of their course from their teachers, whilst other sources such as the university website (52.73%), senior students (43.64%), programme coordinator (32.73%), course outline (32.73%), and admission booklet (30.91%) were also utilised. These various resources provided students with comprehensive information regarding the programme's English requirements. As a result, students were fully aware of the necessary criteria, which could potentially influence their motivation levels. Gardner (1985: 10) defines motivation as the individual's drive or determination to learn a language due to personal desire and the satisfaction derived from this engagement.

I used three multiple-choice open-ended questions (7, 8, and 9) to inquire about students' reasons for learning English and the places and activities in which they used English. I conducted an SPSS analysis to calculate the frequencies within each category. According to Figure 6.4, the majority of respondents in this case reported using English for multiple activities (71.7% or 38 out of a total of 53), for different reasons (73.6% or 39/53), but not in various places (only 32% or 17/53).

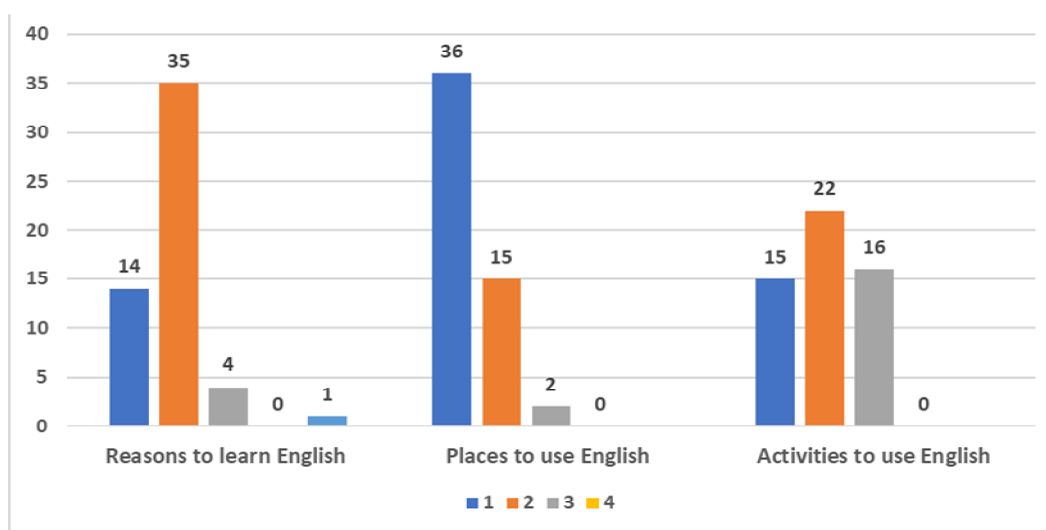


Figure 6.4: Respondents for multiple-choice questions

Since the participants were all EMI students studying English in order to attend EMI content classes, the majority of their English use was in the classroom setting (96.23%) as well as for studying purposes (98.11%) - both frequencies being significantly higher than in other contexts. However, the main reason for taking the EAP course was not only to fulfil their immediate requirement of studying subjects taught in English (83.02%), but also to meet their long-term career objectives (81.13%).

In a way, the students' highly positive perceptions of the prominent role of English, the significance of English in their chosen fields of study, and their diverse motivations for using English to address both immediate and future needs may have an impact on their motivation and attitudes towards the process of learning English.

6.4.2 Teachers' perceptions of the EAP syllabus

This section presents the perspectives of the teachers regarding the official syllabus. The syllabus outlines the objectives and goals of the course, the underlying pedagogical principles, the organisation of the curriculum, the modular approach, the content, and the learning standards for all language skills and assessments. The findings indicate that the

teachers were open to the syllabus, although not all of them were completely satisfied with this standardised document. Section 1 of the questionnaire focused on assessing the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the English syllabus used at the university. The first eight questions required the teachers to indicate the degree of accuracy of each statement by selecting one of four multiple-choice options: 1. Absolutely not, 2. Maybe not, 3. Maybe yes, and 4. Yes, definitely. There were no correct or incorrect answers, and the purpose of this section of the questionnaire was to gain insights into the teachers' perception of the syllabus. The teachers' responses are summarised in Table 6.6.

English Syllabus (ES) items	1 Absolutely not	2 May be not	3 May be Yes	4 Yes, definitely	N (Valid)
1. The ES is a clearly written document.	2 5.13%	0 0%	11 28.21%	26 66.67%	39
2. The ES is complicated and difficult to follow.	28 71.79%	10 25.64%	1 2.56%	0 0%	39
3. The ES is practical.	0 0%	4 10.26%	27 69.23%	8 20.51%	39
4. The ES aims to develop students to communicate in English.	1 2.56%	1 2.56%	21 53.85%	16 41.03%	39
5. The ES is based on grammar translation method.	12 30.77%	22 56.41%	4 10.26%	1 2.56%	39
6. The ES is based on CLT.	0 0%	6 15.38%	15 38.46%	18 46.15%	39
7. What I am expected to teach under the guidance of the ES.	0 0%	3 7.69%	21 53.85%	15 38.46%	39
8. How I am expected to teach under the guidance of the ES.	2 5.13%	6 15.38%	22 56.41%	9 23.08%	39

Table 6.6: Teachers' perceptions of the syllabus

The survey results indicate that approximately 70% of the 39 teachers regarded the syllabus as clear and easily comprehensible. It is grounded in communicative language teaching and strives to foster students' communicative proficiency in English. This indicates that these teachers were well-informed and possessed a solid understanding of the curriculum. In other words, their knowledge and comprehension aligned with the stipulations laid out in the curriculum. Conversely, the remaining 30% of teachers expressed uncertainty regarding

the clarity of the syllabus or found it excessively intricate and challenging to navigate. This elucidates why these teachers did not fully grasp the syllabus and possessed limited knowledge of its contents. Their comprehension and awareness might conflict with the intended objectives of the syllabus. To substantiate this finding, a more comprehensive examination of various dimensions of the syllabus will be explored, encompassing the curriculum's focal points, content and learning standards, curriculum structure, teaching methodologies, pedagogical principles, and assessment strategies. Additionally, the correlation between teachers' perceptions of these curricular dimensions and the impact of these perceptions on the curriculum's implementation will be analysed.

6.4.3 Teachers' perceptions of CLT

Question 11 was designed to elicit the teachers' understanding of the fundamental principles of CLT. The question comprised a list of fourteen items, some of which accurately describe CLT, whilst others represent common misconceptions about CLT that have been documented in the research literature. The responses to this questionnaire item provide insights into the Vietnamese English teachers' conceptions of the general principles of CLT, as shown in Table 6.7. The items that were most frequently selected by the teachers as indicative of CLT include: CLT is a student/learner-centred approach (94.87%); CLT emphasises communication in the foreign language (94.87%); CLT requires a significant amount of time to prepare class activities (84.62%); and CLT necessitates teachers to possess a high level of proficiency in English (66.67%). On the other hand, the two items that were most commonly perceived as 'Not true', meaning they are not characteristic of CLT, are that CLT involves solely teaching speaking and excludes teaching grammar, both at a rate of 97.44%. This is followed by the perceptions that CLT exclusively involves group work and pair work (92.31%); CLT focuses solely on discourse competence (82.05%); CLT places excessive pressure on teachers (82.05%); and CLT is primarily an ESL methodology, rather than an EFL one (74.36%).

CLT Items	True		Not true		Don't know		N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a. CLT is student/learner-centered approach	37	94.87	1	2.56	1	2.56	39
b. CLT means strategic and socio-linguistic competence	28	71.79	5	12.82	6	15.38	39
c. CLT means discourse competence only	1	2.56	32	82.05	6	15.38	39
d. CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy	21	53.85	18	46.15	0	0	39
e. CLT emphasizes communication in foreign language	37	94.87	1	2.56	1	2.56	39
f. CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening	14	35.9	21	53.85	4	10.26	39
g. CLT requires the teachers to have high proficiency in English	26	66.67	9	23.08	4	10.26	39
h. CLT means only group work or pair work	1	2.56	36	92.31	2	5.13	39
i. CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture	17	43.59	17	43.59	5	12.82	39
j. CLT means not teaching grammar	1	2.56	38	97.44	0	0	39
k. CLT means teaching speaking only	1	2.56	38	97.44	0	0	39
l. CLT puts too much pressure on teachers	2	5.13	32	82.05	5	12.82	39
m. CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities	33	84.62	5	12.82	1	2.56	39
n. CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL	4	10.26	29	74.36	6	15.38	39

Table 6.7 : Teachers' perceptions of CLT

Some discrepancies or inconsistencies were identified in the teachers' responses to two descriptions of CLT. When 82.05% of the teachers responded 'Not True' to the statement that CLT puts excessive pressure on teachers, 84.62% of the teachers responded 'True' to the statement that CLT demands a significant amount of time for activity preparation. This could be attributed to the fact that the preparation of CLT activities can be time-consuming for these teachers; however, on the whole, they may not perceive CLT as exerting excessive pressure on them. It is also plausible that these teachers are cognisant of the overall effectiveness of the CLT approach (97.44% or 38 out of the total 39 teachers affirmed that CLT is beneficial as it facilitates students' English communication skills). Consequently, they may be motivated to engage in communicative activities despite the additional time required for preparation.

CLT practices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
To talk to a native speaker	17	43.59%	39
To acquire native-like pronunciation	15	38.46%	39
To acquire native-like fluency	17	43.59%	39
To acquire native-like accuracy	8	20.51%	39
To communicate effectively in L2	37	94.87%	39
Never to use L1 (Vietnamese)	5	12.82%	39
To collaborate with each other	32	82.05%	39
To enjoy communicating in L2	37	94.87%	39
Others	0	0%	39
SUM	168		39

Table 6.8 : The important CLT practices for students

In terms of CLT practices (Table 6.8), teachers identified effective communication and the enjoyment of communicating in English as the two most significant practices for their students, both at a rate of 94.87%. Following this, collaboration among students received a rating of 82.05%. All other practices received notably lower ratings, all below 50%. Only a small percentage of teachers, specifically 12.82%, believed that it was advantageous to completely exclude Vietnamese in EAP classes. Additionally, 20.51% of teachers aimed for their students to achieve native-like accuracy. This finding suggests that most teachers allow students to use a certain amount of their first language, in this case, Vietnamese, in their classes.

CLT practices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
To be a native speaker	1	2.56%	39
To have native-like pronunciation	19	48.72%	39
To have native-like fluency	18	46.15%	39
To have native-like accuracy	16	41.03%	39
To provide teaching materials	25	64.1%	39
To be a facilitator	34	87.18%	39
To be a communication model	30	76.92%	39
To be a co-communicator	33	84.62%	39
Others	0	0%	39
SUM	176		39

Table 6.9: The required CLT practices for teachers

In relation to teachers in CLT classes, the data presented in Table 6.9 reveals that the majority of participants held the belief that teachers ought to assume the roles of facilitators (87.18%), co-communicators (84.62%), communication models (76.92%), or material providers (64.1%). Although only one respondent expressed the view that EAP teachers should be native speakers, a significant proportion of the teachers surveyed, almost half, opined that EAP instructors should possess pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy akin to that of a native speaker. This finding clearly attests to the fact that a considerable number of teachers within this institution exhibit a preference for native accents.

6.4.4 Teachers and students' perceptions of the assessment

In relation to the extent of testing, it was found that all teachers who participated in the survey reported being familiar with CEFR and VSTEP prior to this study. This information was obtained from various sources, as indicated in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 presented below.

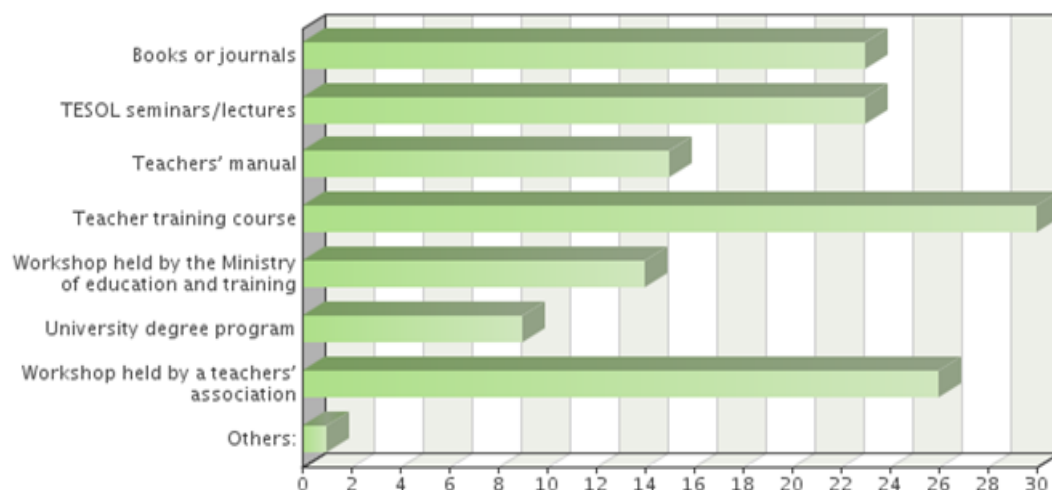


Figure 6.5: Resources of information about CEFR

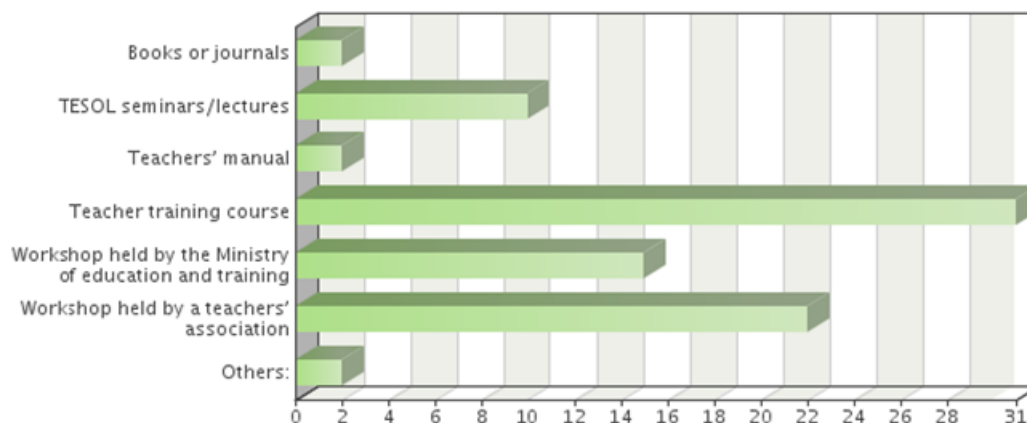


Figure 6.6: Resources of information about VSTEP

In relation to university final examinations, the significance of various language areas was examined, and the findings were presented in tables 6.0 and 6.11. Strikingly, both teachers and students shared similar perceptions regarding the importance of four skills and two additional language areas, with all means surpassing 5 on a scale of six points, ranging from 5.13 to 5.57. Among the six language areas, grammar received the lowest rating in terms of importance, while reading was identified as the most crucial. This alignment in perspectives between teachers and students validates the balanced emphasis on various skills and language areas in this EAP curriculum. This also reinforces the notion that all language areas play a pivotal role in the utilisation of English as a medium of instruction, facilitating students' acquisition of content knowledge.

English areas	1	2	3	4	5	6 (Very	Mean	SD	N
	None					Important)			
a. Reading	0	0	0	4	15	20	5.41	0.68	39
b. Listening	1	0	0	4	16	18	5.26	0.97	39
c. Speaking	1	0	0	3	16	19	5.31	0.95	39
d. Writing	0	0	1	2	17	19	5.38	0.71	39
e. Grammar	0	0	1	6	19	13	5.13	0.77	39
f. Vocabulary	0	0	0	6	17	16	5.26	0.72	39
SUM	2	0	2	25	100	105	5.29	0.8	234

Table 6.10: Importance of English areas in University final examination (teachers)

English areas	1	2	3	4	5	6 (Very	Mean	SD	N
	None		Important)						
a. Reading	0	0	0	2	19	32	5.57	0.57	53
b. Listening	2	0	1	5	15	30	5.28	1.13	53
c. Speaking	2	1	1	4	14	31	5.26	1.21	53
d. Writing	0	0	1	6	21	25	5.3	0.82	53
e. Grammar	0	2	2	4	24	21	5.13	0.98	53
f. Vocabulary	0	0	1	4	25	23	5.32	0.7	53
SUM	4	4	5	25	11	162	5.31	0.9	318

Table 6.11: Importance of English areas in University final examination (students)

6.5 Factors affecting teachers' EAP curriculum implementation

As stated in the methodology chapter, the scale's reliability and usability were assessed through factor analysis and item-total correlation. All reliability tests were conducted on the combined scores for the sub-scales of personal and contextual beliefs, with each sub-scale calculated by summing the scores for the Enable item and Likelihood item. The means and standard deviations of the 17 retained personal and contextual factors, which could potentially impact teachers' implementation processes in the university, are presented in Table 6.12. The scores for the Enable subscale, Likelihood subscale, and the overall Personal and Contextual beliefs scale are provided for each item, using a five-point Likert scale.

As shown in Table 6.12 below, the beliefs of the entire sample were relatively high, with an overall mean score of 3.86. In terms of the two subscales, the participating teachers exhibited rather high beliefs about 16 out of 17 factors, as all mean scores exceeded 3.4 on a 5-point scale. However, teachers demonstrated slightly stronger beliefs on the Likelihood subscale than these factors were indeed occurring in their institution, as indicated by the higher mean scores for many items (11 out of 17).

Personal and Contextual factors	Enable		Likelihood		Total
	Mean* (SD)		Mean** (SD)		Mean
1. The English Test influences my teaching	4.15	0.84	4.18	0.88	4.17
2. The teaching and research committee and colleagues in my department evaluates me and this influences how I teach.	3.41	0.94	3.62	0.91	3.52
3. My students evaluate me, and this influences how I teach.	3.69	0.95	3.62	0.96	3.66
4. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence what I teach.	4	0.79	4.08	0.84	4.04
5. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence how I teach.	3.56	1.05	3.87	0.98	3.72
6. My students' English abilities influence my teaching.	4.41	0.64	4.28	0.69	4.35
7. My students' expectations about how to study English influences my teaching.	3.77	0.9	3.69	0.83	3.73
8. The size of my classes influences my teaching.	4.13	0.7	4.15	0.67	4.14
9. My workload influences my teaching.	4.03	0.78	4.03	0.87	4.03
10. The way I learned English as a student influences the way I teach English.	3.62	0.85	3.62	0.88	3.62
11. My level of English-speaking ability influences my	3.9	1.05	4.15	0.87	4.03
12. My teaching experience helps me in my teaching.	4.44	0.6	4.49	0.6	4.47
13. In-service teacher training improves my classroom	3.72	0.72	3.97	0.74	3.85
14. In-service teacher training is not available, and teachers find it difficult to implement the English curriculum.	2.18	1.19	2.49	1.19	2.34
15. English teaching resources contributes to my teaching	4.15	0.59	4.23	0.74	4.19
16. Audio-visual resources contributes to my teaching	4.21	0.66	4.18	0.85	4.20
17. Grammar-translation method is useful as it helps my students to understand the texts.	3.54	0.88	3.62	1.02	3.58
SUM:	3.82		3.9		3.86

Note: N=91; SD=Standard Deviation; *Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); **Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from N (Absolutely not) to Y (Yes, definitely)

Table 6.12: Factors affecting teachers' curriculum implementation

The factors perceived by teachers to have the greatest impact on their implementation process were their teaching experience (item 12, mean score of 4.44) and their students' English abilities (item 6, mean score of 4.41). Teachers also believed that these two factors were the most likely to occur at this university, with mean scores of 4.49 and 4.28,

respectively. The lowest-rated item on both subscales and also the only factor with a mean score lower than 2.5 was the unavailability of in-service teacher training (item 14), which received average scores of 2.18 on the Enabling subscale and 2.49 in the Likelihood subscale.

In short, teachers held generally positive beliefs about 17 personal and contextual factors. They believed that most of these factors influenced their implementation activities and were available at their university.

6.6 Teachers and students' opinions and confidence in implementing EAP curriculum

6.6.1 Teachers' attitudes towards EAP curriculum implementation (TATCI)

A principal components analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27 to examine the internal structure of the TATCI scale. The summarised survey data on teachers' attitudes towards curriculum implementation can be found in Table 6.13. Within this educational institution, EAP teachers exhibit overall positive attitudes towards the implementation processes, with a mean score of 3.6 on a five-point scale. Among the three major attitudinal dimensions, the perceived usefulness of the curriculum change received the highest positive rating, with a mean score of 4. On the other hand, teachers' negative attitudes were rated at a lower level, with a mean score of 2.91 on a five-point scale, which demonstrates a moderate level of teachers' anxiety about the EAP curriculum implementation.

The aspects most highly valued by the teachers were their improvements in teaching and willingness to learn more computer-assisted teaching (items b and j), with mean scores of 4.08 and 4.03, respectively. Conversely, teachers expressed the greatest concern about their anxiety in implementing the EAP curriculum (item e), with a mean score of 3.0. All positive attitudes were rated at a high level, with a mean score of 3.74.

In short, the data suggest that teachers hold slightly positive attitudes towards curriculum implementation, which stem from their high appreciation of the new curriculum's usefulness, strong interest levels, and mild anxiety regarding its implementation.

Factors	Items	Mean	SD	N
Usefulness of EAP curriculum implementation		4		39
	a. Curricular innovation is good for my teaching.	3.92	0.93	39
	b. My teaching improves as I gain more experience from my classroom instruction.	4.08	0.84	39
Negative Attitudes		3.09*		39
		2.91		
	c. I feel stressful when implementing this EAP curriculum.	3.1*	0.85	39
		2.9		
	d. It is difficult to use CLT method in my class.	3.18*	0.82	39
		2.82		
	e. I feel worried when implementing this EAP curriculum.	3*	0.79	39
		3		
Positive attitudes		3.74		39
	f. It is interesting to implement the new curriculum.	3.54	0.76	39
	g. CLT is the best teaching method.	3.44	0.91	39
	h. I feel comfortable with CLT method.	3.74	0.72	39
	i. I would like to learn more about CLT.	3.97	0.78	39
	j. I would like to learn more about computer-assisted teaching.	4.03	0.81	39
Total attitudes towards curriculum implementation		3.6		39

Note: *Reversed score** Counted with reversed Negative attitudes subscale scores

Table 6.13: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the TATCI scale

6.6.2 Students' attitudes towards EAP curriculum implementation (SATCI)

Survey data regarding students' attitudes towards the implementation of the curriculum is presented in Table 6.14. At this institution, students' overall attitudes towards the implementation processes are moderately positive but lower than those of teachers (Mean = 3.46 on a five-point scale). Among the different aspects of implementation, students highly valued the importance of the English course and the need for strong English skills (items f and n, Mean = 4.4 and 4.13 respectively), while they were most dissatisfied with students' speaking abilities and the amount of time allocated for English instruction (items d and c, Mean = 4.26 and 3.28 respectively).

Most positive attitudes were rated highly, with mean values ranging from 3.36 to 4.13. Specifically, teachers' performance, study skills, course usefulness, and course content (items i, k, j, h) received higher ratings compared to teaching methods and students' satisfaction (items l, m). The only item that received a low rating (Mean = 2.36) was item g, 'My English course is easy,' indicating that most students perceived the course as challenging. However, students did not encounter significant difficulties in understanding the English language lecturers (Mean = 2.17), which was related to their preference for more time dedicated to English instruction.

Factors	Items	Mean	SD	N
GE or ESP		3.73		
	a. Instruction should focus on GE.	3.55	0.72	53
	b. Instruction should focus on the English needed for my specialised studies.	3.91	0.93	53
Negative Attitudes		3.17*		
	c. More time should be given to English instruction.	2.72*	1.06	53
	d. More should be done to help students with speaking.	3.28		
		1.74*	0.71	53
	e. I have trouble understanding my English lecturers.	4.26		
		3.83*	0.83	53
	f. English is my least important course.	2.17		
		4.4*	0.88	53
		1.6		
Positive attitudes		3.53		
	g. My English course is easy.	2.36	1.06	53
	h. The content of my English course is interesting.	3.64	1.08	53
	i. The English language lecturers here do a good job.	3.87	0.73	53
	j. My English course helps me in my major study.	3.72	0.91	53
	k. My English lecturers teach me study skills.	3.77	0.75	53
	l. The teaching methods at university are interesting.	3.36	0.86	53
	m. I enjoy my English class.	3.38	0.88	53
	n. Having good English is important in this university.	4.13	0.94	53
Total attitudes towards curriculum implementation		3.46		53

Note: *Reversed score** Counted with reversed Negative attitudes subscale scores

Table 6.14: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the SATCI scale

Additionally, students displayed some confusion regarding their attitudes towards the EAP course, as they expressed interest in both general and specialised English (items a and b, Mean = 3.55 and 3.91 respectively). A slightly higher percentage of respondents valued more specialized English, demonstrating their preference for the incorporation of ESP in EAP courses.

In summary, the data revealed positive attitudes among students towards curriculum implementation, as shown by their recognition of the importance of EAP courses, high levels of interest, and a slight degree of anxiety associated with the difficulty of the new curriculum. This finding once again supports the strong connection between students' perceptions of the significance of English and their positive attitudes towards the implementation of the English curriculum.

6.6.3. Teachers' self- efficacy in the implementation process

The levels of implementation self-efficacy exhibited by teachers were assessed using a 100-point scale, where a score of 0 indicated 'completely impossible' and 100 indicated 'completely possible'. This scale encompassed 10 implementation activities. Table 6.15 provides an overview of the minimum and maximum values, sample means, and standard deviations for each of the 10 items on the ISE scale. The study participants expressed a generally high level of implementation self-efficacy, with a mean score of 76.9 and a standard deviation of 15.42. In terms of individual implementation activities, the sample demonstrated a strong perceived ability to perform them, as indicated by mean scores ranging from 68.21 to 81.28 on the 100-point scale. Among the 10 listed activities, designing the English syllabus received the lowest mean score of 68.21, while the highest mean scores were observed for 'making use of teaching resources' (81.28), followed by 'using English as a medium of instruction in my classes' and 'planning the teaching activities' (both mean scores exceeding 80). None of the activities were associated with a low level of perceived performance ability (mean score < 50).

ISE Item*	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
a. Interpret the English curriculum correctly	39	30	100	75.64	18.03
b. Design the English syllabus	39	10	90	68.21	19.18
c. Plan the teaching activities	39	40	100	80	15.04
d. Implement the student-centred approach	39	30	100	76.41	14.95
e. Implement communicative language teaching method	39	30	100	75.64	14.65
f. Use English as a medium of instruction in my classes	39	50	100	80.26	14.05
g. Make use of teaching resources	39	50	100	81.28	12.18
h. Use audio-visual resources in class	39	30	100	78.46	16.31
i. Implement computer-assisted teaching	39	30	100	74.87	14.3
j. Discuss with other colleagues about the curriculum implementation	39	30	100	78.21	15.54
SUM	39	33	99	76.9	15.42

Note: Min=Minimum; Max=Maximum; SD: Standard Deviation; *Each item is measured on a 100-point scale ranging from 0 (completely impossible) to 100 (completely possible)

Table 6.15: Sample Means and Standard Deviations in 10 implementation-related behaviours

Table 6.16 presents the self-efficacy of teachers in relation to three primary types of implementation activities: implementation planning, implementation main tasks, and implementation supplementary activities. The mean score for each group of activities is calculated by averaging the scores of all the items within the group. According to Table 6.16, participants appeared to have the highest level of self-confidence in the implementation supplementary activities (items g-j), while feeling the least confident in implementation planning (items a-c). The mean scores for teachers' self-confidence in all three groups are notably high. Overall, EAP teachers in this case demonstrate a significant level of implementation self-efficacy and exhibit confidence in most implementation tasks, with the exception of designing the syllabus.

ISE Group	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	SD	Level of self-efficacy
Implementation planning (items a-c)	117				
High (>70)	69	58.97			
Moderate (50-70)	36	30.77	74.62	17.42	High
Low (<50)	12	10.26			
Implementation main tasks (items d-f)	117				
High (>70)	71	60.68			
Moderate (above 50-70)	43	36.75	77.44	14.55	High
Low (<50)	3	2.56			
Implementation supplementary activities (item g-j)	156				
High (>70)	103	66.03			
Moderate (above 50-70)	48	30.77	78.21	14.58	High
Low (<50)	5	3.2			

Note: *f*=frequency; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 6.16: Teachers' self- efficacy in the implementation process

6.7 The Implementation of the EAP curriculum

This section critically examines the pragmatic aspects of the curriculum and highlights the discrepancies that exist between the teachers' beliefs, their perceptions of the curriculum, and their actual classroom practices. The analysis in this section is based on an extensive and diverse dataset obtained through three distinct methods of data collection. These methods include surveys completed by 39 teachers and 53 students, interviews conducted with six teachers, focus-groups conducted with 18 students, and classroom observations carried out on six different occasions. The data collected from the surveys were initially examined and analysed, and then cross-referenced with the information derived from the classroom observations, recorded videos, interviews with both teachers and students, as well as the analysis of the curriculum standard documents from sections 6.1 and 6.2.

6.7.1 Pedagogical practices

6.7.1.1 Quantitative results from teachers' surveys

The data derived from the teacher's survey indicate the utilisation of a diverse array of pedagogical practices within the classroom setting. To provide a comprehensive overview of

the frequencies, Table 6.17 presents a summary of 39 responses obtained from teachers, who were required to select teaching activities from a five-point scale.

Pedagogic Practices	1 Never	2 Hardly ever	3 Some- times	4 Often	5 Usually	Mean	SD	N
a. Grammar explanation	0	1	13	19	6	3.77	0.74	39
b. Group discussion	0	0	10	23	6	3.9	0.64	39
c. Pair work	0	0	5	22	12	4.18	0.64	39
d. Translation	0	5	21	8	5	3.33	0.87	39
e. Dictionary vocabulary exercises	0	7	19	12	1	3.18	0.76	39
f. Simulations/role play	0	1	19	17	2	3.51	0.64	39
g. Reading and reporting from websites	1	14	18	4	2	2.79	0.86	39
h. Reading and reporting from newspapers	1	14	19	5	0	2.72	0.72	39
i. Reading aloud	0	9	17	12	1	3.13	0.8	39
j. Pronunciation drills	0	2	12	23	2	3.64	0.67	39
k. Games	0	2	14	18	5	3.67	0.77	39
l. Listening to audio file and answering questions	0	2	2	22	13	4.18	0.76	39
m. Call on students to orally respond to any issue/topic	0	1	0	23	15	4.33	0.62	39
n. Reading and reciting dialogue	1	1	22	13	2	3.36	0.74	39

Table 6.17: Pedagogic practices used in the classroom

As depicted in Table 6.17, the activity *Call on students to orally respond* is the most frequently employed, with 59.34% of teachers stating that they typically utilise them (Mean = 4.33). Subsequently, this activity is closely followed by *Pair work* and *Listening to audio file and answering questions* (Mean = 4.18). *Simulations/role play* (Mean = 3.95) and *Listening to audio file and answering questions* are also commonly utilised, with 75.82% and 60.44% of teachers, respectively, employing them usually or often in their classes. These six most frequently used activities are often mentioned in descriptions of communicative teaching activities. Conversely, the least frequently selected activities are *Reading and reporting from newspapers* and *Reading and reporting from websites*, with 51.64% and 46.15% of teachers,

respectively, indicating that they never or hardly ever use them. This is followed by *Dictionary vocabulary exercises* (Mean = 2.82) and *Reading aloud* (Mean = 2.91).

In relation to traditional teaching techniques or activities, it was discovered that 39.56% of the teachers frequently employed grammar explanation, while 45.05% of them did so occasionally. Likewise, 56.04% and 46.15% reported occasional utilisation of translation and dictionary vocabulary exercises in their classes. It should be noted that the term 'grammar explanation' does not necessarily imply a strict analysis of grammar, but rather aims to encourage students to correctly apply their existing grammar knowledge. Furthermore, communicative language teaching does not prohibit the teaching of grammar, as the proper usage of grammar is both indicative of and essential for communicative competence.

41.76% of teachers' responses to *Pronunciation drills* were recorded as 'Often,' while 40.66% indicated 'Sometimes.' These figures suggest inconsistencies in their reliance on these activities. It is possible that these teachers believe pronunciation drills are necessary for achieving accuracy, considering both fluency and accuracy equally important for developing communicative competence. Moreover, the usage of drills might vary depending on the students' needs or the type of class being taught, as English proficiency levels can differ within the same class or across different classes. In relation to *Reading aloud*, teachers' responses paralleled those of *Reading and reciting dialogues*, with 92.31% employing these activities more or less frequently. One possible explanation for this is that teachers use *Reading aloud* as a means of practising listening and pronunciation skills at the start of each lesson, under the belief that it facilitates proper communication or at least prepares students for engaging in real-life conversations later on. On the other hand, *Reading and reciting dialogues* are utilised as highly communicative activities during the production phase, where students create their own dialogues and perform them in front of the entire class.

Teachers' frequencies of implementing CLT pedagogical practices can be observed through their responses to a validation item. This item asks teachers to indicate the extent to which they have practised the 5 principles of CLT, using a 5-point scale ranging from 'rarely practise' to 'practise fully'. Table 6.18 provides a summary of teachers' responses to this

item, revealing that all principles were rated at a high level (Mean=3.89). Notably, items c, d, and e were identified as the most fully practised principles, with mean scores of 4.23, 3.95, and 3.92 respectively. These findings further support the validity of the participants' reported high level of CLT implementation.

CLT pedagogical practices	1 Rarely	2	3	4	5 Fully	Mean	SD	N
a. The objective is to develop student's communicative competence.	0 0%	2 5.13%	14 35.9%	17 43.59%	6 15.38%	3.69	0.8	39 100%
b. The role of the student is a communicator.	0 0%	1 2.56%	17 43.59%	15 38.46%	6 15.38%	3.67	0.77	39 100%
c. Four skills are integrated in the classroom practice.	0 0%	0 0%	8 20.51%	14 35.9%	17 43.59%	4.23	0.78	39 100%
d. Instructional materials may include thematic development materials, task-based materials, and authentic, real-life materials.	0 0%	1 2.56%	7 17.95%	24 61.54%	7 17.95%	3.95	0.69	39 100%
e. Students are evaluated both on fluency and accuracy by being asked to perform a real communicative function.	0 0%	0 0%	10 25.64%	22 56.41%	7 17.95%	3.92	0.66	39 100%
SUM	0 0%	4 2.08%	56 28.72%	92 47.18%	43 22.05%	3.89	0.74	195

Table 6.18: CLT pedagogical practices

6.7.1.2 Quantitative results from students' surveys

Apart from the questionnaire administered to the teachers, an additional investigation into the utilisation of English was carried out by examining the students' learning experience. The students were requested to assess the frequency of the occurrences of various factors in their EAP classes by employing a five-point scale. The findings of this analysis, conducted using SPSS software, are presented in Table 6.19 to provide a descriptive overview of the scores.

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English usage and activities in English courses	Mean	SD	N
a. The lecturers use only English in class explanation	3.81	0.83	53
b. Students ask questions in English	3.21	1.04	53
c. I take lecture notes in English.	3.17	1.1	53
d. I use English for group discussions.	3.11	0.97	53
e. I can understand the lectures in English.	3.77	0.78	53
f. I can understand my classmates when they answer the questions in English.	3.87	0.86	53
g. Textbooks are printed in English.	4	1.14	53
h. The lecturers explain difficult terms in Vietnamese.	4.06	0.91	53
i. Students in my class need more in-class language support.	3.57	1.1	53
j. I can express myself easily in English.	2.81	0.79	53
k. Four skills "listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the classroom practice.	3.91	0.88	53
l. The objective is to develop student's communicative competence.	3.75	0.76	53
n. I take part in group/pair activities in lessons.	3.66	0.83	53

Table 6.19: Students' EAP experiences

As indicated in Table 6.19, English was frequently utilised in various domains and activities, including textbooks (Mean = 4), lectures (Mean = 3.77), lecturers' explanations (Mean = 3.81), classmates (Mean = 3.87), and group/pair activities (Mean = 3.66). Conversely, a significant majority of the respondents (85.45%) encountered difficulty in expressing themselves in English most of the time, while a mere 14.55% of students found it easy (Mean = 2.81). The majority of students concurred that the integration of the four skills in classroom practices played a pivotal role in fostering their communicative competence (items k and l, Mean = 3.91 and 3.75, respectively). Interestingly, students reported that teachers employed a combination of English and Vietnamese in their explanations of

complex terms (item h, Mean = 4.04), despite the predominance of English in the classroom. This finding will be revisited during the analysis of qualitative data gleaned from classroom observations.

In terms of CLT activities, the students affirmed that teachers frequently employ various pedagogical practices. The findings presented in Table 6.20 illustrate that *Discussion* emerged as the most commonly utilised activity, accounting for 83.64% of the responses, followed closely by games at 78.18%. Additionally, other activities such as *Information gap*, *Problem solving*, and *Listing/ranking* were also frequently employed, with rates reaching approximately 70%. It is worth noting that despite the prevalence of discussion as a teaching practice, 85.45% of the respondents reported difficulties in expressing themselves in English. This may potentially hinder the effective implementation of this pedagogical activity.

Pedagogic activities	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Information gap	38	69.09%	53
Problem solving	37	67.27%	53
Discussion	46	83.64%	53
Listing/ranking	36	65.45%	53
Role-play	24	43.64%	53
Games	43	78.18%	53
Others	2	3.64%	53
SUM	226		

Table 6.20: Frequency of Teachers' pedagogic practices

Among the various pedagogical practices mentioned, it is evident from Table 6.21 that *Games* were the most well-received by students, with a significant majority (72.73%) expressing their preference for this activity. Following *Games*, *Discussions* were also favoured by a considerable portion of students (52.37%). In contrast, the remaining activities received lower ratings, not surpassing 40%. Despite this, a noteworthy finding from the survey was that a substantial percentage (78.18%) of students desired an increased provision of communicative activities from their teachers. This desire stemmed from various reasons, including the need for the development of communicative

competence and confidence, limited proficiency in communication, and limited opportunities for practising English.

Pedagogic activities	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Information gap	13	23.64%	53
Problem solving	22	40%	53
Discussion	29	52.73%	53
Listing/ranking	14	25.45%	53
Role-play	19	34.55%	53
Games	40	72.73%	53
Others	1	1.82%	53
SUM	138		

Table 6.21: Students' favourite pedagogic practices

6.7.1.3 Qualitative results from interviews and observation

One of the crucial elements involved in the process of curriculum implementation is the selection of learning experiences. This entails determining appropriate teaching strategies and classroom activities to achieve the desired educational outcomes (McTighe and Wiggins, 2012). Richards (2013: 6) characterises this stage as the 'how' of teaching, which encompasses the domain of methodology in language instruction. It includes the different types of learning activities, procedures, and techniques used by teachers, as well as the underlying principles that guide the design of activities and exercises in textbooks and teaching resources. In the context of curriculum implementation, a thorough examination of the types of learning activities taking place in the classroom can provide evidence as to whether the instructional strategies, teaching techniques, and learning outcomes align. This examination allows us to determine whether the curriculum is being implemented as intended and specified in the standard document. Furthermore, assessing the alignment between classroom activities and learning outcomes or curriculum goals can also shed light on whether teachers have a clear understanding of the curriculum's aim and demonstrate their comprehension of the nature and significance of communicative activities in fostering students' effective communication skills.

This section presents the findings on the types of classroom activities utilised in the classroom. The data from lesson observations reveals that a wide range of activities were implemented in the six lessons that were observed. The learning activities carried out in the classroom appear to align with the criteria for lesson activities. The data from the teachers' interviews confirmed that similar activities, as observed previously, were regularly used. The rationale provided was that these activities would provide opportunities for students to utilise the language and therefore be relevant to the development of communicative competence. Activities such as role-play and classroom presentations were unanimously perceived by the teachers as enhancing the use of the language.

A thorough examination of the teaching activities also revealed an imbalance in focus between language forms and meanings. In the majority of the observed lessons, the activities predominantly emphasised language forms (i.e., discrete items that needed to be learnt) rather than the intended meaning to be conveyed. Additionally, the classroom activities did not foster spontaneous and natural language production, as is encountered in real-life communication. As mentioned previously and observed during the implementation of activities such as role-play, one teacher typically provided a predetermined dialogue for the students to practise, rather than encouraging them to develop their own dialogue. However, the teacher's beliefs were consistent with CLT principles, as evidenced by the survey and interview responses. The teacher explained this as a consequence of time limitations, resulting in students having no opportunities to experiment and use the language as they would in natural conversation or interaction. In other words, students were not given any opportunities to be creative with the language. Although the literature in CLT categorises role-play as a communicative activity, due to the emphasis on encouraging accurate reproduction of prescribed language, the activity in this case became non-communicative in the sense that students attempted to simply replicate the conversation model. The aforementioned findings suggest that teachers have a limited understanding of the concept of communicative activities and how these activities contribute to the development of students' communicative competence.

In addition, the series of the New English File used in the first two courses to some extent encompass diverse aspects of culture from various countries. Some knowledge of different

Englishes, such as British English and American English, was also found in these textbooks which familiarises students with the use of English as an international language. This global focus can be utilised as a potential support for the development of students' intercultural and international communication. However, teachers' practices regarding the diverse cultures and Englishes were inadequately emphasised in the observed classrooms. The missing of this focus in practices can be explained by the misinterpretation of the objective in the intended curriculum. Furthermore, teaching practices that consist of food, festival, folklore, and fashion, highlighting the differences among cultures rather than an understanding of them, may not be multicultural in focus (Meyer and Rhoades, 2006).

In classrooms where teachers taught IELTS-oriented courses, pair or group activities were scarce, and interactions primarily occurred between the teachers and students. One teacher explained during her interview that some activities were beyond the students' language ability, resulting in their reluctance to participate in class (T2). In the observed classes, teachers made the decision to function as transmitters or answer the questions by themselves in order to 'save time' (T2, T5). In many instances, teaching practices were oriented towards test preparation with the aim of helping students achieve higher scores on internal IELTS or VSTEP final exams. Whilst some students were comfortable with this teaching method due to the pressures of assessment, many found it uninteresting. Consequently, this approach led to student demotivation and low attendance, as evidenced by the absence of more than half of the students in some observed classes.

6.7.2 Assessment practices

As previously stated, the CEFR's six levels of proficiency were adopted as the benchmark for evaluating the efficacy of English language acquisition. VSTEP was subsequently developed, implemented nationwide, and received widespread recognition and acceptance within all educational institutions and organisations in Vietnam. According to the results of teacher surveys conducted at this university, both CEFR and VSTEP were widely and consistently utilised, with percentages of 76.92% and 84.61% respectively (refer to figure 6.7).

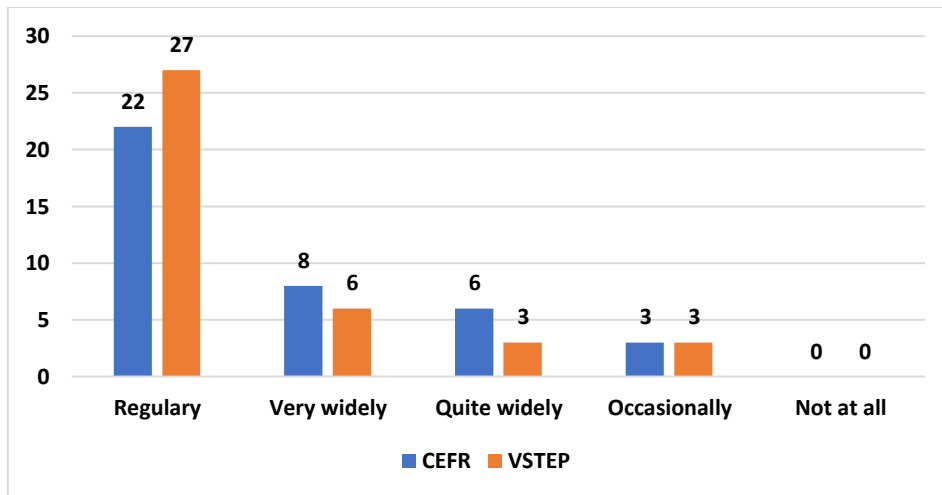


Figure 6.7: How widely CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 1

The CEFR was employed as a point of reference across multiple domains within the institution (refer to Figure 6.8), with language testing and assessment registering the highest level of utilisation at 94.87%. This was followed by language teaching and learning, both at a rate of 66.67%, and foreign language curriculum development at a rate of 58.97%. Additionally, the CEFR found considerable usage in textbook and material production, with a rate of 46.15%, and to a lesser extent in teacher training and national language curriculum development.

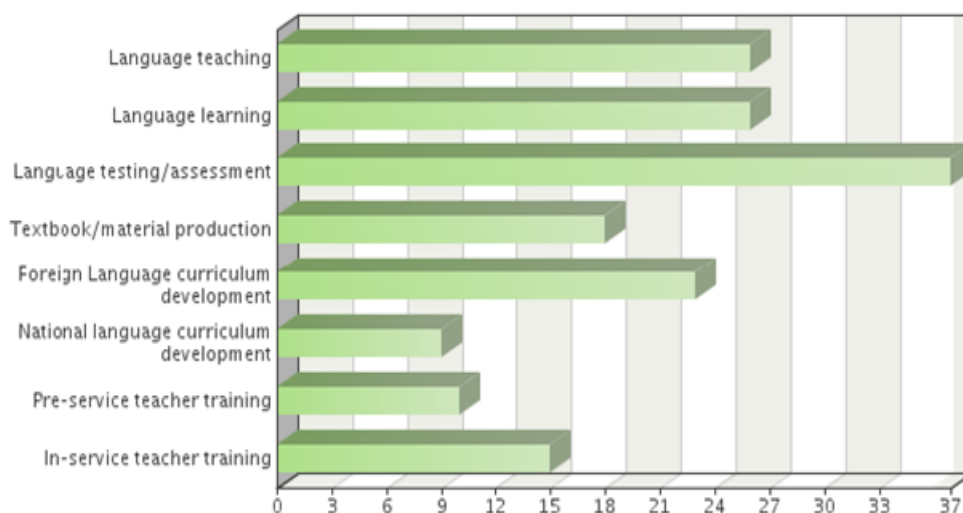


Figure 6.8: Domains CEFR used as a reference in Case 1

Similarly, VSTEP served as a point of reference across various domains (see Figure 6.9). It was predominantly employed at an elevated degree in three domains: language testing and assessment at the foremost level (94.87%), followed by language learning (82.05%), and language teaching (74.36%). In contrast, its utilisation in other domains was significantly more limited, all falling below 36%.

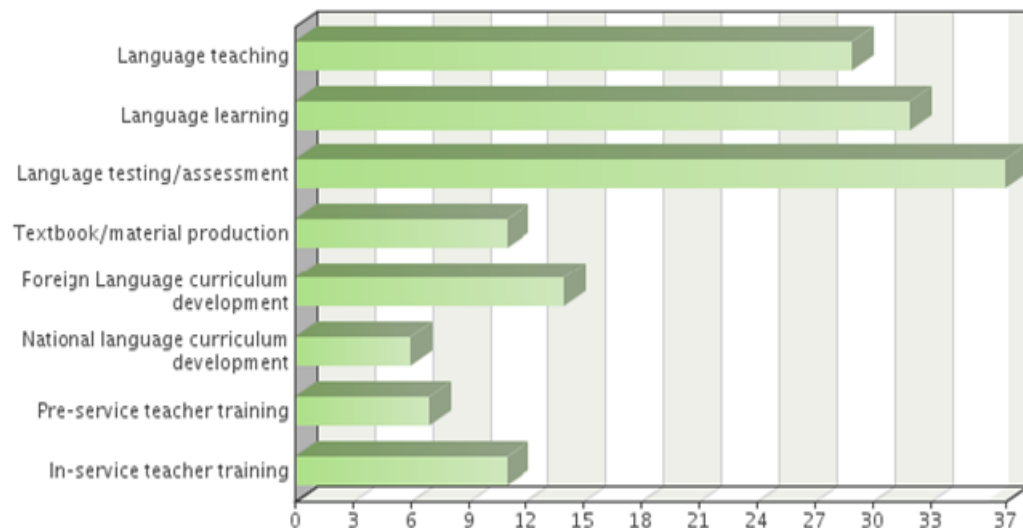


Figure 6.9: Domains VSTEP used as a reference in Case 1

The objective of question 19 was to ascertain the perceived efficacy of CEFR and VSTEP in this institution by soliciting teacher evaluations of its various levels. As depicted in figure 6.10 below, the entirety of teachers (100%) opined that CEFR was either moderately useful (64.1%) or highly useful (33.33%). Similarly, the majority of teachers (94.87%) regarded VSTEP as useful, with only a small minority (5.13%) deeming it as not useful.

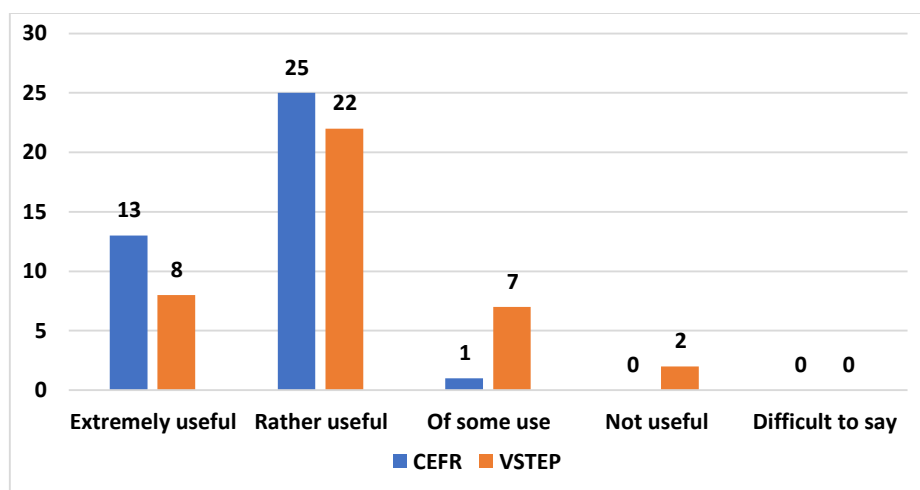


Figure 6.10: How useful CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 1

The demand for an IELTS score has caused an apprehension among teachers, resulting in a perceived 'loss of control,' which can be attributed to a perceived 'lack of creativity and standardisation' (Perryman et al., 2011). In classes that prioritise IELTS preparation, many teachers tend to emphasise test-taking strategies that enable students to obtain higher scores and successfully pass the tests, rather than adequately preparing them for higher levels of language proficiency.

6.7.3 Students and teachers' roles

The EAP students in this institution held the perception that the true commencement of L2 learning occurred when they encountered interactive and dynamic learning experiences at the university or college level. Undergraduate students demonstrated a favourable outlook towards L2 learning and instruction at the tertiary level. However, it came as a surprise to these students when they discovered that attaining a level of English language proficiency at the university level required significantly higher standards compared to those at the school level. Moreover, they were required to adapt to advanced L2 teaching methodologies that were seldom utilised in general education settings.

Change in instructional methods has led to an increased awareness of the changing roles of teachers and students. Teachers now understand that their role in learner-centred learning

is to facilitate students' learning, rather than simply providing and transmitting knowledge. This is illustrated by the following extract from the present study:

Teachers work as facilitators, moving around the classroom and providing instruction and assistance to students in their practice. There are many interactions among students and between the teacher and students (T4).

This finding appears to provide support for Weimer's (2002) theory of learner-centred teaching. According to this theory, teachers take on the role of guides, facilitators, and designers of learning experiences, rather than being the central figure who dominates the classroom. They no longer have the most lines or work harder than everyone else to make things happen. The present data clearly demonstrate that the teachers in this study prioritise the learner in their approach to teaching and learning. They focus on individual students rather than treating the class as a whole, as evidenced by the following accounts:

In my English class, everything I do is giving instructions; most of the time it is for students' practice. Sometimes, I explain things that students find difficult or have problems with. (T6)

The aforementioned finding demonstrates the comprehension of the prescribed syllabus regarding the implementation of lessons and the role of teachers in the classroom. However, the standard document provided insufficient guidance on how to fulfil these requirements. Moreover, teachers' understanding of the concept of interactive learner-centred learning appeared to be somewhat limited. The teaching approach is generally characterised by the encouragement of students' participation and contributions. Nevertheless, not all teachers incorporated learner-centred learning principles when developing meaningful and relevant learning materials to address the diverse needs and abilities of students, and thus promote their full potential and progressive development of language proficiency, knowledge, and confidence. Furthermore, data obtained from interviews and video stimulated recall dialogue sessions revealed that more than half of the teachers were uncertain or lacked confidence in determining whether their classes were interactive or learner-centred.

I have not succeeded in the implementation of learner-centred approach, In many lessons I worked more than students as students are very passive as they got used to the teacher-centred approach when they were at school. (T5)

I have tried to have students work in pairs or groups, but sometimes I end up talking and presenting a lot because of the students' low motivation and attitude. (T2)

However, upon analysing the standard document, it is apparent that the mention of interactive learner-centred learning was limited to a brief mention. A thorough explanation of the principles and characteristics of interactive and learner-centred learning was lacking. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the feasibility of implementing this teaching approach, given the students' weak English language proficiency and their inability to utilise English as a medium of learning. The shift towards learner-centred instructional practices, which necessitate the contribution of ideas and participation in pairs or groups, was seen as impractical in a classroom where only a few students could speak and interact in English. Indeed, the students' limited language proficiency led to a reluctance to participate and communicate in the classroom.

For the low-level students, some of them are true beginners. They have no vocabulary or grammar, so their learning attitudes are not good, and they have low motivation to participate in practice. (T2)

6.7.4 EAP textbooks and supporting materials

Another significant aspect of the curriculum pertains to the efficacy of the accompanying resources, such as the textbook, teachers' guide, and supplementary activities and materials. The primary role of the teachers' guide is to equip educators with ideas for lesson planning, facilitating the organisation of their daily instructional sessions. In contrast, the textbook encompasses teaching and learning materials, as well as activities, which are introduced across diverse topics. The textbook's purpose is to assist teachers in structuring their lessons in a manner that fosters meaningful and purposeful learning experiences for

the students. Consequently, neither type of supporting material functions as rigid instructional modules for teachers to strictly adhere to, but rather both serve as guides and references upon which teachers can rely in order to attain the content and learning standards outlined in the curriculum. Furthermore, there was limited collaboration between English language practitioners and subject lecturers, leading to inadequate provision of language support that aligns with students' specific content knowledge. During focus group interviews, students expressed that the inclusion of topics and vocabulary related to their content areas would enhance their engagement with the EAP curriculum.

Overall, the textbook and teacher's guide were perceived as important and useful in facilitating and providing support. The textbook and teacher guidebook of the first two courses were produced and published in the United Kingdom. These materials may be perceived as more current or advanced, as they are developed for an international market and are therefore independent, non-sectarian, and politically non-partisan. They were viewed favourably in terms of both content and technical aspects. The teachers mainly consulted the textbook and teacher guidebook as their primary reference because both supporting materials provided engaging ideas and sample activities that were considered relevant for the EFL classes. Additionally, the textbook and teacher guidebook not only offered interesting classroom activities, but also provided clear and precise instructions on how to conduct them, which were found to be very helpful. The teaching content and activities suggested in both types of supporting materials were also highly appreciated, as most of the resources and activities, such as the games and songs in the textbook and teacher guidebook, were new to the majority of the interviewed teachers and students. The Western textbooks utilised in GE 1 and 2 encompass a wide range of cultural themes which have been seamlessly integrated into the linguistic content, including sports, music, entertainment, immigration, lifestyles, social values, and religions. However, it is possible that materials published in the United Kingdom may reflect or promote the values of the country and the consumerist Western lifestyle that is based on capitalist principles (Gray, 2010a/b). Also, commercial textbooks are often inadequate for direct use and require adaptation to align with the specific context in which they are intended to be utilised (Richards, 2017). It is important to note that while these textbooks do cover cultures from various countries to some extent, the majority of the cultural information predominantly

revolves around English culture and seldom references Vietnamese local culture. As a result, students may have limited opportunities for intercultural learning. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that teachers at this institution primarily perceive cultural understanding solely in terms of individuals' lifestyles, practices, perspectives, or products, without extensively exploring cultural activities designed to foster intercultural communicative competence among students. Consequently, the teachers prioritise the development of students' cognitive understanding of culture rather than their ability to apply cultural knowledge in communicative tasks.

The supporting materials were deemed satisfactory, as they facilitated teachers' creativity and innovation in their instructional practices. The fact that the content of the textbook and teacher guidebook mainly consists of suggestions enables teachers to modify, adopt, and even develop their own teaching materials. Consequently, teaching and learning can be flexible, as teachers can exercise autonomy in selecting instructional approaches that they deem suitable for their students. A careful examination of the textbook and teacher guidebook implies that teachers are not solely reliant on the supporting materials when planning their lessons; instead, they make appropriate modifications, particularly in addressing the diverse language abilities, prior knowledge, and interest levels of their students. It was observed that teachers did not strictly adhere to the activities and teaching suggestions prescribed in the syllabus and textbooks. This kind of adaptation and customisation was of great interest to some passionate teachers, as they enjoyed creating extracurricular activities (T3, T4 and T6).

I love teaching classes with students of high proficiency level and intelligence in GE 1 and 2, as I have more room for creativity. However, this type of teaching requires dedication, hard work, and is time-consuming. (T4)

The interviewed teachers expressed the opinion that the teaching materials and activities were satisfactory in GE 1 and GE 2. Nevertheless, they deemed them insufficient in GE 3 and 4 due to the IELTS-oriented nature of these courses (T1, T2, T5, T6). Frequently, they had to make alterations, adjustments, integrate supplementary materials from external sources such as workbooks or the Internet, or even develop their own materials to cater to the

specific requirements and proficiency levels of their students. In conclusion, the findings indicate that the teachers were receptive to the curriculum support materials (i.e., the textbook and teacher guidebook). However, certain aspects of both were considered unsatisfactory. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the supplementary materials meet the needs of both the teachers and the students. Regardless of the materials and activities chosen, it is crucial for both designers and users to have an understanding of how and why they can be used to facilitate, motivate, and support learning (Brewster et al., 2002; Pinter, 2006). In a classroom observation (T5), the instructor generated inappropriate teaching resources as a result of this lack of understanding, which led to low motivation and participation among students.

As shown in Figure 6.11, the EMI continuum in practice (adopted from Thompson and McKinley, 2018), the EMI approach and EFL approach are at the two extremes of the continuum. EMI focuses on content, while EFL focuses on language proficiency. The position of the EAP approach in this case study is more towards an emphasis on language learning outcomes, but not as extreme as the EFL approach. This means that the EAP approach includes not only academic English language knowledge but also academic skills in order to fully prepare EMI students for their undergraduate course in English. However, the curriculum did not emphasise academic English language and academic skills.



Figure 6.11: Continuum of programmes that integrate content and language learning (adapted from Thompson and McKinley, 2018)

6.7.5 Teacher training and other resource support

Innovations and reforms necessitate the acquisition of new and substantially improved knowledge, skills, and thinking in various domains (Scott, 2021). Proficiency in employing effective teaching approaches and strategies to enhance learning for students with diverse abilities, as well as utilising various informal methods of assessing students, is essential. At this juncture, it is evident that in-service training is highly imperative to ensure the seamless implementation of the curriculum. The initial phase of the implementation process entailed providing teacher training through seminars, conferences, and workshops on curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment, commencing with a small cohort of teachers to generate 'short-term wins' (Kotter, 2012). Additionally, the teachers were encouraged to engage in self-study to enhance their language proficiency and knowledge of teaching methodologies.

Through discussions with the administrators, it was revealed that numerous training workshops and seminars have been conducted at both the national and institutional levels in recent years. These sessions have aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers in assessment and teaching methods. Distinguished experts in these fields are invited to share their expertise, thereby enabling teachers to improve their practices. Furthermore, faculty members have actively participated by discussing the challenges they encounter and offering their own experiences and suggestions. In addition to these initiatives, a dedicated professional development programme has been established at the departmental level to support teachers in implementing the curriculum. This programme entails regular meetings among teachers belonging to different groups, ensuring collaboration and facilitating the suggestion of further training when required.

In that PD programme, I created groups for building programmes, developing teaching materials, and conducting testing. Those groups were required to meet and discuss regularly throughout the school year, assign tasks, address any issues, and make necessary adjustments within their respective groups. (Admin 2)

In terms of the facilities, despite the institution's commendable efforts to furnish the language classroom with modern amenities like projectors and speakers, there were certain

classrooms that lacked audiovisual equipment. Consequently, teachers had to depend on their personal laptops and portable loudspeakers to conduct listening exercises. In a particular class comprising approximately 30 students, it appeared that the volume produced by the portable speakers was insufficient to reach all students, thereby resulting in diminished attentiveness among some individuals seated towards the rear.

6.7.6 Appropriateness and practicality of change

From an administrative perspective, the English courses within the EMI programme have been assessed as exemplary in terms of quality and strategic value. The administrator emphasised during the interview that this assertion is supported by a very productive pedagogic model and concrete outcomes achieved through their successful implementation (Admin 1).

From the teacher's standpoint, the assessment of the feasibility of implementing change within this institution varied. In the questionnaire, 71.79% (or 28/39) of the teachers surveyed agreed that communicative teaching was effectively employed in this university. During the interviews, participants were asked to provide more details on the appropriateness and practicality of the curriculum change and explain their reasons for thinking so. The participants' responses to these questions revealed an important theme regarding the failure of the change. The new curriculum and pedagogy design implemented in 2016 was not well-received by the teachers and students, as it did not provide a conducive learning environment where students could benefit from various teaching methods pedagogic practices. Some teachers also mentioned limitations in their sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English, and they identified various constraints that hindered the implementation of western methods. These constraints included the wider curriculum context, traditional teaching methods, class size and schedules, and available resources (T2, T5).

6.7.7 Difficulties faced by EAP teachers

<i>Difficulties</i>	Not a problem	Potential problem	A problem	Mean	SD	N
a. Teacher's limited proficiency in spoken English.	20 51.28%	11 28.21%	8 20.51%	1.69	0.8	39 100%
b. Teachers' limited sociolinguistics/ cultural competence.	5 12.82%	26 66.67%	8 20.51%	2.08	0.58	39 100%
c. Teachers' lack of training in CLT.	9 23.08%	22 56.41%	8 20.51%	1.97	0.67	39 100%
d. Teachers have few opportunities for in-service training in CLT.	10 25.64%	24 61.54%	5 12.82%	1.87	0.61	39 100%
e. Teachers have little time for teaching materials for CLT class.	10 25.64%	18 46.15%	11 28.21%	2.03	0.74	39 100%
f. Lack of authentic teaching materials.	11 28.21%	19 48.72%	9 23.08%	1.95	0.72	39 100%
g. Large classes. (Class size)	5 12.82%	16 41.03%	18 46.15%	2.33	0.7	39 100%
h. Insufficient funding, school facilities	5 12.82%	19 48.72%	15 38.46%	2.26	0.68	39 100%
i. Lack of support from colleagues and administrators.	17 43.59%	14 35.9%	8 20.51%	1.77	0.78	39 100%
j. Grammar-based examination.	11 28.21%	21 53.85%	7 17.95%	1.9	0.68	39 100%
k. Lack of assessment instruments.	8 20.51%	25 64.1%	6 15.38%	1.95	0.6	39 100%
l. Students' low English proficiency.	7 17.95%	15 38.46%	17 43.59%	2.26	0.75	39 100%
m. Students' resistance to class participation.	3 7.69%	16 41.03%	20 51.28%	2.44	0.64	39 100%
n. Students' resistance because teacher is central and knowledge transmitter.	10 25.64%	18 46.15%	11 28.21%	2.03	0.74	39 100%
o. Students' resistance because of the concept that learning should be serious, not playing games.	11 28.21%	20 51.28%	8 20.51%	1.92	0.7	39 100%
p. Using the prescribed book in teaching.	11 28.21%	24 61.54%	4 10.26%	1.82	0.6	39 100%
q. Using English language to teach CLT curriculum.	23 58.97%	12 30.77%	4 10.26%	1.51	0.68	39 100%
r. Emphasizing the process or the product.	13 33.33%	24 61.54%	2 5.13%	1.72	0.56	39 100%
s. The conflict of doing grammar explanation and error correction.	21 53.85%	14 35.9%	4 10.26%	1.56	0.68	39 100%
t. Focusing on rote memorization and repetition.	13 33.33%	17 43.59%	9 23.08%	1.9	0.75	39 100%
u. Limited number of class hours	4 10.26%	16 41.03%	19 48.72%	2.38	0.67	39 100%

Table 6.22: Difficulties faced by teachers

Table 6.22 presents descriptive information pertaining to the challenges experienced by teachers, as evaluated by the ID scale in the survey. The participating teachers demonstrated moderate perceptions concerning 14 challenges encountered during the implementation process, with half of the means exceeding 2.0 on a 3-point scale. The data provided in Table 6.22 reveal several noteworthy challenges identified by the teachers, which include students' reluctance to participate in class (Mean=2.44), limited class hours (Mean=2.38), large class sizes (Mean: 2.33), inadequate funding and school facilities (Mean: 2.26), and students' limited proficiency in English (Mean=2.26). The two challenges with the lowest ratings on the Enabling scale were the utilisation of English as the language of instruction for CLT curriculum and the predicament of offering grammar explanations and error corrections, with mean scores of 1.51 and 1.56, respectively.

One of the major challenges in implementing the curriculum was the teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum's aims and the theoretical and pedagogical principles of English language teaching. This included concepts such as the communicative approach, interactive learner-centred teaching, and group work. Some teachers understood communicative and interactive teaching as simply getting students to participate in activities and respond to questions, while learner-centred teaching was seen as having students work independently. There was not enough emphasis on promoting the free production or the use of the target language during discussions. There was little evidence of prolonged discussion and interaction. The teachers' limited understanding of teaching principles and the curriculum's aims led to a lack of emphasis on developing students' confidence and communicative competence. As a result, the lesson activities carried out in some classrooms were not fully communicative, as they did not provide maximum opportunities for students to engage in language communication and negotiate meaning as active participants. Additionally, the opportunities for students to experience and be creative with the language were hindered when the language used in communicative tasks was not authentic or produced naturally.

Whilst the curriculum materials (textbook and teacher guidebook) in GE 1 and GE 2 were found to be useful and helpful, some of the content in GE 3 and GE 4 was unsuitable for the

students' level or insufficient in quantity. The teaching resources and activities were also pitched at too high a level, particularly in GE 3 and 4, making it difficult for students to understand and follow. Students mentioned a significant gap between GE 1, 2 and GE 3, 4, with the first two being easier and the latter two IELTS-oriented courses being much more difficult, even for higher-level English students. This led teachers to produce or find additional materials or resources from other sources, such as the Internet or commercial books, requiring extra effort in lesson preparation. For some teachers, this was challenging and added pressure as it took time, energy, and required knowledge of skills and methods. Furthermore, many teachers were young, enthusiastic, and proficient in English, but lacked experience in designing, editing, and implementing new curricula. Additionally, EAP teachers had a high number of teaching hours, especially in the first semester of the academic year, and no additional support payment from the government, which resulted in lower motivation and enthusiasm for curriculum modification. Other obstacles in implementing the curriculum included students' low language proficiency, teachers' limited language competence, and teachers' lack of teaching and designing repertoire. Observations revealed that with class sizes of 25-35 students, where the majority had low language proficiency, teachers were less likely to incorporate interactive teaching and learner-centred learning. Furthermore, some teachers themselves lacked pedagogical knowledge and skills in English language teaching.

6.7.8 Difficulties faced by EAP students

The policy changes, coupled with the discontinuation of government financial support in 2016, led to a significant alteration in the pedagogy of teaching and learning. This, in turn, had an impact on students' learning and teachers' instruction. In general, it appeared that students had a longer path of English preparation to fulfil the requirements of the expanded EAP curriculum. However, during this period, students also learned some content subjects in English, even if their English proficiency fell below the requirement. This resulted in students experiencing stress, anxiety, and failure, which subsequently led to low motivation and negative attitudes towards learning. Furthermore, since not all EAP students were attending ULIS campus for English learning, all extracurricular activities such as 'buddy programmes', English Speaking Club or Contest, and English Singing Contest were eliminated. As a

consequence, there was no longer an English learning community or productive language learning environments. Consequently, students had fewer opportunities to practise English outside of the classrooms. With regard to blended learning, many students in this case showed disinterest in the online programmes and had low motivation to complete the online tasks, as they were not mandatory and integrated with their EAP curriculum. Instead of paying an additional fee for this online learning, they preferred similar free online programmes and had the freedom to choose programmes that interested them.

6.8 Chapter summary

6.8.1 At national level

As mentioned in the introductory chapter and 6.1, the national language policy aims to prepare learners for effective communication in a multicultural and multilingual environment. This language advantage would enable students to become confident learners and competitive professionals in the era of industrialisation and modernisation.

The adoption of the CEFR as a national framework for foreign language education in Vietnam is widely recognised as a strategic initiative to tackle challenges in English teaching and learning. The CEFR-V and VSTEP, as delineated by the interviewed official representing the national testing team, are formulated to serve as comprehensive competency frameworks specifically designed for Vietnamese learners in the local context. However, it is an oversight that these frameworks, as crucial parts of the national English Curriculum, do not explicitly outline the primary goal of the national language policy, which centres on fostering students' independent and confident communication abilities in a multilingual and multicultural environment. Given the role of VSTEP as a testing scale, it is impossible to capture the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of English use that is needed for students' communicative competence in the multicultural and multilingual context. Therefore, it is necessary to re-evaluate the English teaching approach in relation to its epistemological, ideological, and pedagogical aspects within the traditional ELT curricula in Vietnam in order to meet the new target of Project 2020. Referring back to the literature review on language

teaching and learning approaches in Chapter 3, educators around the world should now develop pedagogical practices that move away from 'native speaker' norms and embrace the pluricentric nature of English in today's highly diverse global context. These practices align with the objective of Vietnamese national language policy of preparing English users for effective communication within a multicultural and multilingual environment. Additionally, there needs to be a shift in the understanding of language as a multilingual and situated social practice within a broader multilingual context. This is particularly significant considering the prevalence of borrowing Western curricula and textbooks, as well as the dominance of native-speakerism as an ideology in Vietnamese higher education. In light of these circumstances, a paradigm shift towards the teaching of English as an international language is deemed to be a suitable measure in order to attain the overarching objectives of Project 2020.

6.8.2 At institutional level

Overall, it can be argued that the development of the EAP curriculum in this EMI programme falls short of fully aligning with the overarching objective of the national language policy. The objective of enhancing students' independent and confident communication in multicultural and multilingual context has not been adequately incorporated into the university's curriculum. Although students are touted as internationalised and independent learners, the curriculum was CEFR-based and limited by the reliance on Eurocentric textbooks. This discrepancy continues to exist, despite a significant number of students successfully attaining the desired learning outcomes of this preparatory course within the initial five years of curriculum implementation. This finding highlights the necessity of redefining the language policy at the institutional level and conducting an evaluation of the EAP curriculum.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this university holds a significant role in the execution of Project 2020, particularly in relation to EMI programmes. The administrators at this institution demonstrated an extensive comprehension of the goals outlined in the national language policy and expressed a strong commitment to enhancing the communicative proficiency of their students. These experienced leaders had the confidence to prioritise pedagogy and

employ strategic approaches to foster pedagogical transformation. Nevertheless, there remains an incomplete integration of Project 2020's objectives into the institutional curriculum standards, leading to a lack of direction in the implementation efforts undertaken by teachers. Furthermore, the modifications made to pedagogical standards in 2016 have led to the absence of a conducive language learning environment, thereby limiting opportunities for students to engage in English language usage beyond the confines of the classroom. These factors can pose significant challenges in the successful execution of the curriculum.

The administrators embraced the perceived freedom and authority to develop a curriculum that would most effectively cater to the needs of their student community, providing them with values and a diverse range of transferable skills that are essential in a globalised world. Consequently, a shift in the roles of teachers and students occurred, characterised by an exchange between them. This transition moved away from a teacher-led curriculum towards a student-centred approach, where teachers served as facilitators and students took on the role of independent, self-directed learners who were responsible for their own learning. As a result, communicative and student-centred methodologies were emphasised in the syllabus to maximise the role of teachers as facilitators and enhance students' communicative competence. However, there was a lack of emphasis on academic skills, study skills, and self-directed learning strategies necessary for students to succeed in EMI programmes, as well as other transferable skills needed for society. The literature review on the implementation of EMI programmes in Vietnamese higher education also highlighted the instances of failure, which can be partly attributed to students' shortcomings. These deficiencies encompass not only a lack of English proficiency but also a dearth of study skills and other self-directed learning strategies.

In relation to the transitions between courses, it was evident that maintaining a cohesive progression of EAP courses posed a challenge within the institution. Both teachers and students expressed concerns regarding the disparity between GE 1, 2 and GE 3, 4, emphasising the necessity for the university to address this matter and seek viable solutions to bridge the existing gap.

During the field trip, I witnessed the endeavours of the institution's administrators in cultivating a professional learning culture among the staff as an integral aspect of the implementation process. This was accomplished through an extensive array of teacher trainings, seminars, and frequent staff meetings designed to foster the exchange of ideas. However, it became apparent that there was a dearth of training that specifically addressed curriculum design and lesson planning, particularly within the context of EAP courses in EMI programmes. The necessity for such training was substantiated in interviews with teachers, who underscored their responsibility in adapting and amalgamating various textbooks and teaching resources to cater to the diverse needs of their students. Continuous professional development in this context can provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the new curriculum.

In short, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the existing English preparation course within the EMI programme in the Vietnamese context. This assessment is particularly critical given the government's recent strong commitment to the long-term goal of gradually incorporating English as a second language into the educational system (GoV, 2024). This should be coupled with a redefinition of the language policy and a formal needs analysis involving not only current EAP students, but also EMI students who have completed the EAP preparation courses, as well as EAP teachers, EMI content educators, and employers. In addition, it is pivotal to focus on professional development and learning opportunities, particularly in curriculum design and planning for EAP instructors.

6.8.3 At classroom level

In this institution, the teachers had mixed opinions about the curriculum. Whilst some aspects were considered clear and important, others were deemed confusing and problematic. The teachers believed that the curriculum had benefits, as it had the potential to improve students' language proficiency and boost their confidence in developing their communication skills. However, concerns were raised about the curriculum's focus on test preparation, the significant gap between levels, students' low language proficiency, and the challenges faced by teachers, such as workload, financial support, and limited knowledge

and skills in teaching and methodology. These issues raised doubts about the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving its intended goals.

In the curriculum implementation, some teachers did not implement successfully in a number of steps among the five ones by Scott (2016), particularly in the first and final steps. Most teachers perceived the main objective of the curriculum as relevant and familiar, although some were not able to identify the key ideas emphasised in it. This lack of understanding may be attributed to the teachers' limited involvement in the curriculum design process, as they mainly played the role of implementers. The pedagogical principles upon which the curriculum is based were deemed suitable for the two initial stages of student development and their corresponding needs. However, they were considered less applicable to the subsequent two stages.

The administrator stated during the interview that no textbook is without flaws or comprehensive in every aspect. It is evident that the chosen Western textbooks in this EAP curriculum did not fully cater to the requirements of the institution, its student community, and society as a whole. As a result, educators had to make adjustments, implement modifications, and even create their own instructional materials, highlighting the increased reliance on teachers' expertise in curriculum design and planning. There was also recognition of the significance and advantages of interactive learner-centred learning, as teachers successfully related this approach to student-focused instruction. Nevertheless, there was a lack of clarity regarding the implementation of this approach in the classroom, and insufficient time to adapt to the change negatively impacted its effectiveness. In short, there exists an implementation gap in terms of curriculum standards, pedagogic standards and assessment standards in this institution. Considering that many teachers are young and inexperienced, there is a pressing need for in-service teacher training on curriculum design, textbooks, pedagogical practices, and evaluation.

The next chapter will examine the implementation of the EOP curriculum in another institution in Vietnam.

CHAPTER 7

EOP CURRICULUM IN VIETNAM (Case 2)

In this university case, the focus was on examining the EFL curriculum, which entails the compulsory teaching of English at the tertiary level. In a similar fashion to chapter six, chapter seven delves into the perceptions, interpretations, and implementation of the new curriculum by institutional administrators, teachers, and students at a prominent application-oriented university in Hanoi. The analysis in this chapter draws upon diverse sets of data, gathered through various data collection methods. Specifically, it is based on data obtained from eight interviews conducted with administrators (including one rector, two department heads, and five from the Testing Team and Building Team), 91 teacher surveys, 291 student surveys, ten interviews carried out with teachers, seven focus-groups conducted with students, and 22 classroom observations.

7.1 Intended EOP curriculum at Institutional level

7.1.1 The Design of the EOP Curriculum

The development of the new curriculum was assigned to a team of EFL teachers in the Faculty of English at the main campus. Initially, the team prioritised structuring the new curriculum, determining which courses to include and their sequence. Recognising that the previous English programmes featured general courses followed by one or two ESP courses, they acknowledged that students were not able to attain the desired advanced level of proficiency. To address this, the team decided to expand the number of face-to-face and online courses offered, in addition to the existing two introductory and two intermediate courses. This change resulted in a total of approximately 30 to 33 credits for the programme. However, this modification was not just a matter of adding more courses; it was, more importantly, about shifting the teaching paradigms. The team aimed to move away from traditional teacher-centred, textbook-driven courses with limited use of resources and evaluation based solely on written tests. Instead, they embraced more participatory teaching methods and strategies, prioritised student-centred classes, incorporated a wider range of teaching resources, and evaluated students based on their everyday performance.

Furthermore, in accordance with the advanced level of English proficiency, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) was integrated into these six courses. The educators at this institution embraced the autonomy, flexibility, and authorisation granted to them in order to customise the curriculum to best meet the needs of their student community and societal expectations, employing a student-centred approach. A comprehensive needs analysis was conducted to ensure that the new curriculum addressed the specific requirements of English language learning in order to fulfil those needs. The participants involved in this analysis included current ESP and EFL students, ESP and EFL teachers, academic content teachers, as well as professionals such as employers and employees. The design of the new curriculum was informed by the needs analysis, the teaching experience of the design team, and their understanding of the students' context. This approach aimed to bridge the gap between the curriculum and the labour market demands. As a result, a competency-based language teaching curriculum was formulated and implemented at the university.

The institution follows a very novel approach. We also categorise disciplines into groups to develop what are commonly known as career-oriented English programmes. Students majoring in engineering, such as mechanical engineering or electronics, will study from the same set of textbooks (Admin 3).

The Faculty of English is responsible for textbook design, the distribution of weekly timetables for English subject studies, and the establishment of criteria for teachers' evaluations of students' learning. This programme follows a blended learning approach, comprising of 6 terms of English over the course of the first 3 years. Each term consists of 75 periods, with 35 periods dedicated to online lessons and 40 periods for offline lessons. Given the focus on language proficiency in the EFL approach, there is a greater emphasis on general English in the first three terms, followed by a shift towards EOP in the last three courses. Consequently, a distinct series of English textbooks and supplementary materials have been developed based on different disciplinary groups. In line with the principles of CBLT (Auerbach, 1986), the amount of content knowledge and vocabulary has been divided into 6 stages to facilitate a more manageable learning experience.

Actually, we aim to incorporate academic knowledge and vocabulary right from the start of the program and gradually introduce more advanced content in subsequent semesters, taking into consideration the students' increasing proficiency in English. (Build 2)

The scale of English classes for non-English disciplines at this university was four classes of forty-five minutes per week, along with a similar amount of time allocated for online lessons. Students studying these disciplines spent the majority of their school day focusing on English through communicative lessons that emphasised listening and speaking. Reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar were covered in the online lessons. These students were provided with individual accounts to log in and access learning materials and exercises that served as preparation for in-person lessons. Different teams, supervised by the university administration, were responsible for designing various sets of language materials such as textbooks, teachers' handbooks, and online learning programmes to cater to the specific needs of different specialisations within the university. The administrative staff described the content of these textbooks as being communicative-oriented and student-centred. These textbooks were designed to include engaging topics, exercises, and a wide range of activities to sustain students' interest and provide relevant materials for different disciplines at the university. Both the online programmes and textbooks contained an equal number of units and covered the same topics.

The course books imply a concept of learner-centredness through various communication activities that are repeated throughout. In competency-based language teaching, it is crucial to prioritise the learners' roles in the learning process. The head of the faculty expressed that the idea of student-centredness is primarily reflected in the design of the new syllabus. The effective implementation of these activities necessitates the availability of teaching resources that can facilitate students' engagement in open dialogues, interactive games, role-plays, and problem-solving tasks. This also involves providing training to students for self and peer evaluation. It was emphasised that students should be encouraged to identify and correct errors in their partners' written and spoken work, and it was recommended that teachers employ diverse techniques for error correction, refraining from confirming or correcting mistakes during oral activities (Admin 4). As a support for their teaching of the

new textbooks, teachers were provided with a Teacher's Book which offers detailed instructions on the steps and procedures to be followed for teaching various skills. The implementation of the new curriculum placed a significant workload on teachers, who not only developed the curriculum but also served as its implementers (Admin 4). Additionally, professional activities were regularly organised for teachers to engage in discussions and exchange ideas concerning the new curriculum and teaching methods. This collaborative approach helped tailor the curriculum to align with the institution's objectives, as well as the specific needs of both teachers and students.

Well, I believe the biggest pressure on teachers is the fact, as teachers have complained, that they are under time constraints and have an overwhelming amount of work. (Admin 4)

7.1.2 The EOP curriculum standards

English, being a mandatory discipline, is categorised into 6 broad subjects that cater to both general English and English for Specific Purposes (EOP), ranging from 1 to 6. As per the regulations set by the MOET, the desired English proficiency level for this course is EOP B1. The course spans a total duration of 600 hours, spread across 60 weeks, with 6 hours of English instruction per week consistently for the initial three years. To formulate the syllabus, the design team referred to various textbooks and EOP resources in search of relevant themes and functional language, which were then incorporated into the new textbook through meticulously devised activities.

Other themes and functions were incorporated as deemed suitable for the given context, institution, and the EOP students. Consequently, by organising lessons around thematic units, students would have the opportunity to develop their speaking and writing skills in a more systematic manner.

There are 8 units or themes in each textbook, but the first two terms have more units compared to the others. In these initial terms, which focus on general English, we aim to include more familiar topics. To accommodate our limited time for face-

to-face lessons, we have decided to reduce the number of units and use them as self-study topics. (Build 2)

Each course syllabus comprises various essential components, including the course title, course description, course objectives (both general and detailed), course contents (which encompass general information, detailed contents, and teaching schedule), course materials, and course assessment. It is strongly recommended that teachers adhere to the syllabus, whilst also being permitted to make necessary adjustments to cater to the individual needs of their students by incorporating supplementary teaching materials. The administrator places great importance on the syllabus due to its practical utility, as it undoubtedly aligns with the institution's objectives. The administrator is confident that the syllabus provides clear guidance for teachers, as it is meticulously structured and presents objectives and teaching methods for each session in a coherent manner. Furthermore, she firmly believes that their teachers possess comprehensive knowledge and a thorough comprehension of the new syllabus, as they have been actively involved in every stage of its design.

Teaching materials

The materials for this EOP course cater to students at a tertiary level and are available in six different proficiency levels. The course materials comprise a collection of course books and supplementary materials. Each level offers student books, teacher's books, audio CDs, PowerPoint lesson plans, and online lessons. These materials are utilised by students across all faculties of the institution. The online programme works in tandem with the coursebook, and monthly student progress reports are generated to assess their language proficiency. These reports are based on the content covered in both the coursebook and online units.

The coursebook itself is structured into eight main units, all following a standardised format with two sections: Overall Objectives and Key Language Knowledge. The Key Language Knowledge section is further divided into five main parts: Vocabulary, Grammar, Online Learning Checklist, Face to Face Class Materials, and Students' Self-assessment. The Face to Face Class Materials encompass two lessons per week, with each lesson consisting of three

or four activities. At the beginning of each unit, the coursebook presents students with lists of key words and expressions that they have previously learned from the online lessons for revision purposes. In other words, students are required to complete the online lesson as preparation for the face-to-face class. This feature proves advantageous for students who engage in independent study or are extensively preparing for examinations.

Each unit follows the same basic pattern, providing a clear structure for students to follow the lesson and understand what they need to do. (Design 3)

7.1.3 The pedagogic standards

At the design stage, the curriculum development team consisted of teachers who were concerned with ensuring the achievement of the programme's objectives by the students. The aim of designing thematic syllabuses was to motivate students through a variety of materials and methodologies, while focusing on tasks that have been proven to contribute to the acquisition of various language features. In order to enhance students' communicative competence, particularly for employment purposes, the language functions were organised around topics or themes, serving as the guiding principle for each syllabus. As a result, the syllabuses are structured both topically and functionally, with an emphasis on task-based learning. However, diverse teaching and learning approaches were adopted to provide learners with ample opportunities to engage in communicative activities.

Considering the ambitious goal set by the MOET for tertiary students to reach a B1 level upon graduation, Vietnamese universities have the potential to achieve this goal, provided that students begin at an A2 level according to the CEFR. However, MOET has reported that 95% of first-year tertiary students are at an A0 level, also known as 'false beginners' (Admin 4). This trend has been observed not only in this institution but also in other universities, as reported during a national conference (Admin 4). Consequently, a wide range of pedagogical practices have been implemented to support students from the very beginning of their studies at this institution. First-year students are required to take a placement test, which is divided into four different levels.

Learning communicative skills on our own can be very challenging, which is why we require assistance. It is essential to have a communicative context in which to practice the language. Therefore, higher education institutions can play a crucial role in creating a communicative environment for students, both inside and outside of the classroom. (Admin 4)

Pedagogical Activities for a Unit

In each online unit, students acquire vocabulary and grammar knowledge through presentations and engage in activities that enhance their listening, reading, and writing skills. Prior to the face-to-face lessons, students engage in comprehensive reviews of vocabulary and grammar, which serve as a foundation for their subsequent speaking activities. It is imperative for teachers to cultivate a positive classroom environment that fosters an atmosphere of support and constructive feedback, thereby encouraging students to volunteer for speaking tasks in front of their peers. Furthermore, teachers carefully monitor students' progress during class and utilise the results of online unit tests to identify specific areas of English proficiency that require extra attention or supplementation during face-to-face lessons. To ensure a well-rounded assessment, each student is expected to perform at least twice within a given term, with performance evaluations being a component of the grading process. In cases where class time is insufficient, teachers may assign individual, pair, or group practice exercises to be completed at home, with students subsequently submitting recorded or videotaped performances for evaluation, feedback, and grading purposes.

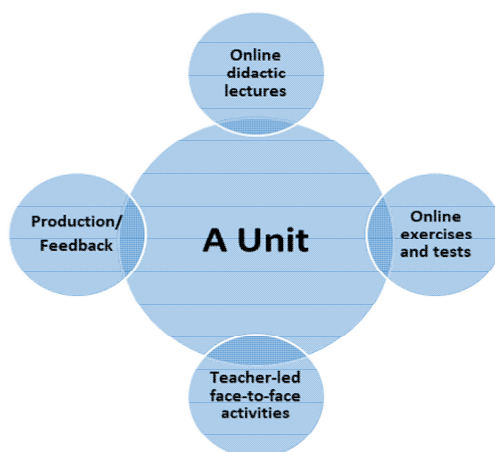


Figure 7.1: Pedagogical Activities for a Unit

Additional pedagogical activities

English clubs were established at the university to provide thousands of students with a rich extracurricular environment for productive language learning. In order to maximise resources, English-major students were appointed as team leaders for club activities. Additionally, a buddy programme was implemented outside of regular class hours, wherein English-major students worked with non-English-major students in small groups. Language majors served as tutors, offering support in communicative activities and addressing other English-related issues. A group of young teachers was also involved in overseeing and leading these extracurricular activities.

7.1.4 The assessment standards

Competency-based language teaching involves formative and alternative assessments within educative programmes (Sambell, McDowell, and Montgomery, 2013). The objective of evaluation is to determine and identify what students know and what they can do. The assessment of these EOP courses consisted of formative and summative assessment procedures to measure students' performance using a detailed test specification. Formative assessment (33%) was conducted as an ongoing process, which included a daily speaking assessment, mid-term speaking test, online tests, and regular written tests, as well as weekly writing tasks. Summative assessment (67%) was performed at the end of each term through a 4-skills English test. Based on the test specification, the testing team developed a comprehensive range of writing-based tests and oral tests for ongoing and achievement assessment for each term.

We have built an EOP test specification, which is a technical description of the test based on CEFR criteria or the 6-level KNLNN, to ensure that all exam questions are closely linked to the English courses and that all English tests are of equal difficulty.
(Test 3)

To enhance the daily speaking assessment process, it is anticipated that teachers will clearly articulate the criteria used for evaluating each speaking practice activity. This will enable students to fully understand the essential requirements for successfully completing the activities and providing feedback.

After practicing individually, in pairs, or in groups, some students were invited to re-enact the activity in front of the class. The purpose was to allow the teacher and classmates to provide feedback and comments. (Test 4)

Regular paper-based tests, with a maximum duration of 40 minutes, were administered in the fourth and tenth week of the programme. Furthermore, a mid-term speaking test was conducted during the final two periods of week six. The test content was derived from the online knowledge and skills section covered in previous lessons. In terms of written assignments, students were assigned a different topic every week and submitted their work to the teacher for random evaluation. The teachers played a crucial role in informing students about their progress and providing feedback, which can enhance their understanding of their strengths and accomplishments (Sambell, McDowell, and Montgomery, 2013).

Teachers identified areas of knowledge and skills in which students were not proficient based on their answers from the results of regular written tests and online unit tests. They then provided supplementary reviews for the students. (Test 4)

In the mid-term speaking test, students have 2 minutes to introduce themselves and then discuss one of the topics they have learned from week 1 to week 5. Afterwards, they answer the teacher's questions about the topic they have just presented. (Test 3)

The end-of-term test at this university was an achievement test that assessed students' language proficiency in four skills: Listening (20%), Reading (20%), Writing (10%), and Speaking (40%). Additionally, it examined their knowledge of the course, including other language areas such as Grammar (5%) and Vocabulary (5%). The final oral test, which

accounted for 40% of the overall achievement test, comprised three parts: Introduction, Paired Conversation, and Mono-Talk. This test lasted between 10 to 15 minutes, and topics for parts 2 and 3 were selected randomly.

In competency-based language teaching, assessment should be authentic, meaning that it measures real-world tasks. Consequently, the end-of-programme (EOP) tests, which students were required to take at the completion of the English training programme, were being developed when I collected data. The B1 EOP tests were designed to incorporate the results of a needs analysis and encompassed two typical functions. The first function was to demonstrate successful completion of the EOP course by the students. The second function was to showcase to entrepreneurs and potential employers that these students were competent in using EOP for specific career fields. These tests needed to be equivalent to the CEFR B1 tests and be based on CEFR B1 testing criteria. The only difference is that they included topics and real-world tasks from the EOP learning programme in the area of knowledge.

The EOP tests are essential because the program is designed for EOP students, meaning that the tests must align with the program's objectives. Additionally, it is important to clearly define the expected language proficiency and skills of the students. This includes not only general English criteria, but also specific EOP criteria that are relevant to their respective majors or groups of majors. These considerations are taken into account when designing the EOP tests. (Test 3)

7.2 EOP teachers and students' profile

7.2.1 EOP teachers' demographic Information

The teacher questionnaire survey for this case was completed by a total of 91 eligible teachers out of the total number of 200 EFL teachers. The study included ten teacher characteristics, which were identical to those in Case 1.

Demographic Variables	Value	N=91	%
Institution	HaUI	91	100%
Age	Under 25	10	10.99%
	25-29	31	34.07%
	30-39	40	43.96%
	40-49	10	10.99%
Gender	Male	5	5.49%
	Female	86	94.51%
Teaching Experience	1-4 years	27	29.67%
	5-10 years	42	46.15%
	11-14 years	10	10.99%
	15-20 years	12	13.19%
Employment Status	Permanent employment	33	36.26%
	Fixed term contract : >1 school-year	24	26.37%
	Fixed-term contract : ≤ school-year	34	37.36%
Qualifications	Bachelor's degree	29	31.87%
	Master's degree	62	68.13%
	Doctoral degree	0	0%
Highest education place	In a Vietnamese institution	79	86.81%
	In an international institution in Vietnam	11	12.09%
	Overseas	1	1.1%
Teaching Method taught	Grammar – translation method	16	17.58%
	CLT method	60	65.93%
	Both	15	16.48%
First Language	Vietnamese	91	100%
	English	0	0%
EMI Ability	Average	10	10.99%
	Good	69	75.82%
	Very Good	12	13.19%
Teaching Hours per week	Less than 10 hours	4	4.4%
	10-14 hours	11	12.09%
	15-20 hours	43	47.25%
	More than 20 hours	33	36.26%

Table 7.1 Demographic Descriptions of the Survey Participants

7.2.1.1 Demographic Descriptions of the Survey Participants

As evident from Table 7.1, the predominant gender among teachers was female, accounting for 94.51% of the teacher workforce, while males constituted a mere 5.49%. Given the notable gender disparity in the distribution of teachers in Case 1 and Case 2, it is worth noting the comparison with the gender distribution among educational institutions in Vietnam, as this lends valuable insights into the issue of gender equality within the English teaching profession. Moreover, in situations where females dominate, fostering greater gender equality could potentially expand the pool of available teachers.

University Case 2 exhibited a predominantly young teacher population, with 89% of the survey participants being under the age of 40 and 45.06% under the age of 30. Consequently, 75.82% of the EFL teachers involved in the study had less than 10 years of teaching experience, a trend that aligns with the current English education workforce in other Vietnamese universities. The presence of a youthful teaching staff carries the inherent characteristic of inexperience. While these young teachers may find it easier to achieve a score of 7.0 in the IELTS exam, they are lacking in pedagogical expertise. This can potentially lead to challenges in implementing the new curriculum. It is worth noting that only 10.99% of the teachers were between the ages of 40 and 50, with no teachers exceeding the age of 50. In Vietnamese institutions where a significant proportion of teachers are nearing retirement, the total staff remuneration has decreased in recent years due to the early retirement of EFL teachers, particularly those who did not meet the educational and qualification requirements, and their replacement by younger teachers. Moreover, the institutions did not face any adverse budgetary consequences resulting from the ageing teacher population. Staff remuneration represents the largest component of education expenditure, and in Vietnam, the statutory salaries of experienced teachers are considerably higher than the starting salaries for younger teachers.

Table 7.1 presents the percentages of teachers who possess two primary levels of formal education, typically a bachelor's and a master's degree, obtained from a university or an equivalent institution. Notably, a majority of the EFL teachers, accounting for more than two-thirds of the total, have attained a master's degree. Furthermore, 31.87% of teachers

have undergone some form of tertiary education. A significant proportion of these individuals are relatively young teachers who recently graduated from universities. Many of them are currently engaged in pursuing a master's degree or a PhD in order to fulfil the university's requirements for lecturers or managerial positions. In addition to these academic pursuits, the teachers at this university actively participate in a wide array of training workshops and short-term courses that are offered as part of the institution's training programmes, which aim to facilitate the development and implementation of the new curriculum.

In this particular university case, all instructors are of Vietnamese nationality, with a significant proportion of them (82.42%) being educated through CLT methodologies during their university studies. Consequently, this exposure has rendered them well-acquainted with CLT and potentially alleviated any challenges they may encounter during its practical application. Although only a solitary teacher had received her education overseas, a noteworthy majority (89.01%) of the surveyed instructors expressed confidence in possessing good to excellent language proficiency.

7.2.1.2 Teachers' job experience and contractual status

A number of countries have expressed concerns about the decline in teachers' job security and the increase in contract-based employment, particularly of a short-term nature (OECD, 2018), as well as the impact of teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2008; Podgursky et al., 2004; Rockoff, 2004). According to Table 7.1, 36.26% of teachers were employed on a permanent basis, 26.37% on fixed-term contracts, and over one-third of these teachers (36.37%) on contracts lasting less than one year. The explanation for this prevalence of short-term contractual employment is that university management sought to enhance flexibility in the teacher labour market and assign teachers to meet specific short-term needs arising from the higher number of EOP classes in the implementation of the new EOP curriculum. Only a subset of younger teachers on short-term contracts were deemed eligible for long-term contracts and, eventually, permanent employment after a few years of teaching. As a result, this contractual status may have implications for teachers' job security and the execution of their teaching responsibilities.

Given the youthful demographic of teachers in this university and the prevalence of short-term contractual employment, it is unsurprising to observe a dearth of substantial teaching experience. More than two-thirds of teachers possess fewer than 10 years of teaching experience. Specifically, 29.67% of teachers have taught for a duration of 1 to 4 years, while 46.15% have accumulated 5 to 10 years of teaching experience. A mere 13.19% of teachers have taught for over 15 years, constituting a negligible proportion of educators with substantial expertise. The presence of a significant number of teachers with limited experience may indicate a need for enhanced training and professional development. Such a situation could potentially give rise to complications, particularly in an institution currently implementing a new curriculum, as is the case here. Nevertheless, this predicament also presents opportunities for revitalising the teaching profession and higher education at the university level.

7.2.2 EOP students' characteristics and previous learning experience

The student questionnaire survey in this case, which follows the same structure as Case 1, was completed by a total of 291 eligible students. As anticipated, the number of male students slightly exceeded that of female students (61.17%) (Figure 7.2). However, a significant disparity between males and females was observed in the two subscale groups of disciplines. In the first group, 89.94% of the participants, representing four disciplines including Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Automatics, Information Technology, and Computer Science, were male. This gender distribution is a characteristic feature of these university majors. Conversely, in the other group comprising disciplines such as Tourism and Hospitality Management, Tourism Business Administration, Vietnam Studies, and Travel Guide, the number of female students surpassed that of male students (78.69%). All respondents were enrolled in the same English programme at this university, albeit with textbooks tailored to the specific features of their respective discipline groups. The majority of the participants reported Vietnamese as their first language (92.44%), while 7.56% (22 respondents) were international students.

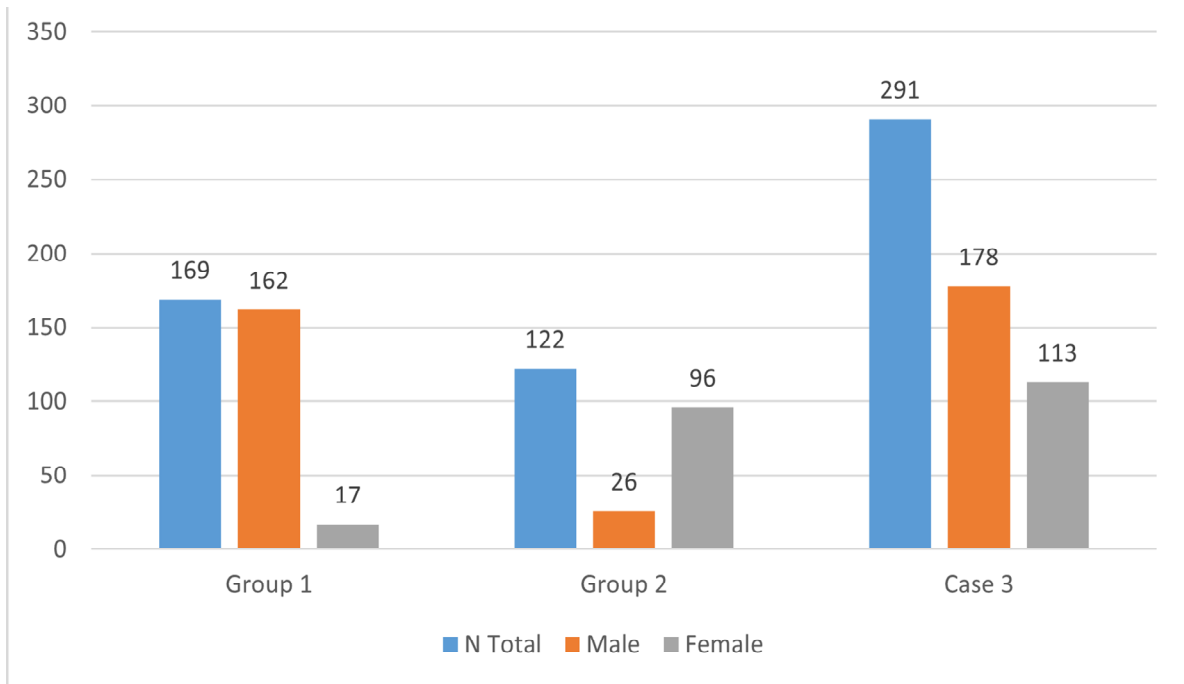


Figure 7.2: Gender Difference

In this particular university case, a conspicuous pattern emerges with regard to the diversity of students in aspects such as socio-economic backgrounds, personalities, learning styles, and English proficiency. Notably, a significant majority of students (96.91%) studied English as a school subject prior to their enrolment at the university. Conversely, a mere 2.06% of students attended English-medium schools. Interestingly, the duration of English language learning prior to university varied greatly, ranging from 0 to 15 years. Consequently, it is evident that the student population comprises both novices and proficient English speakers. The majority of students, accounting for 82% of respondents, dedicated between seven and ten years to the study of English. This suggests that many students began learning English during their primary or secondary education, subsequently continuing their studies in high school.

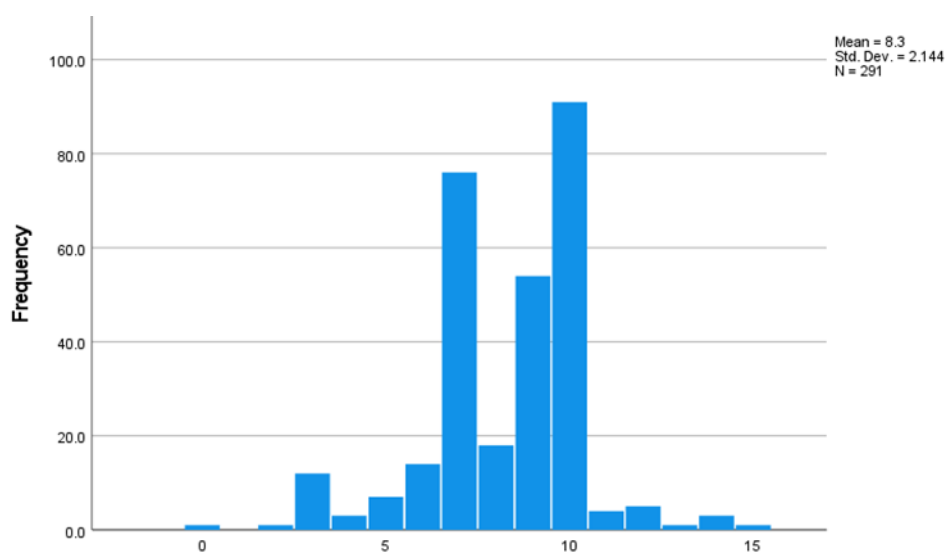


Figure 7.3: Years of learning English before university

Approximately 54% of the students had more than nine years of English learning, starting from primary school. Only 4.8% of the respondents reported having three years of English learning or less. These students were more likely to have studied in the 3-year English programme for high school students. It should be noted that the number of learning years did not necessarily correspond to their English levels. As discussed in section 3.4, students with low proficiency could be considered false beginners of English if they studied different English curricula currently implemented in the Vietnamese education system. The students' criticisms regarding English teaching at the school level were that it limited their English language knowledge and restricted their usage and speaking of the target language, despite the use of communicative interaction situations in the English language course materials. They indicated that language learning at school created a gap between school and university or college (S22, S36, S41). Students in focus-group interviews did not consider the school level as an English learning period and also expressed the opinion that English language classes at school did not allocate sufficient time for learning (S19, S26, S48). Language learning consisted of four classes per week at the primary level and only three classes in secondary and high school, with each class lasting forty-five minutes (S55). It is interesting to note that the typical EFL student equated the length of time of their English learning with the level they thought they should be at; however, they did not seem to equate progress with effort.

As in Case 1, the students were aware of their low level of English proficiency. EFL students arriving at the university/college level usually had deficiencies in their English knowledge. The study also found that graduate students from high school reached the university level with an extremely poor English vocabulary and low communicative competence in English, despite their long period of language learning. Many students shared experiences of English learning focused on grammar and vocabulary in reading and writing skills at the general education level. Most of them had no opportunity to learn and practice listening and speaking at school. Some of them were better at English due to the extraordinary courses at private language centres (S20, S31, S42). Students with low proficiency levels in English expressed frustration with their progress in English at the school level (S47, S52) and subsequent difficulties at the university level (S34, S39, S47, S52, S60). As evident from the learners' comments, they did not realise that speaking the English language and gaining knowledge of it would be necessary for their further studies and careers (S25, S44, S59), as there was no connection between the two stages (school and university levels). S21, for example, highlighted that he thought he should be at a much higher proficiency level due to poor English teaching at school but did not entirely exempt himself from responsibility. He suggested that 'I did not really pay attention to learning English because I never use English in daily life'. In contrast, many students admitted that they were not motivated and did not have an interest in learning English until they entered university when they discovered the important role of English in meeting their immediate needs and long-term goals.

7.3 Teachers and students' perceptions of the new EOP curriculum

The findings regarding teachers' awareness of the curriculum's emphases indicate their responsiveness to the skills-oriented nature of the courses. However, it was observed that teachers' awareness and understanding of the curriculum's focus did not always align with their own conceptions of teaching and learning. A number of teachers seemed more preoccupied with the quantity of content they needed to cover, rather than with effectively developing the necessary language skills. Consequently, the curriculum served as a catalyst for teachers to recognise the importance of enhancing their content and pedagogical

knowledge and skills, in order to perform their teaching duties more effectively and provide superior educational services to their students. The teachers' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn how to teach in accordance with the curriculum's requirements suggests that the prescribed teaching approaches were perceived as valuable, and that teachers were indeed receptive to the implemented reforms.

7.3.1 Students' perceptions of the status of English and needs

Table 7.2 presents the various reasons students deem studying English as important. The majority of students (85.91%) identified the opportunity to secure a good job in the future as the most crucial motivation for learning English. The second most commonly chosen reason is to excel in their respective fields of study (68.38%), followed by fulfilling the requirements of the EFL programme (45.02%). These findings affirm students' highly positive perceptions regarding the significant role of English in their academic and professional success. Other reasons, such as studying abroad and a personal interest in learning English, received significantly lower ratings at 14.43% and 8.9% respectively. Furthermore, 4.81% of respondents mentioned miscellaneous reasons, with seven individuals citing the importance of effective communication, three specifying the utility of English for leisure activities like travelling or gaming, two emphasising the desire to broaden their global knowledge, and one person aspiring for a high future salary.

Reasons	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Because it is a requirement of the program	131	45.02%	291
Because good English helps me to succeed in my major	199	68.38%	291
Because I can get a scholarship to study abroad with good English	42	14.43%	291
Because I can get a good job with good English in the future	250	85.91%	291
Because I like English	26	8.9%	291
Others	14	4.81%	291
SUM	662		

Table 7.2: Reasons for the importance of English study

The belief held by students regarding the significance of studying English was further substantiated during their focus groups. Without exception, all participants acknowledged that acquiring proficiency in English played a pivotal role in their lives, citing reasons aligned with those revealed in the survey. Moreover, they emphasised the confidence that mastery of English affords individuals in becoming 'global citizens' in the age of globalisation, as well as the language's role as a gateway to accessing new reservoirs of knowledge.

Nowadays, we frequently meet people from different countries. Personally, I feel more confident when I am able to communicate in English as it allows me to understand and assist them when they need help. It can be quite embarrassing if they ask me something and I am unable to comprehend their question. (S25)

It is crucial to recognise the significance of English as it is the most widely spoken language worldwide. (S27)

English is extremely important because it serves as a means for me to engage with foreign businesses and access global resources in the highly competitive context of Vietnam and the world. (S48)

Personally, I believe that English is of utmost importance as I require both foundational and specialised knowledge in English for my future pursuits. (S53)

Tables 7.3 and 7.4 present the findings regarding the perception of students and teachers concerning the English language and its usage in their EOP courses. The participants were asked to assess the significance of various English areas, as well as the importance of English skills in students' success in their respective majors. Overall, both students and teachers considered all language areas to be highly important for learning English (Mean = 5.23 and 5.19 respectively on a six-point scale). Listening and Speaking were deemed the most valuable (Mean = 5.75 and 5.73 by students, and 5.57 and 5.67 by teachers), followed by Vocabulary (Mean = 5.41 and 5.31). Writing and Grammar, on the other hand, received ratings below 5 from both students and teachers. In conclusion, the EOP teachers and

students shared similar perceptions regarding the significance of English skills and other language areas, which further reinforces the emphasis of the new EOP curriculum on Listening and Speaking skills.

English areas	1	2	3	4	5	6 (Very	Mean	SD	N
	(None)					important)			
a. Reading	1	0	8	78	124	80	4.94	0.84	291
b. Listening	0	1	0	9	51	230	5.75	0.54	291
c. Speaking	0	1	1	15	42	232	5.73	0.60	291
d. Writing	0	3	9	96	123	60	4.78	0.84	291
e. Grammar	2	4	13	87	124	61	4.75	0.93	291
f. Vocabulary	1	0	7	27	92	164	5.41	0.80	291
SUM	4	9	38	31	556	827	5.23	0.76	1764

Table 7.3: Importance of English areas (students)

English areas	1	2	3	4	5	6 (Very	Mean	SD	N
	None					Important)			
a. Reading	0	0	1	9	53	28	5.18	0.69	91
b. Listening	0	0	0	0	39	52	5.57	0.5	91
c. Speaking	0	0	0	6	18	67	5.67	0.6	91
d. Writing	0	0	1	26	42	22	4.93	0.76	91
e. Grammar	0	0	9	37	38	7	4.47	0.78	91
f. Vocabulary	0	0	0	10	43	38	5.31	0.66	91
SUM	0	0	11	88	233	214	5.19	0.67	546

Table 7.4: Importance of English areas (teachers)

Table 7.5 presents the findings regarding the students' perceptions of the significance of English skills in relation to the success of their individual majors. Within this academic institution, EOP students demonstrated a high level of importance assigned to all four skills (Mean = 3.11 on a four-point scale). Notably, Speaking emerged as the skill rated with the highest significance (Mean = 3.47), closely followed by Listening (Mean = 3.42). Conversely, the remaining two skills, Writing and Reading, were deemed comparatively less important, with mean values slightly below 3 (Mean = 2.78 and 2.66, respectively).

English skills	1 (least important)	2	3	4 (most important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	32	72	115	72	2.78	0.94	291
b. Listening	17	23	73	178	3.42	0.87	291
c. Speaking	20	16	63	192	3.47	0.88	291
d. Writing	46	71	109	65	2.66	0.99	291
SUM	115	182	360	507	3.08	0.92	1164

Table 7.5: Importance of English skills in major's success

Moreover, a significant majority of the surveyed students (96.2%) correctly identified the English requirement for graduation as B1 according to the CEFR. The primary source of information regarding the English requirement was their teachers, accounting for 83.16% of respondents. Additionally, other sources such as the university website (48.11%), the programme coordinator (40.21%), the course outline (38.49%), senior students (27.49%), and the admission booklet (14.43%) were also utilised by the students. This variety of information channels highlights the availability of resources pertaining to the programme's English requirement. Consequently, students displayed a thorough understanding of the specific and measurable goal associated with these EOP courses, which could potentially influence their motivation. Only a small number of students (0.6%) referred to the previous English programme's requirement, which entailed obtaining a TOEIC score of 450. Some students may have misinterpreted the question, as they described the course requirement as 'good,' 'communicate fluently,' or 'focus on Listening and Speaking skills.'

I conducted the same SPSS analysis as in Case 1 to tally the occurrences of values within the cases in the three multiple-choice open-ended questions (7, 8, and 9), which were subsequently segmented into three variables: students' motivations for learning English, locations, and activities where they utilised English. Figure 7.4 presented below illustrates that less than half of the participants in this institution employed English for multiple activities (46.7% or 136 out of a total of 291), 33.3% (97) studied it for diverse reasons, and only 31.6% (92) used it in various places.

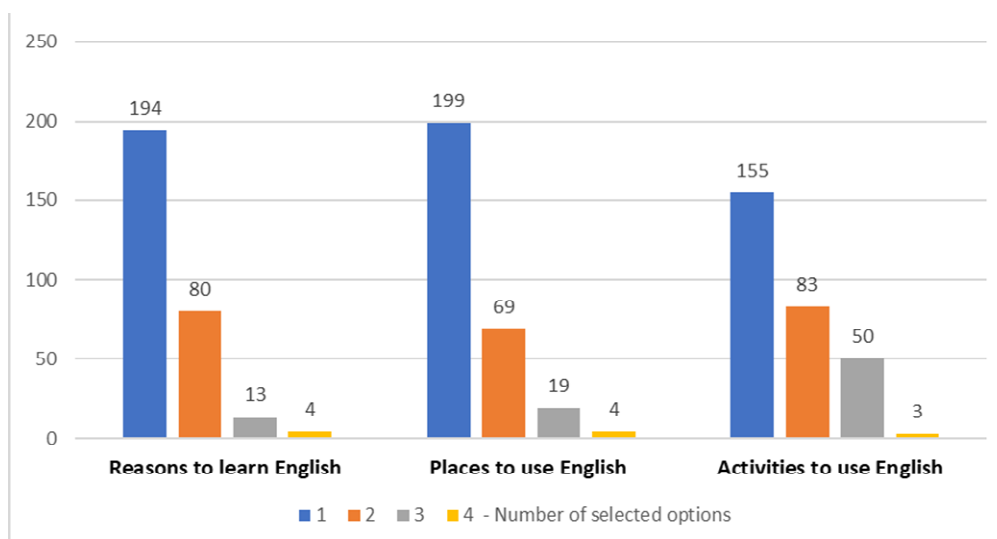


Figure 7.4: Respondents for Multiple-choice Questions

The low percentages of English usage in various activities, across different locations, and for diverse purposes can be attributed to the fact that these students were obliged to take EOP courses during their undergraduate studies. Consequently, the primary context in which these students utilised English was the classroom (96.56%), and their most prevalent activity involving English was studying (95.19%). However, although many students indicated that the programme's requirement was their main motivation for learning English (42.27%), nearly double the number expressed the need for English in their future professions (80.41%). This finding further reinforces the students' positive recognition of the significance of English and demonstrates that EOP students possess greater motivation to acquire the language in order to accomplish long-term career objectives, rather than solely focusing on passing university examinations.

7.3.2 Teachers' perceptions of the syllabus

Table 7.6 below presents the number of teachers who responded to each statement and the percentage of respondents who selected each of the four rating options for each statement. Statement 1 received the highest rating, with 93.4% of the 91 teachers who participated in this study agreeing that the English Syllabus is a clearly written document, and 67.03% expressing complete certainty. The second highest rated statement is number 4, with 63.74% of respondents believing that the English Syllabus definitely aims to develop

students' ability to communicate in English. The majority of teachers (95.6%) identified the syllabus as being based on the CLT approach. Additionally, 93.7% of teachers indicated that the English Syllabus is practical, with 49.45% expressing complete certainty about its practicality. 80.21% of teachers did not find it to be complicated and difficult to follow. Furthermore, approximately 75.82% did not believe that this English syllabus is grounded in the grammar translation method.

English Syllabus (ES) items	1 Absolutely not	2 May be not	3 May be Yes	4 Yes, definitely	N (Valid)
1. The ES is a clearly written document.	2 2.2%	4 4.4%	24 26.37%	61 67.03%	91
2. The ES is complicated and difficult to follow.	32 35.16%	41 45.05%	16 17.58%	2 2.2%	91
3. The ES is practical.	0 0%	3 3.3%	43 47.25%	45 49.45%	91
4. The ES aims to develop students to communicate in English.	2 2.2%	2 2.2%	29 31.87%	58 63.74%	91
5. The ES is based on grammar translation method.	35 38.46%	34 37.36%	20 21.98%	2 2.2%	91
6. The ES is based on CLT.	0 0%	4 4.4%	43 47.25%	44 48.35%	91
7. What I am expected to teach under the guidance of the ES.	0 0%	9 9.89%	42 46.15%	40 43.96%	91
8. How I am expected to teach under the guidance of the ES.	3 3.3%	12 13.19%	47 51.65%	29 31.87%	91

Table 7.6: Teachers' perceptions of the syllabus

Interactive learner-centred learning is a fundamental pedagogical principle that informs the design of the syllabus. It necessitates active student participation in the learning process rather than passive teacher-directed instruction. In this study, the teachers exhibited a strong comprehension of the significance of implementing an interactive learner-centred learning approach. This approach was explicitly stated as a required teaching method in the syllabus. Furthermore, the teachers displayed a positive attitude towards interactive learner-centred learning, acknowledging its advantages for both students and teachers in terms of enhancing their communication skills. Specifically, the teachers (S8, S12, S15)

suggested that this approach facilitated greater opportunities for practical application of the English language in the classroom, benefiting both students and teachers alike.

7.3.3 Teachers' perceptions of CLT

The results pertaining to teachers' understanding of the fundamental tenets of CLT are presented in Table 7.7 below. It is worth noting that the four most commonly chosen attributes of CLT by the teachers in this instance align with those identified in Case 1, albeit with a higher percentage. CLT is deemed as a student-centred or learner-centred approach (100%), with an emphasis on fostering communication in the target language (95.6%). Furthermore, the teachers acknowledge that CLT necessitates substantial time investment for the preparation of classroom activities (85.71%) and requires instructors to possess a high level of English proficiency (78.02%). In addition, a significant majority of teachers at this institution also recognise that CLT places a considerable emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills (68.13%) and prioritises fluency over accuracy (67.03%) as additional characteristics. Notably, these two figures are considerably lower in Case 1 university, at 53.85% and 35.8% respectively.

The items that have been most commonly identified as Not True, indicating their lack of alignment with the principles of CLT, mirror those selected in Case 1 university with the exception of the final item. In the latter case, the statement that CLT is essentially an ESL methodology, rather than an EFL methodology, received a response rate of only 40.66%. The remaining five items, which were consistently identified as Not True, are as follows: the belief that CLT solely focuses on teaching speaking (92.31%), that it solely relies on group work and pair work (89.01%), that it dismisses the teaching of grammar (80.22%), that it exclusively emphasises discourse competence (75.82%), and that it places an excessive burden on teachers (64.84%).

The Vietnamese educators within this institution maintain the belief that CLT places significant emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills (68.13%), reduce focus on grammar instruction and instead utilise time-consuming activities. Although approximately 64.84% of instructors do not concur that CLT imposes excessive burdens on

teachers, they contend that CLT demands an excessive amount from them. The instructors harbour misconceptions regarding CLT, and there exist disparities between their convictions and actual practices. Consequently, these misconceptions and beliefs held by the teachers within this university context serve as the primary obstacles impeding the successful implementation of CLT.

CLT Items	True		Not true		Don't know		N total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
a. CLT is student/learner-centered approach	91	100	0	0	0	0	91
b. CLT means strategic and socio-linguistic competence	51	56.04	11	12.09	29	31.87	91
c. CLT means discourse competence only	3	3.3	69	75.82	19	20.88	91
d. CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy	61	67.03	27	29.67	3	3.3	91
e. CLT emphasizes communication in foreign language	87	95.6	1	1.1	3	3.3	91
f. CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills	62	68.13	24	26.37	5	5.49	91
g. CLT requires the teachers to have high proficiency in English	71	78.02	16	17.58	4	4.4	91
h. CLT means only group work or pair work	5	5.49	81	89.01	5	5.49	91
i. CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture	46	50.55	26	28.57	19	20.88	91
j. CLT means not teaching grammar	11	12.09	73	80.22	7	7.69	91
k. CLT means teaching speaking only	1	1.1	84	92.31	6	6.59	91
l. CLT puts too much pressure on teachers	9	9.89	59	64.84	23	25.27	91
m. CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities	78	85.71	10	10.99	3	3.3	91
n. CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL	21	23.08	37	40.66	33	36.26	91

Table 7.7: Teachers' perceptions of CLT

Several inconsistencies or discrepancies were identified in this case. Around 64.84% of the teachers do not believe that CLT places excessive pressure on teachers, whilst a significant number of them agreed that CLT requires a considerable amount of time to prepare CLT activities (85.71%) and necessitates a deeper understanding of the target language culture (50.55%). The perception of Vietnamese EOP teachers regarding the target language culture appears to align with the attitudes towards culture reported in the literature from China and Vietnam. They believe that possessing an understanding of the target language culture is essential. However, the remaining half of the teachers consider the needs and practices of

spoken English in the Vietnamese context, and they believe that cultural differences do not hinder students' language acquisition.

Teachers held varying beliefs about the feature, with some perceiving CLT as primarily an ESL methodology rather than EFL. Among the teachers surveyed, 41% disagreed with this perception, 23.08% agreed, and 36.26% were unsure. The uncertainty exhibited by teachers regarding this feature is not unexpected. Some research findings highlighted the misconception held by other EFL teachers that CLT is primarily suited for ESL contexts and may not be effective in EFL settings (Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; and Musthafa, 2001, 2015). However, English now emerges as a global language, as previously discussed in Chapter 3, expanding its influence into diverse domains beyond its traditional role as a foreign or second language. The selection of 'Don't know' by Vietnamese teachers regarding this feature of CLT indicates their uncertainty rather than a misconception of CLT. Despite the presence of discrepancies and uncertainties surrounding CLT, all teachers surveyed unanimously agreed that the CLT method is valuable in facilitating English communication among students.

CLT practices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
To be a native speaker	4	4.4%	91
To have native-like pronunciation	47	51.65%	91
To have native-like fluency	49	53.85%	91
To have native-like accuracy	46	50.55%	91
To provide teaching materials	46	50.55%	91
To be a facilitator	78	85.71%	91
To be a communication model	52	57.14%	91
To be a co-communicator	73	80.22%	91
Others	0	0%	91
SUM	395		91

Table 7.8: The required CLT practices for teachers

For teachers in CLT classes, as shown in Table 7.8, the majority of respondents held the belief that teachers should take on the role of facilitators (85.71%), co-communicators

(80.22%), and communication models (57.14%). Although only a small percentage of respondents (4.4%) believed that teachers must be native speakers, more than half of the surveyed teachers expressed the perspective that teachers should possess native-like pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy, as well as provide teaching materials. This finding reveals the teachers' preference for native accents in this particular university context.

Regarding CLT practices (Table 7.9), teachers identified effective communication and enjoyment of communication in the target language as the two most crucial practices for their students, with percentages of 92.31% and 84.62% respectively. Subsequently, collaboration among students followed closely with a percentage of 75.82%. Approximately half of the surveyed teachers expressed the belief that CLT students should aspire to acquire native-like fluency, pronunciation, or engage in conversation with a native speaker. Only a small portion of teachers considered it advantageous for Vietnamese to be excluded completely in CLT classes (7.69%) or some more for students to strive for native-like accuracy (30.77%). This finding suggests that the majority of teachers permitted students to utilise their first language (Vietnamese) in their English classes.

CLT practices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
To talk to a native speaker	44	48.35%	91
To acquire native-like pronunciation	44	48.35%	91
To acquire native-like fluency	48	52.75%	91
To acquire native-like accuracy	28	30.77%	91
To communicate effectively in L2	84	92.31%	91
Never to use L1 (Vietnamese)	7	7.69%	91
To collaborate with each other	69	75.82%	91
To enjoy communicating in L2	77	84.62%	91
Others	0	0%	91
SUM	401		91

Table 7.9: The important CLT practices for students

7.3.4 Teachers and students' perceptions of assessment

100% (91) of the surveyed teachers indicated that they were familiar with CEFR and VSTEP, as evidenced by the data presented in Figures 7.5 and 7.6 below.

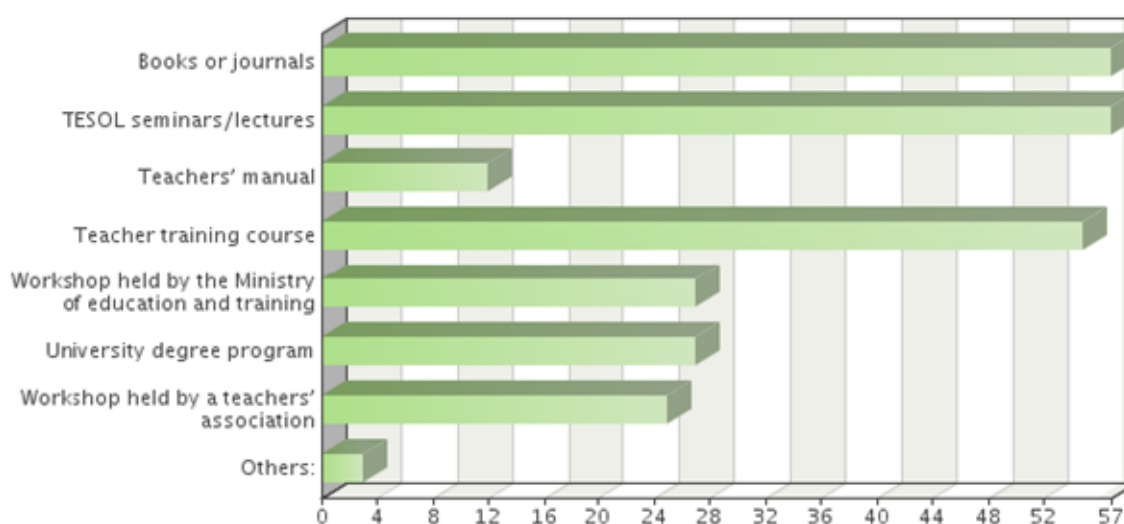


Figure 7.5: Resources of information about CEFR

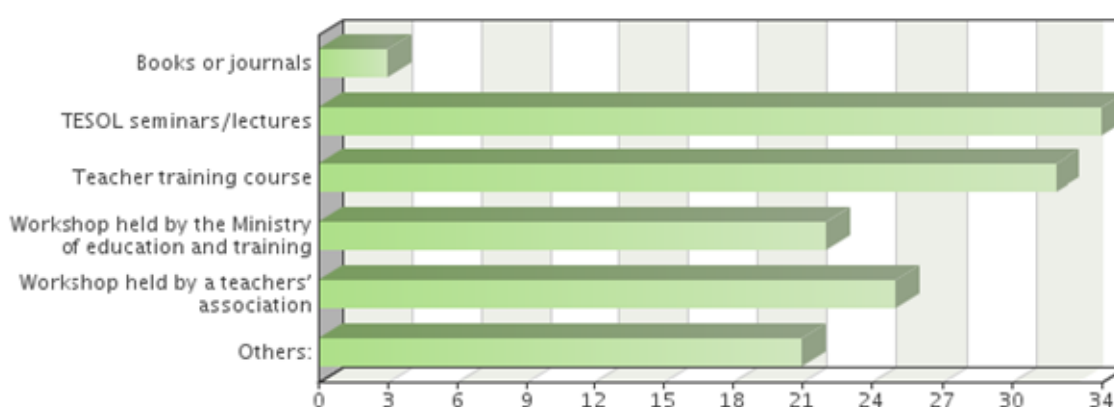


Figure 7.6: Resources of information about VSTEP

Tables 7.10 and 7.11 below present the results pertaining to the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the significance of various aspects of the English language in the final examination at the university. On the whole, both teachers and students considered all four language skills, as well as the other two language areas, to be of significant importance (with an overall mean score of 5.16 and 5.28, respectively on a six-point scale). Of these,

speaking was deemed the most valuable skill, whereas grammar was regarded as the least important. This alignment in viewpoints between teachers and students validates the emphasis placed on communicative competence in the new EOP curriculum.

In Table 7.10, the perceptions of teachers regarding different language areas were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of skills with mean scores surpassing 5, with speaking being the most significant skill (mean score of 5.74), followed by listening (mean score of 5.3) and reading (mean score of 5.27). Conversely, the second group exhibited mean scores below 5, with grammar being deemed the least important (mean score of 4.69). This outcome indicates that teachers possess a comprehensive understanding of the emphasis placed on enhancing students' communicative competence within the EOP curriculum.

English areas	1 None	2	3	4	5	6 (Very Important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	0	0	1	7	49	34	5.27	0.65	91
b. Listening	0	0	2	11	36	42	5.3	0.77	91
c. Speaking	0	0	1	1	19	70	5.74	0.53	91
d. Writing	0	0	5	13	51	22	4.99	0.78	91
e. Grammar	0	0	6	30	41	14	4.69	0.81	91
f. Vocabulary	0	0	5	13	53	20	4.97	0.77	91
SUM	0	0	20	75	249	202	5.16	0.72	546

Table 7.10: Importance of English areas in University final examination (Teachers)

In accordance with the findings presented in Table 7.11, it was observed that students attributed significant importance to all language areas, as evidenced by mean values surpassing 5 on a six-point scale, with the sole exception of Grammar (mean = 4.9). Notably, Speaking and Listening emerged as the two most highly regarded skills in the university final examination, with mean scores of 5.7 and 5.63, respectively. This finding indicates that such perceptions have the potential to positively influence student motivation in the process of learning English, particularly in relation to communicative activities.

English areas	1 (None)	2	3	4	5	6 (Very Important)	Mean	SD	N
a. Reading	1	2	2	40	106	140	5.3	0.82	291
b. Listening	1	1	3	18	55	213	5.63	0.73	291
c. Speaking	1	0	3	11	50	226	5.7	0.64	291
d. Writing	1	0	10	53	114	113	5.12	0.87	291
e. Grammar	1	3	14	82	98	93	4.9	0.97	291
f. Vocabulary	3	2	14	61	91	120	5.04	1.02	291
SUM	8	8	46	265	514	905	5.28	0.84	1746

Table 7.11: Importance of English areas in final examination (Students)

7.4 Factors affecting teachers' EOP curriculum implementation

Table 7.12 presents the means and standard deviations of 17 personal and contextual factors that have been identified as potential influences on teachers' implementation processes in this institution. The table provides scores for each item on the Enable subscale, Likelihood subscale, and the overall Personal and Contextual Beliefs scale.

As shown in Table 7.12, the personal and contextual beliefs of the entire sample were relatively high, with an overall mean score of 3.96 on a 5-point scale. Concerning the two sub-scales, participating teachers held high beliefs about 16 factors, with all mean scores exceeding 3.0. Interestingly, teachers in this institution also demonstrated stronger beliefs that these factors were indeed occurring in their workplace, as indicated by the higher mean scores on the Likelihood sub-scale for almost all items.

Personal and Contextual factors	Enable Mean* (SD)		Likelihood Mean** (SD)		Total Mean
1. The English Test influences my teaching	4.01	0.59	4.26	0.68	4.14
2. The teaching and research committee and colleagues in my department evaluates me and this influences how I teach.	3.78	0.68	3.98	0.89	3.88
3. My students evaluate me, and this influences how I teach.	3.81	0.7	4.15	0.74	3.98
4. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence what I teach.	3.99	0.81	4.27	0.83	4.13
5. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence how I teach.	3.65	0.87	4.02	0.98	3.84
6. My students' English abilities influence my teaching.	4.32	0.56	4.47	0.56	4.4
7. My students' expectations about how to study English influences my teaching.	3.96	0.82	3.97	0.95	3.4
8. The size of my classes influences my teaching.	4.23	0.68	4.27	0.88	4.25
9. My workload influences my teaching.	4.22	0.85	4.34	0.91	4.28
10. The way I learned English as a student influences the way I teach English.	3.46	0.99	3.59	1.15	3.53
11. My level of English-speaking ability influences my	3.95	0.95	4.04	0.91	4
12. My teaching experience helps me in my teaching.	4.48	0.66	4.56	0.62	4.52
13. In-service teacher training improves my classroom	3.84	1.04	4.24	0.79	4.04
14. In-service teacher training is not available, and teachers find it difficult to implement the English curriculum.	2.45	1.05	2.81	1.18	2.63
15. English teaching resources contributes to my teaching	4.14	0.66	4.23	0.78	4.19
16. Audio-visual resources contributes to my teaching	4.2	0.69	4.36	0.81	4.28
17. Grammar-translation method is useful as it helps my students to understand the texts.	3.27	1.02	3.29	1.08	3.28
SUM:	3.87		4.05		3.96

Note: N=91; SD=Standard Deviation; *Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); **Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from N (Absolutely not) to Y (Yes, definitely)

Table 7.12: Factors affecting teachers' curriculum implementation

The factors perceived by teachers as having the greatest and the least influence on their implementation processes were the same as those in university case 1. The two most influential factors, which are related to both end users of the implementation process, were teachers' teaching experience (item 12, mean score of 4.48) and their students' English abilities (item 6, mean score of 4.32). Teachers in this university also strongly believed that these two factors had the highest likelihood of occurring (mean scores of 4.56 for item 12

and 4.47 for item 6). Conversely, the only factor that received a below-average score was the unavailability of in-service teacher training at the university (item 14), with a mean score of 2.45 on the Enabling subscale and 2.81 on the Likelihood subscale.

In summary, teachers expressed positive beliefs overall regarding 17 personal and contextual factors. Their specific beliefs about the Enabling ability and the Likelihood of occurrence of these factors were completely aligned. Teachers believed that most factors would have an impact on their implementation activities and had a stronger belief that these factors would be available at this university.

7.5 Teachers and students' opinions and confidence in implementing EOP curriculum

7.5.1 Teachers' attitudes towards EOP curriculum implementation (TATCI)

Table 7.13 presents survey data on teachers' attitudes towards curriculum implementation. The data indicated that teachers at this university generally hold moderately positive attitudes towards the implementation process, as evidenced by a mean rating of 3.76 on a five-point scale. Among the three main dimensions of attitude, the perceived usefulness of curriculum change received the highest positive rating, with a mean score of 4.25. Conversely, teachers' negative attitudes were rated the lowest, with a mean score in the mid-range of 2.86 on a five-point scale. The aspects of the implementation process that were highly valued by teachers were their willingness to learn more about CLT and computer-assisted teaching (items i and j, mean scores of 4.34 and 4.32, respectively). Conversely, teachers expressed the greatest concern regarding teachers' anxiety (item e, mean score of 3.04). In terms of positive attitudes, all items were rated highly, with a mean of 3.93.

Factors	Attitude items	Mean	SD	N
Usefulness of curriculum implementation		4.25	0.71	91
	a. Curricular innovation is good for my teaching.	4.25	0.74	91
	b. My teaching improves as I gain more experience from my classroom instruction.	4.24	0.67	91
Negative Attitudes		3.14* 2.86	0.81	91
	c. I feel stressful when implementing this English curriculum.	3.18* 2.82	0.86	91
	d. It is difficult to use CLT method in my class.	3.2* 2.8	0.85	91
	e. I feel worried when implementing this English curriculum.	3.04* 2.96	0.71	91
Positive attitudes		3.93	0.76	91
	f. It is interesting to implement the new curriculum.	3.73	0.84	91
	g. CLT is the best teaching method.	3.48	0.72	91
	h. I feel comfortable with CLT method.	3.79	0.71	91
	i. I would like to learn more about CLT.	4.34	0.78	91
	j. I would like to learn more about computer-assisted teaching.	4.32	0.76	91
Total attitudes towards curriculum implementation		3.76	0.764	91

Note: *Reversed score** Counted with reversed Negative attitudes subscale scores

Table 7.13: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the TATCI scale

Overall, the data revealed that teachers demonstrated notably positive attitudes towards the implementation of the curriculum with an overall mean score of 3.76. This was supported by their profound recognition of the new curriculum's practical value, elevated level of engagement, and a marginally increased sense of anxiety linked to the implementation process.

7.5.2 Students' attitudes towards curriculum implementation (SATCI)

Table 7.14 presents survey data regarding students' attitudes towards the implementation of the curriculum. The data reveals that students at this particular institution generally hold positive attitudes towards the implementation process, as evidenced by the overall mean score of 3.43 on a five-point scale. Notably, the aspects that received the highest ratings from students were the necessity for additional support to improve their speaking skills (item d) and the importance of the EOP courses offered by the institution (item f), with

respective mean scores of 4.29 and 4.27. This is particularly significant considering that the EOP courses focus on enhancing students' communicative competence, involving face-to-face lessons to practice speaking and listening skills, and allocating 40 percent of the end-of-term exams to speaking. Therefore, this finding reinforces students' awareness and motivation to engage in more communicative activities in this new curriculum.

In addition, students emphasised the integration of ESP into the EOP courses (item b), the helpfulness of EOP courses in their respective majors (item j), and the significance of having proficient English skills (item n), with mean scores of 4.1, 3.97, and 3.93 respectively. Most of the positive attitudes expressed by students fell within the high mean score range of 3.44 to 3.97. The only exception was item g, 'My English course is easy' (Mean = 2.65), indicating that the majority of students found the course challenging.

Factors	Items	Mean	SD	N
GE or ESP		3.83		
	a. Instruction should focus on General English.	3.55	1.0	291
	b. Instruction should focus on the English needed for my specialised studies.	4.1	0.96	291
Negative Attitudes		2.85* 3.15		
	c. More time should be given to English instruction.	2.23* 3.77	1.00	291
	d. More should be done to help students with speaking.	1.71* 4.29	0.94	291
	e. I have trouble understanding my English lecturers.	3.20* 2.80	1.08	291
	f. English is my least important course.	4.27* 1.73	1.24	291
Positive attitudes		3.62		
	g. My English course is easy.	2.65	1.17	291
	h. The content of my English course is interesting.	3.79	1.05	291
	i. The English language lecturers here do a good job.	3.87	0.86	291
	j. My English course helps me in my major study.	3.97	0.88	291
	k. My English lecturers teach me study skills.	3.84	0.96	291
	l. The teaching methods at university are interesting.	3.44	1.06	291
	m. I enjoy my English class.	3.50	0.99	291
	n. Having good English is important in this university.	3.93	1.02	291
Total attitudes towards curriculum implementation		3.43	1.01	291

Note: *Reversed score** Counted with reversed Negative attitudes subscale scores

Table 7.14: Means and Standard Deviations of Items in the SATCI scale

Items related to students' enjoyment of their English class and teaching methods (items l, m) received lower ratings compared to their satisfaction with the study skills taught, teachers' performance, course usefulness, and course content (items k, i, j, h). Although students found these courses difficult, a small number of them reported difficulties in understanding their English language lecturers (Mean = 2.83), which suggests their preference for more time dedicated to English instruction.

The students' attitudes towards this EFL course were somewhat ambiguous, as they showed interest in both general and specialised English. However, a higher percentage of respondents expressed a preference for specialised English in EOP courses (items a and b, mean scores of 3.8 and 4.2, respectively). This can be explained by the strong support of ESP in their majors and future employment.

In conclusion, the data reveals that students have moderately positive attitudes towards curriculum implementation, which can be attributed to their recognition of the significance of EOP courses, high interest, and a slight degree of anxiety regarding the difficulty of the new curriculum. These findings further support the association between students' perceptions of the importance of English and their positive attitudes towards curriculum implementation.

7.5.3 Teachers' self- efficacy in the EOP implementation process

As indicated in Table 7.15, the participants in this institution reported a notably high level of self-efficacy in implementing the EOP curriculum, with an overall mean score of 73.49 on the 100-point scale (SD=13.58). In terms of specific implementation tasks, the sample also exhibited a considerable perceived proficiency in performing them, as evidenced by mean scores ranging from above 63.85 to 77.14. Among the 10 listed implementation activities, teachers' perceived aptitude for designing the English syllabus was the least pronounced (Mean=63.85), while their perceived capability in planning the teaching activities was the most pronounced (Mean=77.14). Notably, participants did not demonstrate a low level (Mean<50) of perceived performance ability for any of the activities.

ISE Item*	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
a. Interpret the English curriculum correctly	91	30	100	74.73	14.56
b. Design the English syllabus	91	10	100	63.85	15.83
c. Plan the teaching activities	91	30	100	77.14	13.27
d. Implement the student-centred approach	91	30	100	71.54	13.74
e. Implement CLT method	91	40	100	73.41	12.49
f. Use English as a medium of instruction in my classes	91	40	100	75.82	12.74
g. Make use of teaching resources	91	30	90	72.75	12.39
h. Use audio-visual resources in class	91	40	100	75.16	13.2
i. Implement computer-assisted teaching	91	40	100	74.51	14.24
j. Discuss with other colleagues about the curriculum implementation	91	30	100	76.04	13.41
SUM	91	32	99	73.49	13.58

Note: Min=Minimum; Max=Maximum; SD: Standard Deviation

Table 7.15. Sample Means and Standard Deviations in 10 implementation-related behaviours

Based on the findings presented in Table 7.16, it is evident that the participants displayed the utmost level of self-confidence in the execution of supplementary activities (items g-j). Conversely, they expressed the lowest level of confidence in implementing planning (items a-c). Notably, the mean scores of teachers' self-confidence were significantly high across all three groups. Overall, the EFL teachers in this specific institution demonstrate a commendable level of self-efficacy in their instructional practices. They exhibit self-assurance in performing most of the implementation tasks, with the exception of designing the syllabus.

ISE Group	f	%	Mean	SD	Level of self-efficacy
Implementation planning (items a-c)	273				
High (>70)	118	43.2			
Moderate (50-70)	124	45.4	71.91	14.55	High
Low (<50)	31	11.4			
Implementation main tasks (items d-f)	273				
High (>70)	180	65.93			
Moderate (above 50-70)	76	27.84	73.59	12.99	High
Low (<50)	17	6.23			
Implementation supplementary activities (item g-j)	364				
High (>70)	236	64.84			
Moderate (50-70)	98	26.92	74.62	13.31	High
Low (<50)	30	8.24			

Note: f=frequency; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 7.16: Teachers' self- efficacy in the implementation process

7.6 The Implementation of the new EOP Curriculum

The practical aspects of the curriculum were investigated through the analysis of various sets of data, including surveys completed by teachers and students, interviews with teachers and students, and classroom observations. The concept of iterative logic (Cobb et al., 2003) was utilised to examine the development and implementation of a blended learning curriculum that aims to enhance students' communicative competence. The cyclical pattern of online didactic lectures, online exercises and tests, teacher-led face-to-face activities, and Production/Feedback (refer to Figure 7.1) is the crucial iteration that contributes to the refinement of the overall design. A comprehensive examination of the pedagogical and assessment practices used both inside and outside of the classroom settings was conducted to assess adherence to the intended curriculum and the alignment of classroom activities with the desired learning outcomes.

7.6.1 Pedagogical practices

7.6.1.1 Quantitative results from teachers' surveys

The data derived from the teacher's survey indicates that educators from this university employed a diverse range of pedagogical strategies within their classrooms. Table 7.17 presents a concise summary of 91 teacher responses, depicting the frequencies of pedagogical practices. These practices were assessed using a five-point scale, which encompassed a variety of teaching activities.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	N
Pedagogic Practices	Never	Hardly ever	Some- times	Often	Usually			
a. Grammar explanation	1	5	41	36	8	3.49	0.78	91
b. Group discussion	0	0	3	40	48	4.49	0.57	91
c. Pair work	0	1	2	34	54	4.55	0.6	91
d. Translation	1	19	51	14	6	3.05	0.82	91
e. Dictionary vocabulary exercises	4	29	42	11	5	2.82	0.9	91
f. Simulations/role play	5	1	16	41	28	3.95	1.02	91
g. Reading and reporting from websites	15	27	39	7	3	2.52	0.97	91
h. Reading and reporting from newspapers	14	33	37	6	1	2.42	0.87	91
i. Reading aloud	7	27	29	23	5	2.91	1.04	91
j. Pronunciation drills	0	8	37	38	8	3.51	0.78	91
k. Games	0	0	18	46	27	4.1	0.7	91
l. Listening to audio file and answering questions	2	5	29	38	17	3.69	0.92	91
m. Call on students to orally respond to any issue/topic	1	4	14	34	38	4.14	0.91	91
n. Reading and reciting dialogue	7	13	35	27	9	3.2	1.06	91

Table 7.17: Pedagogical practices used in the classroom

As evident from Table 7.17, the activities most commonly utilised by teachers are Pair work and Group discussion, with 54 (59.34%) and 48 (52.75%) teachers reporting regular use of these activities (Mean = 4.55 and 4.49 respectively). Following these activities are Call on students to orally respond to any issue/topic (Mean = 4.14) and Games (Mean = 4.1). Simulations/role play (Mean = 3.95) and Listening to audio file and answering questions (Mean = 3.69) are also frequently employed activities, with 75.82% and 60.44% of teachers respectively using them usually or often in their classes. These six frequently used activities are commonly mentioned in the descriptions of communicative teaching activities. On the other hand, the least selected activities are Reading and reporting from newspapers (Mean = 2.42) and Reading and reporting from websites (Mean = 2.52), with 51.64% and 46.15% of

teachers respectively stating that they never or hardly ever use them, followed by Dictionary vocabulary exercises (Mean = 2.82) and Reading aloud (Mean = 2.91).

With regards to traditional teaching techniques or activities, 39.56% of teachers stated that they often use Grammar explanation, while 45.05% said they sometimes use it. Similarly, 56.04% and 46.15% mentioned that Translation and Dictionary vocabulary exercises are sometimes employed in their classes. It is possible that when referring to 'grammar explanation,' their intention is not to focus on a detailed analysis of grammar, but rather to encourage students to correctly utilise the grammar they already know. Communicative language teaching also does not negate the teaching of grammar, as proficiency in grammar is necessary for effective communication.

The responses of 41.76% of teachers indicating that they use Pronunciation drills often and 40.66% stating 'Sometimes' suggest inconsistencies in their reliance on these activities. These teachers might employ pronunciation drills under the belief that they are necessary for achieving accuracy, as both fluency and accuracy are equally important for communicative competence. Additionally, teachers may use drills based on the needs of their students or the type of class they are teaching, considering that students' English proficiency levels can vary within the same class and across different classes. The teachers' responses to Reading aloud correlate proportionally to those of Reading and reciting dialogues, with 92.31% attempting to incorporate these activities more or less frequently. They may employ Reading aloud as listening and pronunciation exercises at the start of each lesson, believing that these activities facilitate effective communication or at least prepare students for participation in real communication during subsequent activities. Meanwhile, Reading and reciting dialogues are utilised as highly communicative activities during the production stage, where students create their own dialogues and then practise them in front of the entire class.

The frequencies at which teachers engage in CLT pedagogical practices are also evident in the validation item, which asks teachers to indicate the extent to which they have practised the 5 principles of CLT on a 5-point scale ranging from '*rarely practise*' to '*practise fully*'. Table 7.18 summarises the teachers' responses to this item, with all the principles receiving

high ratings (Mean = 3.91). As shown in the table, the principles that are most fully practised are *'The objective is to develop students' communicative competence'* and *'The role of the student is a communicator'* (items a and b, Mean = 4.23 and 4.03, respectively). This confirms the validity of the participants' overall high level of CLT implementation as reported.

The frequencies of teachers' CLT pedagogical practices are also reflected in the validation item that asks teachers to indicate how fully they have practiced the 5 principles of CLT, as measured by 5-point scales ranging from *'rarely practice'* to *'practice fully'*. Table 7.18 summarises teachers' responses to this item with all the principles rated at a high level (Mean=3.914). As shown in the table, the principles most fully practiced are *The objective is to develop student's communicative competence* (item a) and *The role of the student is a communicator* (item b), with mean scores of 4.23 and 4.03 respectively. This finding confirms the validity of the overall high level of CLT implementation reported by the participants.

CLT pedagogical practices	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	N
	Rarely				Fully			
a. The objective is to develop student's communicative competence.	0 0%	0 0%	11 12.09%	48 52.75%	32 35.16%	4.23	0.65	91 100%
b. The role of the student is a communicator.	0 0%	1 1.1%	12 13.19%	61 67.03%	17 18.68%	4.03	0.6	91 100%
c. Four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the classroom practice.	2 2.2%	8 8.79%	32 35.16%	34 37.36%	15 16.48%	3.57	0.94	91 100%
d. Instructional materials may include thematic development materials, task-based materials, and authentic, real-life materials.	1 1.1%	7 7.69%	21 23.08%	44 48.35%	18 19.78%	3.78	0.89	91 100%
e. Students are evaluated both on fluency and accuracy by being asked to perform a real communicative function.	0 0%	3 3.3%	21 23.08%	44 48.35%	23 25.27%	3.96	0.79	91 100%
SUM	3 0.66%	19 4.18%	97 21.32%	231 50.77%	105 23.08%	3.91	0.77	455

Table 7.18: CLT pedagogical practices

7.6.1.2 Quantitative results from students' surveys

As in Case 1, pedagogical practices were not only examined from the teachers' perspectives but also further analysed through the students' learning experiences as a method of triangulated data analysis. Table 7.19, presented below, provides a descriptive analysis of the scores acquired from a five-point scale conducted using SPSS software. The table presents the frequency of English usage in different areas and activities.

English usage and activities	Mean	SD	N
a. The lecturers use only English in class explanation	3.59	0.98	291
b. Students ask questions in English	3.12	1.00	291
c. I take lecture notes in English.	3.30	1.18	291
d. I use English for group discussions.	2.99	1.19	291
e. I can understand the lectures in English.	3.09	1.01	291
f. I can understand my classmates when they answer the questions in English.	3.40	0.95	291
g. Textbooks are printed in English.	4.18	1.06	291
h. The lecturers explain difficult terms in Vietnamese.	4.38	0.88	291
i. Students in my class need more in-class language support.	4.00	0.89	291
j. I can express myself easily in English.	3.01	0.98	291
k. Four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the classroom practice.	3.98	1.04	291
l. The objective is to develop student's communicative competence.	4.05	1.01	291
n. I take part in group/pair activities in lessons.	4.08	0.95	291
SUM	3.63	1.01	291

Table 7.19: English usage and Classroom practices

As observed in Table 7.19, the use of English was frequently utilised in certain areas and activities, such as textbooks (Mean = 4.18) and group/pair activities (Mean = 4.08). Conversely, a majority of students (69.67%) did not frequently use English in their discussions. Additionally, 74.59% of respondents found it challenging to express themselves in English most of the time, while only 25.41% of students found it easy (Mean = 3.01). The majority of students agreed that the classroom practices integrated the four skills in order to enhance their communicative competence (items k and l, Mean = 3.98 and 4.05, respectively). Interestingly, students reported a similar occurrence as in Case 1, where

teachers employed a combination of English and Vietnamese when explaining difficult terms (item h, Mean = 4.38). This was particularly prevalent in this university classroom setting. This finding can be attributed to the fact that most students began their studies at the false-beginner level while implementing the EOP curriculum, which incorporated unfamiliar terms from content knowledge. Consequently, students in this case required more in-class language support (item l, Mean = 4). This intriguing finding will be further discussed in the analysis of qualitative data obtained from classroom observations.

In relation to activities based on CLT, it was verified that teachers employed a variety of pedagogical approaches to different extents during classroom instruction. Based on the data presented in Table 7.20, games were reported by 88.32% of the surveyed students as a regular occurrence in the classroom, followed by listing/ranking activities (67.35%). Other activities frequently implemented included information gap exercises, role play, problem solving, and discussions, all of which were practised with varying regularity, either exceeding or falling below the 50% mark.

Pedagogic activities	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Information gap	174	59.79%	291
Problem solving	163	56.01%	291
Discussion	143	49.14%	291
Listing/ranking	196	67.35%	291
Role-play	168	57.73%	291
Games	257	88.32%	291
Others	9	3.09%	291
SUM	1110		

Table 7.20: Frequency of Teachers' pedagogic practices

Among the various pedagogical practices examined, games were the most well-received by EAP students, with 72.73% of respondents expressing a preference for this activity, as indicated in table 7.21 below. In contrast, other activities garnered significantly lower levels of favourability, with none exceeding 35%. Despite the clear preference for games, a

substantial majority of students surveyed, 92.78% (270/291), expressed a desire for more communicative activities. This inclination was motivated by several factors, such as the need to enhance communicative competence and confidence, the students' limited proficiency in spoken English, limited opportunities for practising the language, and a desire for more engaging lessons.

Learning activities	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	N
Information gap	64	21.99%	291
Problem solving	75	25.77%	291
Discussion	68	23.37%	291
Listing/ranking	97	33.33%	291
Role-play	93	31.96%	291
Games	228	78.35%	291
Others	7	2.41%	291
SUM	632		2037

Table 7.21: Students' favourite pedagogic practices

7.6.1.3 Qualitative results from interviews and observation

The regular utilisation of pedagogical practices was confirmed through 12 teacher interviews, 7 focus groups involving 42 students, and 28 observed lessons. In general, the teaching and learning activities appear to align with the objectives outlined in the curriculum.

During the teacher interviews, all educators acknowledged the employment of learning activities prescribed in the textbooks. These activities were designed to foster communicative and learner-centred teaching and learning approaches. The majority of teachers adhered to the instructions provided in the teachers' book, with only a few making minor adjustments to accommodate varying student levels. Among the communicative activities, pair work, group work, role play, presentations, and language games were particularly emphasised by the teachers.

I adhere to the instructions provided in the guidebook for my teaching. These instructions recommend conducting the majority of tasks and activities using a communicative approach (T9).

The new curriculum places emphasis on developing communicative skills, with the primary method being CLT (T8).

During their interviews, several teachers highlighted their preference for incorporating diverse teaching approaches and methods in their classes (T9, T10, T15, T18). Prior to the implementation of Project 2020, the prevailing practices at the general education and tertiary levels mainly revolved around knowledge transmission and teacher-centred classes. Consequently, the participants had to make substantial changes to their instructional practices when introducing the new curriculum. They witnessed the effects of these changes both in themselves and in their students. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that all participants unanimously agreed that the methodology should not exclusively focus on grammar, test performance, or teacher-centred instruction. Rather, the interviewed teachers concurred that an effective methodology should prioritise communication and promote active student participation, rather than placing excessive emphasis on grammar rules. One teacher expressed this sentiment by stating that activities should encourage interaction, facilitating extensive student communication (T8). Another teacher noted that 'the new curriculum places the student at the forefront of the learning process' (T15). Teachers have observed significant progress among students enrolled in the EOP curriculum compared to those in the previous English curriculum at the university, as reflected in one teacher's remarks, 'The students are motivated and dedicated to learning. They thoroughly enjoy these classes' (T16).

This effect was also confirmed in the majority of classroom observations, where both teachers and students exhibited motivation and a strong interest in teaching and learning activities. The findings regarding pedagogical activities, gathered from surveys and interviews with teachers, were once again validated through classroom observations. In these pedagogical practices, teachers served as facilitators, while students actively engaged in lessons using a proactive approach. However, it should be noted that certain activities,

initially intended to align with the principles of communicative activities, were carried out individually rather than in pairs or groups, indicating a teacher-centred approach in some classes. During one particular class observation, T7 primarily employed instructions in both English and Vietnamese, delivering an instruction in English followed by a translation into Vietnamese. In her interview, this teacher acknowledged that this habit or weakness was a result of the students' low proficiency level. She, however, failed to recognise that she had not successfully implemented a communicative, student-centred curriculum.

I often ask students whether I should guide them in English or Vietnamese, and they usually choose Vietnamese. Sometimes, I also prefer to explain things clearly in Vietnamese to ensure their easy comprehension and help them achieve their goals. Hence, I frequently use Vietnamese extensively in my instructions. (T7)

In this institution, educators have recognised the reality that a large number of their students in lower-level classes come from rural backgrounds and possess limited exposure to the English language. As a result, these students face difficulties when attempting to engage in communication in the target language, particularly during listening and speaking exercises. Consequently, the teachers have chosen to implement traditional drill and practice methodologies for instructional purposes.

7.6.2 Assessment practices

Findings from 91 teachers' surveys indicated that only the CEFR was widely used in this university (figure 7.7). Specifically, 35.16% of teachers reported using it regularly, 21.98% used it very widely, 27.47% used it quite widely, and 15.38% used it occasionally. On the other hand, VSTEP was only used by some teachers, despite being accepted at this university. A total of 68.13% of teachers agreed that VSTEP was not of any use.

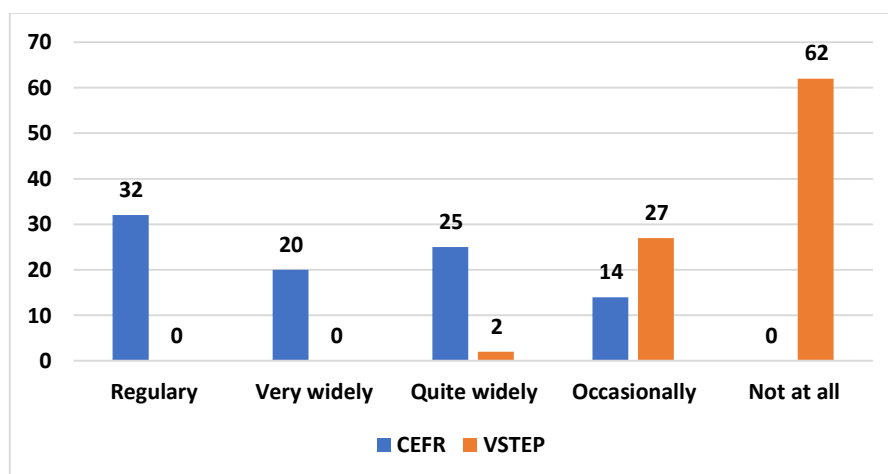


Figure 7.7: How widely CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 2

Accordingly, the teachers in this institution utilised the CEFR as a point of reference across various domains (see Figure 7.8). The highest utilisation of CEFR was observed in the field of language testing and assessment (93.41%), followed by language teaching (64.84%), foreign language curriculum development (59.34%), textbook/material production (58.24%), and language learning (57.14%). Additionally, CEFR was also employed in other domains, including national language curriculum development and teacher training, albeit to a lesser extent.

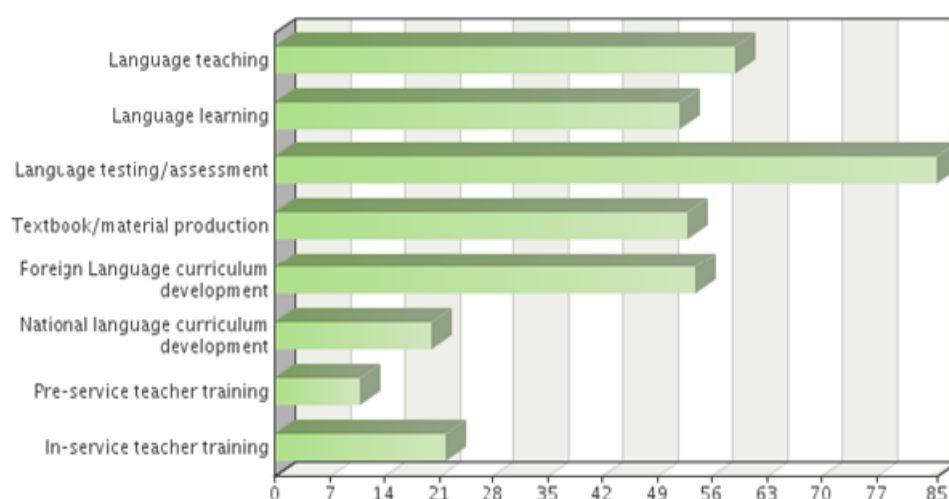


Figure 7.8: Domains CEFR used as a reference in Case 2

In contrast, VSTEP served as a point of reference at significantly lower levels in most every domain in this university case (see Figure 7.9). Notably, it was primarily utilised at the highest level in the realm of language testing and assessment, accounting for only 18.58% of the instances. Following closely behind, national language curriculum development accounted for 14.16% of the cases. In the remaining domains, however, the utilisation of VSTEP was notably limited, with all percentages falling below 10%. A substantial proportion of teachers, amounting to 42.48%, expressed agreement that VSTEP was not employed as a reference in any of these domains.

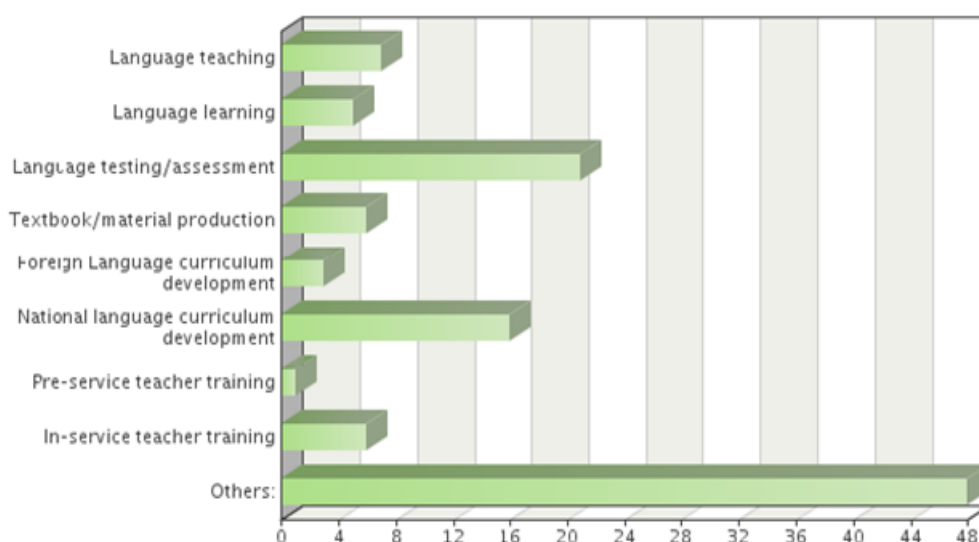


Figure 7.9: Domains VSTEP used as a reference in Case 2

The findings from question 19 revealed conflicting outcomes regarding the efficacy of CEFR and VSTEP at this university, as showcased in Figure 7.10 below. On the one hand, 96.7% of participants agreed that CEFR was more or less beneficial, with 57.14% considering it rather advantageous and some finding it extremely useful (23.08%). Only three teachers (3.3%) found it difficult to make a definitive judgement, and none of them perceived it as useless. On the other hand, as many as 62.64% of teachers found it challenging to assess the usefulness of VSTEP. This statistic is understandable considering that VSTEP was not widely implemented at this university.

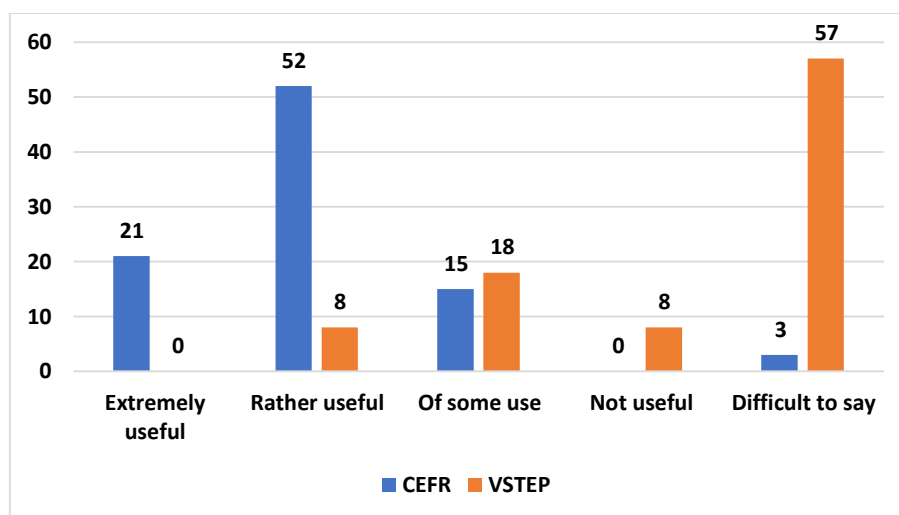


Figure 7.10: How useful CEFR and VSTEP used in Case 2

An initial diagnostic assessment was conducted at the commencement of the course in order to ascertain the suitable level of instruction for the students. The English coursebook and online programmes incorporated a diverse range of assessment tools, including writing-based tests and oral examinations, to facilitate ongoing and final evaluations of student progress. Although these assessments demonstrated validity in terms of measuring language proficiency, it should be noted that the focus of language acquisition for the learners in question primarily occurred through oral means, as evidenced by mid-term and final oral examinations. Additionally, computer-based assessments were utilised for online evaluations, whereas end-of-term exams were conducted in a traditional paper-and-pencil format.

7.6.3 Students and teachers' roles

An analysis of the standard document revealed that the curriculum and syllabus clearly mentioned the concept of interactive learner-centred learning. The document provided a detailed explanation of the principles and characteristics of interactive and learner-centred learning. However, there were concerns about the feasibility of implementing this teaching approach due to students' weak levels of English language proficiency and their inability to use English as a means of learning. Most of the classes had shifted their instructional practices to learner-centred ones, which required contributions of ideas and participation in pairs or groups. In classes with low-level students who could only speak and interact in the

language at a beginner level, English was taught at a basic level. The low level of language proficiency among students resulted in resistance to classroom participation and communication, as confirmed through interviews with teachers and students, as well as through observations.

For the lower-level students, some of them are true beginners. They have little to no vocabulary or grammar, which affects their learning attitudes and lowers their motivation to participate in practice (T8).

However, all teachers adhered to a predetermined sequence of lessons with the goal of familiarising students with effective learning practices. Furthermore, teachers in these classes provided Vietnamese instructions in specific scenarios where students required additional support. The number of Vietnamese instructions gradually diminished as the courses progressed and students became more comfortable with the curriculum, as well as with new teaching and learning approaches, and improved their English skills, which in turn increased their confidence.

Throughout the observations, most teachers took on the role of facilitators, strictly adhering to the syllabus, which emphasised communicative activities and learner-centred approaches. However, not all teachers succeeded in fulfilling their duty as facilitators of learning in every lesson and activity. For example, two instructors (T7, T12) decided to go back to traditional teaching practices, such as teacher-centred instruction, in order to tackle the difficulties encountered in their respective classes. The first class consisted of students with limited English proficiency, whereas the second class predominantly consisted of introverted female students. In both cases, the students displayed a reluctance to actively engage in class activities, especially those involving communication. One of the teachers was young and lacked experience in working with students at a low level, whereas the other teacher had limited proficiency in English and lacked confidence in effectively implementing communicative teaching methods.

7.6.4 EOP textbooks and supporting materials

In the pre-use evaluation stage, Tomlinson's (2003) approach solely outlines the purpose of this phase, without providing any specific criteria for assessment. Therefore, additional evaluation criteria (e.g., physical appearance, practical considerations, and content pages) proposed by Cunningsworth (1984), McDonough and Shaw (2013), Tomlinson (2011), and Jolly and Bolitho (2011) were incorporated. The textbook cover lacked colour, professional presentation, and did not appear visually appealing to learners (S25, S47). However, the content of the textbook and supplementary materials (such as PowerPoint lesson plans, online lessons, etc.) appeared engaging and captivating to learners, as they were closely aligned with their content knowledge. This discovery was affirmed by all students during the focus-groups. The layout and design of the materials reflected a highly organised approach across the six courses. The student book maintained a consistent structure and appearance, with each unit adhering to the same fundamental pattern of presenting a grammatical structure within a conversational context, followed by controlled practice activities. This standardised process reduced unfamiliarity for students, and after completing a few units, they knew what to expect in terms of teacher guidance and meta-language. This was advantageous for learners who preferred the familiarity of a structured approach, but less favourable for those who desired more variety. The design was relatively uncluttered, and learners could generally comprehend the tasks they were required to complete. The illustrations in the books were typically realistic and functional, although some were ambiguous, making it challenging for students to discern specific details in certain photos due to the absence of colour, or to grasp the intended meaning of certain high-tech product illustrations. This situation had been observed in a lesson.

The primary pedagogical method employed in the teacher's book was essentially a Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach. This particular approach was evident in the structure and format of the textbook, the various activities included within it, and the proposed lesson plans found in both the teacher's book and PPT lesson plans. These lesson plans adhered to a traditional PPP approach, whereby the online lessons, instructor, or audio CD initially provided learners with models of the target language, which they then practised within carefully controlled settings. Nevertheless, while the instructional

methodology undoubtedly influenced the materials, it is feasible to modify them to align with alternative approaches.

Reflecting the PPP-based approach, the activities in the textbook were designed to provide learners with opportunities to practise or review language that had already been presented online. There was a suitable balance of activity types, including monologue talks, pair work, and group work. While many activities were engaging for learners due to the integration of some ESP, particularly in higher-level courses, some proved to be challenging for adult learners. The materials offered ample opportunities for developing the four language skills of reading, writing (in the online learning context), listening, and speaking (in face-to-face lessons). Additionally, a wide range of activities and exercises focused on grammar and vocabulary were available on online platforms for further practice. Overall, the materials provided satisfactory opportunities for developing the four language skills and other language areas. The topic content was generally realistic and relevant to adult learners, incorporating knowledge related to their majors or groups of majors, which is highly beneficial for their undergraduate studies and future careers. The materials also largely avoided presenting negative racial, cultural, and sexual stereotypes. However, some topics and situations, such as those pertaining to company background and company culture, appeared more suitable for an ESL rather than an EFL context, surpassing the current abilities of most learners.

All the interviewed teachers affirmed that the materials were easily adaptable for their use. The teacher's book and PowerPoint lesson plans provided comprehensive teaching support, comprising complete lesson plans and numerous suggestions for games and activities. Nevertheless, the coursebook's suitability for instructing mixed-ability classes was limited (T7, T9), although there was flexibility to modify certain activities to increase or decrease their level of difficulty. Although the materials lacked Vietnam-specific content, customization and personalisation of most activities were feasible. Furthermore, the adaptability of the materials to accommodate various learning styles was possible. The integration of online resources into face-to-face lessons and the students' learning processes was seamless.

7.6.5 Teachers training and other resource support

It was feared that without providing any in-service training, there would be a risk of teachers implementing the new curriculum superficially, reverting to more familiar and comfortable assessment and teaching practices, or developing a negative attitude towards the changes (Test 3). To address this concern, it is necessary to incorporate more practical sessions, such as workshops and open discussions, focusing on the challenges and issues involved in implementing the new curriculum and assessment methods, as well as utilising different teaching methodologies. Consequently, it is crucial to ensure that teachers receive adequate and relevant training, along with meaningful input regarding the new curriculum, assessment practices, and various teaching methods. Based on discussions with administrators, it became evident that teachers were assigned a central role and were considered crucial to the successful implementation of the new curriculum. The administrators addressed the involvement of teachers in curriculum design and development, as well as their professional training, in order to enable them to contribute ideas, develop a profound understanding, and enhance their expertise. As a result, teachers can develop a sense of ownership that fosters their commitment to the reform. These initiatives were initially carried out on a limited scale, involving the most enthusiastic and dedicated teachers who were open to change, before being gradually expanded to encompass the entire staff.

Teachers are important resources for developing and implementing the new curriculum. A small group of the most enthusiastic and talented teachers were chosen to receive training, followed by the gradual inclusion of other teachers. Let's prioritise in the following order: teachers, the programme, teaching materials, facilities, and then training regulations. (Admin 4)

Accordingly, the institution organised a series of training courses facilitated by prominent professors from the US, Australia, and the British Council. The courses focused on curriculum design, textbook compilation, language teaching methods, testing, and assessment (Admin 3, Admin 4, Admin 5). These courses were deemed essential in the

specific context of this university (Admin 4) as it was in the midst of developing and implementing new curricula and a testing system for EOP.

Teachers have participated in many seminars and training programs inside and outside the institution. The top priority is to foster teachers' capacity in teaching methods, especially communication approaches. (Admin 5)

The availability of these training programmes was confirmed by eleven teachers, as indicated in teacher interviews (T7-18). This type of support received positive feedback from teachers due to its effectiveness and timeliness (T9, T16, T18). Teachers not only gained knowledge from these trainings but also received financial assistance, 'as a means of encouragement' (T8). Consequently, this led to an increased level of motivation and confidence for teachers to participate.

In addition to the language proficiency requirement, which is ranked fourth highest (C1) or a 7 in IELTS, teacher evaluations were conducted on a termly basis by administrators and other teachers through classroom observations, usually twice a term (T12, 18). Furthermore, students provided feedback at the end of each term (Admin 5). This approach was employed to strike a balance between supervision and support in managing teachers and was believed to have a positive influence on the quality of instruction. It facilitated the exchange of ideas and prompt resolution of issues identified during the observations on the one hand and placed some pressure and stress on teachers on the other (T8, T12, T13).

In the teachers' vast collective experience across diverse fields, they routinely convened for obligatory weekly meetings. These professional engagements occurred in small groups within their respective disciplinary domains. Within this academic institution, the teachers utilised the G-drive and internal email system to facilitate the exchange of ideas, good practice and materials. They shared content by uploading resources derived from the handbook, supplementary materials, and links to supporting videos. This practice cultivated an ongoing community of practice which teachers found highly advantageous. During the weekly meetings, teachers from different teams elucidated and reviewed the shared materials, paying particular attention to specific guidelines. Other teachers raised concerns

regarding the effectiveness of certain strategies, identifying what worked and what did not, and proposed potential solutions. These meetings also served to establish the agenda for the following week, including course-related matters. Consequently, teachers were well-informed about their priorities, which facilitated adherence to deadlines. As the course progressed, teachers gained valuable insights into their students' abilities, identifying their strengths and areas in need of improvement. Consequently, teachers were able to make changes to pedagogy and adjusted the classroom dynamics accordingly. However, some teachers reported encountering recurring issues, such as mistakes in the textbook or misinterpretations in instructional practices, despite these issues having been addressed in the small group meetings. In such cases, educational leaders failed to simultaneously address difficulties across different disciplines, resulting in the repetition of errors and diminished effectiveness.

In terms of technology support, a multimedia centre has been established, equipped with professional equipment including a studio, video camera, and other necessary devices for teachers to conduct online lectures and other video activities. Additionally, a spacious computer room with full internet access was always available for students to take online courses. All language classes were equipped with projectors, speakers, or TV screens, and teachers utilised their laptops to display PowerPoint (PPT) lessons and play audio files for listening tasks. Instead of large lecture halls, new language classrooms were provided, designed for language learning and capable of accommodating 20 to 30 students. However, in some classrooms, the TV screens were too small to effectively display lesson contents, resulting in reduced student interest and motivation. Moreover, the campus Wi-Fi signal was not consistently strong and accessible to students. Despite these limitations, both teachers and students highly appreciated this technology support, recognising it as a significant effort made by administrators in the context of higher education in Vietnam. It was considered a significant improvement compared to the previous programme and is seen as an initial success, as confirmed in interviews.

7.6.6 Appropriateness and practicality of change

A total of 91.21% (or 83 out of 91) of the teachers who participated in the survey for Case 2 expressed agreement with the effective implementation of communicative teaching at this university. This finding was further supported by the interviews conducted and the majority of classroom observations. Both teachers and students highly valued the new curriculum, considering it appropriate and practical. According to the insights shared during the interviews, the curriculum reform not only addressed the immediate needs of the teachers and students but also aligned with their long-term goals. Despite feeling some anxiety about the challenges posed by the new curriculum, they exhibited a strong motivation to teach and learn in the new courses. The teachers also acknowledged limitations in terms of sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English, attributing them to various factors such as the broader curriculum context, traditional teaching methods, heavy workload and schedules, as well as limited resources and equipment for implementing Western teaching methods.

7.6.7 Difficulties faced by EOP teachers

Table 7.22 presents descriptive data on the challenges faced by teachers, as measured by the ID scale in the survey. The participating teachers expressed strong beliefs regarding 14 difficulties encountered during the implementation process, as evidenced by all means exceeding 2.0 on a 3-point scale. The data in Table 7.22 highlight several significant difficulties identified by the teachers, including students' limited English proficiency (Mean=2.59), students' reluctance to participate in class (Mean=2.45), the absence of authentic teaching materials (Mean: 2.43), and a restricted number of class hours (Mean=2.4). The two lowest rated challenges on the Enabling scale, namely using English as the medium of instruction for the CLT curriculum and utilising the prescribed textbook, both received an identical mean score of 1.78. The other two challenges that received low ratings are the lack of support from colleagues and administrators, and the use of grammar-based examinations, with 34.07% and 36.26% of the teachers respectively frequently indicating that they experienced 'no problem' in these areas.

<i>Difficulties</i>	Not a problem	Potential problem	A problem	Mean	SD	N
a. Teacher's limited proficiency in spoken English.	11 12.09%	36 39.56%	44 48.35%	2.36	0.69	91 100%
b. Teachers' limited sociolinguistics/cultural competence.	11 12.09%	50 54.95%	30 32.97%	2.21	0.64	91 100%
c. Teachers' lack of training in CLT.	8 8.79%	44 48.35%	39 42.86%	2.34	0.64	91 100%
d. Teachers have few opportunities for in-service training in CLT.	11 12.09%	55 60.44%	25 27.47%	2.15	0.61	91 100%
e. Teachers have little time for teaching materials for CLT class.	15 16.48%	42 46.15%	34 37.36%	2.21	0.71	91 100%
f. Lack of authentic teaching materials.	12 13.19%	28 30.77%	51 56.04%	2.43	0.72	91 100%
g. Large classes. (Class size)	14 15.38%	36 39.56%	41 45.05%	2.3	0.72	91 100%
h. Insufficient funding, school facilities	18 19.78%	42 46.15%	31 34.07%	2.14	0.72	91 100%
i. Lack of support from colleagues and administrators.	31 34.07%	44 48.35%	16 17.58%	1.84	0.7	91 100%
j. Grammar-based examination.	33 36.26%	34 37.36%	24 26.37%	1.9	0.79	91 100%
k. Lack of assessment instruments.	14 15.38%	44 48.35%	33 36.26%	2.21	0.69	91 100%
l. Students' low English proficiency.	4 4.4%	29 31.87%	58 63.74%	2.59	0.58	91 100%
m. Students' resistance to class participation.	8 8.79%	34 37.36%	49 53.85%	2.45	0.65	91 100%
n. Students' resistance because teacher is central and knowledge transmitter.	15 16.48%	48 52.75%	28 30.77%	2.14	0.68	91 100%
o. Students' resistance because of the concept that learning should be serious, not playing games.	23 25.27%	46 50.55%	22 24.18%	1.99	0.71	91 100%
p. Using the prescribed book in teaching.	26 28.57%	59 64.84%	6 6.59%	1.78	0.55	91 100%
q. Using English language to teach CLT curriculum.	35 38.46%	41 45.05%	15 16.48%	1.78	0.71	91 100%
r. Emphasizing the process or the product.	15 16.48%	64 70.33%	12 13.19%	1.97	0.55	91 100%
s. The conflict of doing grammar explanation and error correction.	23 25.27%	48 52.75%	20 21.98%	1.97	0.69	91 100%
t. Focusing on rote memorization and repetition.	18 19.78%	43 47.25%	30 32.97%	2.13	0.72	91 100%
u. Limited number of class hours	10 10.99%	35 38.46%	46 50.55%	2.4	0.68	91 100%

Table 7.22: Difficulties faced by teachers

Many online activities require reading and writing skills, posing a challenge for learners who are not taught in person and lack immediate assistance. The textbook does not include presentations, reading-based activities, and writing-based activities, which proved problematic for learners who have not completed the required online lessons prior to

attending face-to-face sessions. Several teachers (T8, T10, T18) have reported that they must allocate additional time to vocabulary and grammar review at the beginning of face-to-face lessons to compensate for this issue, resulting in limited time for free communicative production at the end. This problem was also observed in some classes where teachers found a solution by assigning free-production activities as homework. They instructed students to record their practice sessions on video and submit them online for peer assessment. Teachers in their interviews raised concerns regarding the implementation of CLT activities in classes where the majority of students are female and appear to be more introverted and passive compared to their male counterparts. The limited engagement and participation exhibited by these students required teachers additional time and effort in teaching practices. In an observed class consisting solely of female students, their reticence and hesitancy to engage in group activities or respond to the teacher's questions were clearly evident. In such instances, the teacher occasionally took on the responsibility of answering questions herself or assumed the role of a presenter, rather than a facilitator.

The teachers' perception of the new curriculum, which incorporates lessons and activities tailored to students' interests and needs, is that it is time-consuming. In addition to identifying misconceptions, the observations also document various educational practices and other obstacles to implementing the EOP curriculum at this university. The teachers reported that while the traditional teacher-student relationship is strong, it has little influence on teaching methods. They expressed that many of the CLT activities required excessive time and sometimes seemed more like recreational games than serious learning. Consequently, the teachers occasionally found themselves lacking sufficient time for student output. They felt as though they were not fulfilling the role of instructor when employing such activities and anticipated potential complaints from students. The teachers also voiced concerns regarding the overwork load due to the multiple tasks of formative assessment and the scarcity of authentic English materials and communicative reading exercises. Conversely, several experienced teachers expressed their reluctance to adopt communicative attitudes and practices. Some teachers posited that this resistance may stem from the fact that experienced educators are more averse to change and struggle to integrate new theories into their own practical classroom experiences.

7.6.8 Difficulties faced by EOP students

Introducing blended learning into the curriculum may be perceived as a burdensome task for students (S23, S25, S32, S39, S40, S58) due to time limitations and academic pressures. A plethora of online lessons, activities, exercises, and assessments were assigned to students on a weekly basis. These tasks must all be completed and submitted prior to the in-person classroom sessions. Students often prioritised more immediate assignments (S31) or habitually procrastinate, leading to an excessive workload the night before the face-to-face lessons (S24). Consequently, all tasks were completed within a very short timeframe, potentially leading to a limited understanding of language features. Accordingly, students were unable to fully utilise this knowledge during communicative activities in the face-to-face setting. Some students struggled to manage their time due to the substantial amount of online content in certain subjects. This became particularly problematic when time constraints compelled students to prioritise assessments.

However, S34, who found English interesting and extremely important, admitted that despite time constraints and commitments to other subjects and activities, online tasks were manageable. Similarly, students S19, S27, and S53 shared the belief that by devoting a designated period each day, they could successfully fulfil the weekly online workload. Conversely, several students encountered difficulties with specific online lectures that required the acquisition of new reading and listening skills. An important concern emerged in the form of inadequate online support for students who struggled to comprehend the online presentations or had enquiries. Additionally, students expressed dissatisfaction with the absence of feedback on all online tasks and assessments.

Furthermore, it should be noted that students attended only two ninety-minute lessons per week, indicating a limited amount of time spent in the classroom. While students generally appreciated the online learning experiences, concerns were raised regarding the extensive use of computers and the unavailability of internet service on the university campus (S41, S55). It is important to highlight that not all students were comfortable with technology, as many did not have personal laptops or computers. As an alternative, they had to rely on the university campus labs, which had a limited number of computers and restricted operating

hours. Additionally, some students acknowledged that this posed a challenge due to difficulties in maintaining focus and succumbing to distractions when using online platforms (S23, S27, S29, S33, S35).

In summary, despite the common perception that online tasks may be time-consuming and in need of improvement, a significant number of students maintained the perspective that they are beneficial and, notably, an essential component of the subject and the revised curriculum. Blended learning afforded students increased autonomy in selecting their study approaches (S33) and offered a positive experience (S49) that could yield benefits in their higher education journey (Admin 4).

7.7 Chapter Summary

7.7.1 At institutional level

Overall, it is evident that the establishment of the EOP curriculum at this institution is in line with the objectives of the national language policy. Whilst the institutional curriculum standards placed emphasis on improving students' communicative competence, the incorporation of English use within a multilingual and multicultural environment was not indicated, mirroring the same problem observed in the curriculum of Case 1 university. The various interpretations of policy texts The recently developed textbooks and teaching materials, available in both online and offline formats, were meticulously crafted, drawing inspiration from imported textbooks from English-speaking countries to ensure authenticity. However, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on the diverse cultural tapestry of the globalised world, Vietnamese values, and the learning culture within the planned curriculum. Consequently, this lack of emphasis permeates the actual implementation of teaching practices as well. This finding serves as further validation of the urgent necessity to redefine the language policy at the institutional level and for the MOET to provide specific guidelines.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this institution has a documented history of continuously developing its curriculum since 2011. Various initiatives have been trialled and evaluated, although not all have yielded the expected outcomes. This demonstrates the institution's leaders' willingness to take calculated risks and their openness to change. The administrators displayed a positive disposition towards and a commitment to supporting the reform of the English curriculum in this institution, recognising it as a crucial factor for the successful implementation of change. It is worth noting that the administrators in this university case study have established a trusting environment that facilitated the widespread adoption of innovative ideas and structures.

Teacher professional development was considered to be of utmost importance in the university setting because of their perceived central role in implementing the new curriculum. In addition to conducting training sessions and facilitating collaborative staff meetings focused on professional dialogue, there was also a strong emphasis on promoting individual professional development opportunities. The main objective was to assist the teachers as a whole in deepening their comprehension of the new curriculum, thereby enabling them to progress in a unified manner. As a result, this created a conducive environment for transformative learning, empowering teachers to critically examine their assumptions, navigate through any cognitive dissonance they encountered, and ultimately gain new perspectives.

7.7.2 At classroom level

The chapter has presented the findings regarding the implementation of the EOP curriculum in University Case 2. The data collected from lecturers and students regarding the new EOP curriculum demonstrates that they held a highly positive view of the new curriculum, despite encountering a variety of challenges throughout the implementation process. The curriculum was perceived as beneficial not only for the students' skill development but also for the enhancement of teachers' abilities. Teachers identified their teaching experience and the students' abilities as the most influential factors affecting their teaching. The availability of in-service training was also mentioned, and it was observed that most teachers were involved in the curriculum design. Moreover, students expressed satisfaction with the

teaching methods employed by the lecturers. There was also recognition of the significance and advantages of interactive learner-centred learning. However, it was evident that some teachers lacked a comprehensive grasp of these concepts and their relevance to fostering students' communicative competencies. Their understanding of the interactive learner-centred approach was somewhat limited. On a positive note, this approach was highly valued as it allowed students to consciously learn and acquire essential language skills. It also provided a more systematic approach to lesson preparation and enhanced the effectiveness of English language teaching.

In light of the five steps in the curriculum implementation (Scott, 2016), the findings from this case study institution confirmed the successful performance of teachers in the first four steps but not the last one, individual student progression.

The subsequent chapter will delve into the implementation of the EAP curriculum within the United Kingdom context, with a thorough analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 8

EAP CURRICULUM IN THE UK CONTEXT (Case 3)

What have I learnt so far regarding the pedagogical practices employed by teachers in the research project? This chapter aims to identify studies on interventions, current practices, concepts, and theories that focus on pedagogy in the UK context. By adopting an inclusive approach to the studies, particularly in terms of methodologies, this thematic overview allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic, rather than relying solely on a limited number of studies that qualify for in-depth review. Additionally, studies related to teacher education and/or the curriculum were also included, provided that they contributed to the understanding and knowledge of teachers' pedagogical practices. Among the three forms of EAP programmes in UK higher education (refer to 4.4.3), this chapter specifically concentrates on the PSE courses and presents findings from one component of the qualitative dataset. These findings were derived from interviews conducted with a curriculum designer, who also serves as the course instructor, as well as a group of five PSE students. The objective of this university case study was to elucidate the design and implementation of the EAP curriculum within the context of the United Kingdom.

8.1 Intended EAP curriculum at institutional level

8.1.1 The EAP curriculum standards

The pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme under investigation is an intensive course designed to familiarise non-native English speakers with the academic conventions and practices of studying at a university in the United Kingdom. The programme primarily focuses on enhancing proficiency in academic reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It is specifically tailored for students who have already received an offer of admission to the university. The duration of the course varies depending on the desired improvement in the students' IELTS scores, with options of either a 10-week or a 6-week programme. The 10-week course is intended for students aiming to increase their score by 1.0, while the 6-week course caters to those seeking an improvement of 0.5. To be eligible for the 6-week course, students must have a minimum overall IELTS score of 5.5, with no individual section score below 5.0.

Transitioning to a degree programme from the pre-session course is contingent upon meeting the following criteria: commencing the programme on the specified date, attending all classes as per the established timetable, actively participating in all classes, demonstrating satisfactory progress in language skills, and completing all assigned homework, assessments, and other tasks provided by instructors. Upon successful completion of the pre-session course, students will proceed to their main academic programme. They will be awarded a certificate confirming their attendance and documenting their achievements. Successful completion of the pre-session course indicates that students have met the English language requirements set by the university. The experience of this university, supported by current academic thought, shows that student's ability to use English increases when they practise it alongside their other studies. For this reason, all students who complete the pre-session courses are encouraged to make full use of the university's in-session English support programme. Students also have access to a Learning Development Lecturer focused on English for Academic Purposes.

8.1.2 The EAP pedagogic standards

Teacher involvement in curriculum design has a long-standing academic tradition. However, whilst it promotes the effective implementation of curriculum reforms, teachers encounter various challenges during the design process. These challenges are frequently a result of the constraints imposed on the design process and a lack of necessary knowledge and skills for effective collaborative design, as exemplified in university case 2 from the previous chapter. In this case, similar challenges have been observed in the curriculum design process, where teachers have been actively engaged. The PSE Teaching Syllabus at this institution is an official document that establishes standards for English teaching and learning. The university offers different syllabi for different courses based on students' IELTS scores. The initial syllabus was published and utilised by the university for a significant period of time. In 2018, it underwent revision with the active participation of teachers. The specific syllabus examined in this research is titled '6-week Pre-session English syllabus'.

In the pre-sessional course, students are provided with guidance from experienced language instructors and devote approximately 22 hours per week to attending various types of classes, lectures, seminars, and classroom-based e-learning activities. The classes consist of a maximum of 20 students who come from diverse countries and cultures, and they collaborate in a cooperative learning environment to complete a range of tasks during class time and compile a portfolio of their coursework. In addition, students are expected to engage in self-directed learning during designated periods and set aside several hours each evening and on weekends for their studies. The course curriculum addresses both general English language proficiency and English for Academic Purposes, covering a wide range of academic topics (refer to Table 8.1). As evidenced by Table 8.1, the course encompasses diverse pedagogical approaches within a nurturing academic setting to facilitate students' improvement in their academic English language skills. Furthermore, it integrates a comprehensive selection of activities aimed at imparting valuable study skills and self-directed learning strategies, which are pivotal for attaining success in their degree programme. Additionally, students receive personalised support and guidance from university and language tutors, including individual meetings to discuss their personal learning journey.

Topics	Explanations
Presentation skills	organising and structuring a presentation, using vocabulary
Seminar skills	presenting, developing and supporting an argument, participation in discussions
Study skills	tips and strategies essential to students' university success
Academic English skills	reading and writing summaries, vocabulary, discussion
Academic writing skills	paraphrasing, coherence, grammar, avoiding plagiarism
Listening	note taking, understanding organisation
Project work	using the library, extended reading
Institution	introducing students to the University and the surrounding area
Tutors	1-1 meetings with tutor to discuss students' work and progress
Independent learning	strategies to develop students' independent learning
Settle-down	helping students to settle in to their new environment and meet other students

Table 8.1: EAP Topics of Study

The responsibility of formulating the syllabus was entrusted to an English instructor who taught the course at the primary academic institution. Initially, their primary objective was to delineate the framework of the English syllabus, with a specific emphasis on determining the selection and sequencing of the courses.

They are the existing university so what I was given is that has been running for a while. I was given their curriculum, but I was also given a kind of free hand to devise what I thought would be appropriate for students in this college. (Build 4)

Considering the previous failure of the English programme to effectively facilitate students in achieving the desired advanced level of proficiency, the first step taken by the designer was to modify the teaching paradigms. This entailed incorporating participatory teaching methods and strategies, diversifying the range of teaching resources, and assessing students' progress on a daily basis.

I called my knowledge and experience in previous present note and creating 6-week course. I factored in need analysis, you know... I did some diagnostic work, you know... classic things with students. That included what topics they are going to study, there are some business, some tourism... (Build 4)

The designer had a strong desire to carry out a formal needs analysis prior to the development of the English syllabus. However, this endeavour proved to be unfeasible due to time constraints and the unavailability of the international students, who are expected to arrive in the UK only at the start of the course. As a result, the design phase heavily relied on the perceived needs of the students, which were derived from the designer's teaching experience and knowledge of the students' background. Each syllabus for the course encompasses various components, such as the course title, level, prerequisites and corequisites, course goals, course aims, course description and methodology, assessment procedures, course contents, and both bibliography and webography.

In order to address the absence of a formal needs analysis, the designer resolved to conduct a semi-structured interview with the students at the beginning of the course (refer Extract 8.1). This interview aims to explore the students' previous learning experience, learning styles, expectations, as well as their understanding of UK university educational culture. This supplementary enquiry served as an informal needs analysis, or a reflective turn, which aided the designer in assessing the degree to which the new curriculum aligns with the needs of the students, as well as identifying whether any revisions are necessary.

DAY	AM Session: 09.30 – 11.30	PM Session: 12.30 – 14.30
MON	1. Academic study skills – Tutorial practice. - semi-structured interview questions (teacher designed) about students' i) previous learning experience ii) learning styles iii) expectations and understanding of UK university educational culture (Recorded – tapescript created – further use: to use the ideas to create a choice of questions for the timed writing essay, final week, 'A reflective turn'.	2. Reading skills – skimming, more detail (categorizing), understanding main idea – TOPIC: learning styles Chazal: p.12-15 3. Ac. writing skills – TOPIC: 'Starting the process'. - self-evaluation of discrete writing skills - understanding essay titles - brainstorming ideas for writing - analysing and creating simple essay plans Chazal: 16-18

Extract 8.1: The EAP day 1 Scheme of Work

During the design phase, the primary concern of the teacher responsible for developing the English curriculum was to ensure that the objectives of the programme would be achieved by the students. The teacher needed to determine the appropriate content for each course level, including functions, topics or themes, tasks, grammar structures, vocabulary, and cultural aspects, in order to meet the goals and objectives of each course. Given that the English Curriculum focuses on developing students' language competences and academic skills, the functions of language and academic skills served as the guiding principles for each syllabus. This approach appeared to be a logical way to plan the curriculum, despite the potential rigidity of its implementation (Nunan, 2004). Each set of functions was organised around a specific topic or theme. Consequently, the English curriculum syllabi were structured based on topics and functions, with an emphasis on task-based learning.

Although functions, topics, and academic skills shaped the organising principles of the English curriculum, a more flexible approach was adopted, allowing for the simultaneous

development of content and tasks. Some of the suggested activities for implementing the functions and topics were task-based, aiming to provide learners with opportunities to engage in communicative activities. After identifying and sequencing the themes and functions, additional aspects relevant to each theme were taken into consideration. These included selecting a topic or context appropriate to the theme, function/task, and the necessary language structures, as well as cultural aspects and interactional strategies. In completing this task, the syllabi designer consulted the textbook and the university's previous curricula to examine the themes and functions covered there. As the sequencing of themes and functions differed from that in the text, the designer identified the specific chapters and pages where the themes and functions could be found. Additional themes and functions were added as deemed appropriate for the context, institution, and students. Thus, structuring lessons around themes/topics and functions enabled students to acquire speaking and writing skills as well as academic and study skills in a more organised manner.

8.1.3 The EAP assessment standards

The testing system is limited to specific assessments that have been designed and prescribed by the university for pre-sessional courses. Regular assessments of students' progress are carried out, with a particular emphasis on written assignments and oral presentations. As the evaluation of students in the new EAP curriculum primarily relies on their performance and everyday participation in class, rather than written tests, a set of criteria has been developed for each skill area, encompassing passive and productive skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), as well as other academic and study skills. These criteria serve as benchmarks or rubrics to aid in the measurement and monitoring of student performance and progress throughout the course. The rationale behind employing the same rubric for different pre-sessional English courses is that all of these courses strive to enhance not only students' academic English skills in listening, writing, speaking, and reading, but also their presentation skills, seminar skills, and other study skills, based on the relevant proficiency level. The use of proficiency criteria also helps to minimise subjectivity in student evaluation and ensures consistent expectations for all students.

Generally, the in-course assessment, the key formative assessment, involves working on a long essay, which accounts for 40-50 per cent of the grade. The first task focuses on writing, which can include planning an essay or conducting research for the essay. Each week, the teacher introduces a new skill related to essay writing. There are several skills that students utilise on a weekly basis when working on their essays. Throughout the course, students work on rough drafts of their essays before submitting the final version at the end. Another task that goes hand in hand with the essay is a presentation, typically done using Power Point. This presentation is usually related to the essay topic. This represents an ongoing development where students apply the skills required to write an essay, which leads to a formal assessment. Additionally, students work on improving their English language proficiency and take a test at the end of the course that assesses their proficiency in the four language skills and grammar. At the beginning of the course, teachers administer a diagnostic test to identify students' weaknesses. Following that, they provide test practice exercises that focus on grammar and vocabulary expansion for students to complete on a weekly basis. Students are also expected to complete several texts and additional readings, which are accessible through the online version of the module.

On the other hand, this course incorporates summative assessments at various intervals throughout its duration. Students are tasked with completing three portfolio assignments centred around the development of academic study skills. The initial task involves reading a chapter from a scholarly article and subsequently taking notes. The second task entails composing an essay, whereas the final task constitutes a comprehensive evaluation. Concerning study skills, this subject matter is relatively novel for students embarking upon their first year of university education. As part of the curriculum, students receive instruction in academic study skills and the specific criteria applicable to essay writing within the context of a university.

The pre-sessional courses also include a persistent reflective blog, in which students are expected to write a weekly diary and submit it to their instructors. Each student receives weekly tutorials, and these reflections serve as the foundation for the discussions in the tutorials.

8.2 Teacher and students' profiles

8.2.1 Teacher's demographic information

Teacher 19 (T19) was a highly proficient EFL instructor, boasting extensive experience and native fluency in English. In addition to his teaching prowess, T19 also served as the designer of this EAP curriculum. This wealth of experience greatly enhanced his confidence in both designing and delivering the curriculum. Consequently, this teacher possessed a comprehensive grasp of the curriculum design and encountered no challenges in understanding and interpreting the new curriculum. As highlighted in chapter 6, the quality and quantity of teachers' initial education play a crucial role in shaping their teaching practices in higher education institutions. T19 held a Master's degree as his highest level of formal education, and he was actively pursuing a PhD to further his academic career. Through his university education and Master's courses, he had acquired knowledge and familiarity with various language teaching approaches and methods. T19's position was secured by a fixed-term contract, indicating a lack of job security. However, his extensive experience in language teaching was a valuable asset that could offer significant advantages when instructing international students at the university.

8.2.2 Students' characteristics and previous learning experience

These English courses have been specifically developed to cater to the needs of international students who may require enhancement of their English language proficiency prior to commencing their university degree. The student cohort comprises individuals hailing from diverse countries, including Egypt, China, South Korea, as well as several Southeast Asian nations such as Thailand and Vietnam. Their unique social and cultural backgrounds significantly shape their perceptions towards the pre-sessional English courses. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the students enrolled in this programme have already met the minimum English language requirement, which is a score of 5.5 in the IELTS test. Moreover, they possess a fundamental level of communicative competence, enabling them to comprehend instructions from teachers and effectively present their thoughts.

A majority of the participants initiated their English language learning journey during the third or fourth year of primary school or the first year of secondary school. However, it appears that language acquisition at the school level was not prioritised. Notably, four students expressed that their English language knowledge was not enhanced through school-based instruction.

After 7 years of studying English, my English ability is still almost zero. I can only describe it as having a basic understanding of grammar, but when it comes to communication, speaking is almost impossible for me. (S61)

The participants held the perception that the study of foreign languages at school levels in their home countries was undervalued. Additionally, three students expressed the view that the teacher-centred instructional approach and the insufficient quality of teaching were contributing factors. They argued that the English teaching methods, which typically involved teacher-led presentations or the grammar-translation approach, did not facilitate effective language acquisition or the development of speaking proficiency. One student specifically emphasised the absence of student interactions and communication in the language learning environment of her home country's classrooms. Instead, students worked independently without participating in collaborative activities such as pair or group work. Consequently, this situation has resulted in a lack of confidence when it comes to communication among students.

When I speak in front of people, I get nervous, and I mess things up because we didn't have any group interaction (S63).

We usually worked individually. We didn't have any class activities like group work or pair work at all. That's why I find speaking in front of people difficult. It's my problem (S64).

Teachers used to teach, you know, just give lecture, and then we do whatever they asked us to do, like doing exercises or practice tests, and then go home (S63).

Teachers only present and give exercises while students listen and do the exercises. Students can ask teachers if they have a question, but I don't think many students have questions because they don't care much about English (S61).

Some students participating in this study have expressed that their English language classes at school primarily focused on teaching grammatical concepts and constructing simple sentences, catering to a rudimentary level of English proficiency. Nonetheless, despite spending many years learning the language, these classes failed to assist them in achieving an advanced level of English proficiency.

From year 6 to year 12 in Vietnam, English seems like it is not a very important subject. Teachers taught grammar for the entire time, there were no communicative activities. (S61)

It was only about learning and teaching for the exams. The activities were poor, and there were no extracurricular activities or any so-called inspiring things for students to learn English. (S62)

To meet the language prerequisite for admission to a university in the United Kingdom, students would typically enrol in English courses offered by private language centres. These courses required the payment of substantial fees and lasted for a duration of one to two years, providing intensive language instruction. In an effort to achieve this objective, a student opted to enrol in English courses in a different country known for its superior English language education, namely Singapore. This choice was driven by his conviction that studying in his country of origin would not enable him to attain a score of 5.5 on the IELTS test within a year.

After years of studying English in foreign countries, I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in English learning environments, and my English has improved. (S61)

8.3. Students' perceptions of status of English and needs

Regarding the perception of the value of English, all the students considered it to be an indispensable and crucial tool, particularly for their academic pursuits at the university level.

In my opinion, to be able to study at all universities in the UK or in the world in general, English is the most important. Because English is used for everyday communication and allows me to participate in class. It helps me understand what teachers teach and what other students communicate with me. English is the foundation, and without learning it, I won't be able to understand any other subjects. (S61)

However, students also perceived the English language as a mere prerequisite for securing employment in the job market. The students expressed the belief that showcasing a commendable level of spoken English during job interviews could give them a competitive edge, particularly when applying to reputable companies. The idea that proficiency in English, above proficiency in any other language, could serve as the primary criterion for securing employment was a compelling incentive for students to improve their English language skills. The students asserted that:

English is now the global language, so no matter what you do, it will be much more beneficial if you can communicate in English. And when you look for a job, employers will always favour you if you are good at English. (S62)

The participants in this study expressed the significance of possessing the proficiency to communicate and utilise the English language. They expressed a strong desire to acquire a substantial level of familiarity with the language, enabling them to comprehend and engage in discussions involving both fellow countrymen and individuals from diverse nationalities. The students articulated that frequent usage and active practice of English were necessary in order to enhance their ability to readily comprehend others.

English is very important nowadays. For example, when we go to another country to learn like this, the language used to communicate is normally English. If I want to talk with friends from other countries, I cannot learn all of their languages to speak but I can use English to talk to all. In my opinion, English is not only important when I go to other countries but also in Vietnam. Now it is also very important. (S65)

8.4 Teacher's perceptions of the new curriculum

This section aims to provide an academic review of teachers' perceptions regarding the new English curriculum. The beliefs held by teachers appear to significantly impact their interpretation of the educational environment and specific teaching scenarios. Moreover, these beliefs may also shape teachers' attitudes and overt actions. In relation to the development of EAP teaching within the institution under study, the participant who was also involved in the design of the new English courses possessed a unique perspective to trace the historical trajectory of various English programmes and their respective objectives. As a result, this teacher was able to provide a comprehensive overview of this particular facet of curricular transformation.

I think this is an exceptional case because it is a new education company. They need to have new courses designed, based on some pre-existing materials and curricula from this institution. That is the reason why they needed me, an experienced teacher, to come and design the course. (T19.1)

The institution had a specific agenda for the contents of the textbook; however, the implementation and utilisation of the textbook primarily fell within the purview of the teachers. From the perspective of the teacher participant in this case, this autonomy provided the opportunity to tailor the curriculum to align with his individual teaching methods and the unique requirements of their students. The teacher participant acknowledged the authority to make decisions regarding the emphasis placed on certain topics, the discretion to omit certain material, and the adaptability to accommodate

evolving student perspectives. At the university level, educators were influenced by students' learning objectives and specific assessment formats, such as essay writing and presentations. In addition, they took into account the importance of developing English language proficiency and academic study skills to support students' progress. These academic study skills include research conduct and the ability to identify reliable sources, among other crucial competences.

What they tend to do is follow a course which ticks the boxes for academic study skills, and the other is language skills. And you know, English language skills, there are many textbooks and there's a kind of standard syllabus used in there which they think is the order in which you should learn English, you know, from simple to more complicated. (T19.1)

8.5 The Implementation of the new EAP curriculum

The objective of this section is to conduct a critical analysis of the implementation of the new EAP curriculum within the UK educational context. This phase is recognised as a pivotal stage in the overall process of curriculum development, as it involves the conversion of the written curriculum into practical teaching and learning strategies aimed at assisting students in attaining their objectives. Consequently, this study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation by specifically focusing on various classroom activities. By examining what transpired within the confines of the classroom, valuable evidence was gathered to ascertain the success or failure of the intended curriculum. This section emphasises the key themes that emerged from the data gathered through student interviews while also incorporating relevant insights from teachers as necessary for the discussion. In the conducted interviews, the students were prompted to engage in introspection regarding their encounters in the EAP courses and provide insights into the efficacy of teachers' instructional approaches in facilitating their learning. Initially, numerous recurring themes were extracted from the interview data, which were subsequently refined and organised into the five sub-sections presented herewith.

8.5.1 Pedagogical practices

The teachers were provided with a pre-designed syllabus and were required to adhere to a 'pacing guide' that outlined the curriculum and specified timeframes. The teacher in this case affirmed that he diligently adhered to the pacing guide as mandated. This instructional tool greatly facilitated lesson planning and provided clear guidelines for classroom activities.

Generally, I follow what's given. if they got a lot of material, they would say you don't have to do everything, you can set it for homework. (T19-1)

I go through my toolbox in my brain of activities, strategies, and I think that represents a kind of almost methods or approaches of teaching where I'm not controlled to anyone's particular method, grammar translation or whatever it is. I'm just drawing from that box of methods that I practiced, tested and picking out what I think works. (T19-2)

The students elucidated, in the interviews, how the teachers' pedagogical approaches to teaching English at the university level have transformed their attitudes towards English language acquisition, their language learning processes, their utilisation of the target language in their study and research. Given the students' necessity to utilise English in both formal and informal contexts, an increased emphasis was placed on language skills and academic aptitude, which were the primary focal points of the instructors at this institution. The students enrolled in this course have been provided with comprehensive training in essential academic study skills, encompassing research methodology, source identification, source integration, and precise referencing. Furthermore, particular emphasis has been placed on developing proficiency in academic essay writing, including the components of an effective introduction and the structure of main body paragraphs (see Extract 8.2).

WED	1. Ac. study skills – Presentations – assisted draft writing (collaboration with teacher) – looking at useful signposting expressions + presentation guidelines . Chazal: p.65 + 67-69	2. Ac. study skills – Writing summaries of texts used as sources + effective note-taking when reading sources (focus on artists’ processes: Ai Wei Wei and Zeng Fanzhi) RCA booklet p.25-29
THUR	1. Ac. study skills – Bibliographic search (1) – Induction from librarian. 2. Ac study skills – bibliographic search (2) – TASK: find 4-6 mixed sources online connected to a topic which might be the basis of the extended essay – email evidence of sources to tutor.	3. Ac. vocabulary – nouns used to classify a function or type of expression eg. ‘euphemism’ Bailey: p.155.157 4. Grammar focus – ‘diagnostic test’ to identify areas for improvement – opportunity for self correction with 2nd chance guesses. CAE/Prof. Entry Test
FRI	1. Ac. study skills – focus on writing introductions, inc. thesis statements – identify features of introduction – select appropriate thesis statements. Chazal: p.60-63 2. Ac. study skills – writing: paragraph cohesion – identify main features inc, topic sentence, main and sub statements/points/supporting evidence, and cohesive devices RCA booklet p.30-31	Social programme – trip to the Natural History Museum

Extract 8.2: The EAP Week 1 Scheme of Work

Although there is limited scholarly literature pertaining to the initial dismay experienced by students at the commencement of their university-level studies, this gave rise to a response that can be deemed advantageous, as the students endeavoured to adapt to the advanced and rigorous standards of teaching and learning prevalent in higher education. The students collectively asserted that they commenced exerting additional efforts to enhance their mastery of the second language by actively engaging in communicative interactions within the English language classroom.

TUES	1.Ac. study skills – writing: Argument essays (2) – using useful phrases to present arguments. Bailey: p.85-90 2. Ac. study skills – writing: Cause and Effect essays – Using grammar structures to present cause and effect – sentence writing exercises. Bailey: 91-94	3. Ac.study skills – listening to video talk/lecture – TOPIC – ‘How to start the creative process’ – Quentin Blake, You Tube, The Power of Illustration. TASK: Divide talk into stages of the process. Add details on 2nd listen. Discuss and parallel process with students’ experiences. RCA booklet p.32-33 + 38
WED	1. Focus on writing: incorporating sources into essays – reporting verbs and in-text citations. RCA booklet p.79	READING CLUB: extensive reading and listening practice - follow tapescript and watch video of Fiona Banner, Tateshot
THUR	1.Focus on writing: Framing a claim – phrases for presenting points of view, including ‘hedging’. RCA booklet p72-78	TUTORIALS – topics including discussing ppt presentations; identifying personal language challenges and creating strategies

Extract 8.3: The EAP Week 2 Scheme of Work

As discussed in Section 8.2, the students involved in this particular university case originated from diverse countries, each with their own distinctive social and cultural backgrounds. The instructor acknowledged the students' diversity in various aspects, such as their English proficiency, subject knowledge, preferred learning methods, and personalities, following an informal needs analysis conducted at the start of the course. Moreover, the teacher recognised the individual strengths and areas for improvement among the students based on the diagnostic assessment results and tutorials (see Extract 8.2 and 8.3). Effectively managing a class with varying levels of ability and diverse learning styles remains a continuous challenge for educators. During the implementation phase, the teacher, as revealed in the interviews, utilised a variety of teaching approaches and methods specifically tailored to meet the students' needs in the classroom.

I'm taking bits from everything, every method that I've studied. That becomes, you know, like blended into a big happy method, which I called in, which I picked out as required. And the reason I do that is because, you know, there are variables you need to consider - yeah, the students, where they're from, what their level is, the task, the activity. (T19-2)

Teachers considered and incorporated the unique and valuable experiences, interests, and abilities brought by each student, as the process of teaching and learning must adapt to the changing clientele. This need arose not only because the starting point of students - their knowledge and assumptions - had shifted, but also because the desired outcome - the nature of students' shared knowledge and assumptions - had also evolved. In this particular case, the teacher served almost as an additional student who was going through the materials and the entire course (T19-2).

You have the syllabus, you work on it, you do the material, you get through the input, but as a teacher you go through range of skills and strategies to see what works and fits, yeah. I think that what the teachers' job is. (T19-2)

Due to time limitations, a significant portion of instruction in these pre-sessional courses often relied on standardised course materials. The emphasis was on covering the material and utilising strategies such as pair work, group work, project work, discussions, vocabulary and grammar assessments, presentations, and self-directed learning in both face-to-face lessons and the university online platform. Students agreed that there were clear benefits in the use of blended learning as the content of online and offline resources were well-integrated and tailored to students' daily needs, topics, themes, as well as the course objectives. They all agreed that the lessons were enjoyable. The wide range of learning activities, both online and offline, was manageable due to the clear and sufficient instructions provided by the teachers (See Extract 8.4 as an illustrative example). Students recognised the significant role that technology plays in enhancing their access to knowledge, facilitating project-based activities, and offering timely formative assessment.

DAY	AM Session: 09.30 – 11.30	PM Session: 12.30 – 14.30
MON	1. Academic writing: 'Framing a claim' (2) revision - rewriting generalized/'factual' statements with more hedged - tentative language RCA Booklet p.72-78 2. Academic writing: style - differentiating formal and informal writing; rewriting informal sentences using formal feature such as the passive/impersonal voice. Jordan, Academic Writing p.88	3. Speaking (listening): focus on presentation - TED TALK - Brian Dettmer - 'Digging into a book' - listening comprehension - note-taking - use checklist of presentation features to analyse Brian's talk. https://www.ted.com/talks/brian_dettmer_old_books_reborn_as_intricate_art?language=en 4. Presentation: brainstorm and start draft of final PPT presentation
TUES	1. Academic writing: analysis of example discussion essay - draw up a skeleton plan of key elements, and useful words/phrases; use the skeleton plan to graft your own ideas for the extended essay; draft write intro and main body 1; return to earlier stages if necessary, eg. search for articles/sources. Chazal p.220	2. Focus on grammar: sentence structure – analysis of sentence structure – focus on core components – example breakdown – highlighting core features in a text. 3. Focus on academic vocab and discussion: theme – cognitive development (Piaget) RCA booklet p.84

Extract 8.4: The EAP Week 4 Scheme of Work

Moreover, the university provided extracurricular activities that took place beyond the confines of the classroom to the students. These activities, including Christmas lunch, projects, museum visits, and speaking tasks, were directly linked to language learning courses and required mandatory attendance. Each participating student employed personalised strategies to augment their English language skills alongside their standard academic curriculum.

Teachers have more activities. For example, in this university, they have lessons in museums every week to learn about culture. Even though I studied English, the teacher brought me to museums about Asia, let me learn, let me approach. (S61)

Sometimes teachers also take students to pubs or go somewhere just to talk, not hang out, but sit and talk to each other, about everyday issues. (S65)

Another set of perspectives was associated with the personalities and learning styles of the students. One group of students was portrayed as self-assured and outgoing learners who actively engaged in classroom activities. In contrast, the other group was perceived as reserved and introverted learners who seldom contributed to group discussions. Consequently, the teacher believed it was imperative to customise his instructional approaches, class exercises, and even the curriculum to be addressed. In this circumstance, the teacher responded to students' interest rather than following a fully thought-out plan.

I try to avoid pushing, I do try to stretch their abilities, language abilities, and if they don't like presenting, I try to get them to develop some confidence, some risk factor, yeah, but I don't try to make them uncomfortable and set, standard, you know, levels and achievements, because everybody is different. (T19-2)

Some students are more talkative, others are quiet, but what I'm trying to get them to think is that's normal, that's life. It's not a question who's better and who's not, they're just individuals, we have a class of all religions. I try to show personal interests and get them to share their interests. (T19-2)

The students in the study highlighted the significant role of teaching methods, learning materials, and teacher qualifications in their EAP learning process. The impact of teacher qualifications on the language learning process has been extensively studied. Betts et al. (2003) present evidence of the positive effect that highly qualified teachers have on students' learning achievements. These findings suggest that teachers with advanced qualifications are more likely to provide a 'high quality of teaching,' which entails teaching content that aligns with disciplinary standards of adequacy and comprehensiveness, as well

as utilising teaching methods that aim to enhance learner competence (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005). Berliner (2005: 207) defines 'successful teaching' as teaching that enables learners to reach a reasonable and satisfactory level of proficiency. It appears that students in higher education hold the belief that their teachers are more capable of fostering successful learning outcomes. Specifically, students in this Case emphasised the value of interactive teaching methods that align with communicative approaches employed by their English teachers. These methods have proven to be effective in supporting learners and providing them with opportunities to actively engage in communication using the target language both inside and outside the classroom. The students expressed a preference for communication among their peers and with their teachers in informal settings such as social events like Christmas lunches or museum visits. The close relationships fostered between the EAP teachers and students, facilitated by smaller class sizes and approachable teaching styles, position the EAP instructors not only as language educators but also as agents of socialisation. As a result, a conducive learning environment was created, which motivated students to actively participate in and thoroughly enjoy their lessons.

I can see that the role of the lecturer in my English course at this university is the first one who helps me to approach English, not just the person standing in class, lecturing and assigning assignments, but as a friend who I can communicate with very easily. (S61)

Teachers are very friendly and easy to approach. (S62)

8.5.2 Assessment practices

The results obtained from interviews with students revealed that teachers implemented both formative and summative assessments throughout the duration of the course. Initially, teachers administered a diagnostic test to provide personalised attention to each student and identify their areas of weakness. Following this, they assigned a variety of test practices and grammar exercises for students to complete on a weekly basis, aiming to enhance their grammar skills and expand their vocabulary. Moreover, students were required to complete a number of texts and additional readings, accessible through the online module.

Regarding in-course assessment, students were evaluated on various skills, including essay writing, which they continuously worked on throughout the course. They were given the opportunity to refine their drafts before submitting their final versions. Additionally, students were expected to deliver a presentation, usually in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, often related to their essay topic (see Extract 5). This ongoing development allowed students to showcase the necessary skills for essay writing. Concurrently, students also concentrated on improving their overall proficiency in the English language. At the conclusion of the course, they underwent a comprehensive test assessing all four language skills, as well as grammar.

DAY	AM Session: 09.30 – 11.30	PM Session: 12.30 – 14.30	GUIDED STUDY / ASSESSMENTS
WED	1. Focus on academic writing: summarizing and paraphrasing – input: key features of summarizing – analysis of example summaries – guided practice of summary writing; repeat process for paraphrasing Bailey p.43-51	READING CLUB: Gompertz on Duchamp's Fountain, The Guardian: The story of Modern Art.	i. join Curzon cinema ii. finish comprehension questions about Duchamp.
THUR	1. Reading skills - test practice - 'Gompertz article on Duchamp' - highlighting key words in questions, targeted scan reading, generating synonyms. 2. Academic vocab/grammar: word formation, -ing clauses; dummy subjects. RCA booklet p.83, 85	Tutorials.	finish p.85 - 'dummy subjects' read the examples, rewrite the incorrect sentences.
FRI	1. Academic writing: References and citations - input/ examples - practice: draft writing paraphrases and direct quotations from an original text. 2. Focus on extended essay and ppt presentation: continue drafting essay, and brainstorming/researching ppt idea.	Social programme: Richmond Curzon - 'The Favourite'.	- finish citations practice: Bailey p.56-57 - finish draft essay intro and main body 1 - write short outline/plan of ppt

Extract 5: The EAP Week 4 Scheme of Work

The role of the teacher entails the review and correction of students' essays and conversations in progress. The course provided a detailed breakdown of competencies that teachers anticipated in a presentation. For instance, in week 1, the assigned task was to draft a presentation plan, which the teacher evaluated. Subsequently, students received feedback through posted notes, facilitating their development towards producing a polished and formal presentation. This approach can be considered a form of continuous assessment, albeit with a greater emphasis on the teacher's guidance, which the teacher referred to as 'casual assessment'.

8.5.3 Textbooks and supporting materials

In terms of textbooks and supporting materials, the teacher in the sample utilised materials that were produced and published in the United Kingdom. The institution had a specific agenda for the contents of the textbook, which was structured around themes/topics and functions. Teachers were expected to adhere to the pacing guide but were also permitted to make modifications to accommodate the needs of the students as well as evolving perceptions and assumptions. Specific chapters and pages were included as references for teachers and students, where additional themes and functions/tasks of EAP could be found. External EAP sources may be considered beneficial for independent EAP learning, as they can assist active learners in acquiring a deeper understanding of EAP usage. The utilisation of external sources provides an opportunity for students to improve at their own pace and within their own control, allowing them to make errors privately without the risk of criticism, peer competition, and subsequent nervousness (Hurd, 2008). Therefore, it can be advantageous if these external independent learning sources support students in utilising the target language and developing a greater awareness of the English language. Hurd (2008: 9) contends that all learners, regardless of their mode of learning, bring their own 'baggage' to the learning process, encompassing a wide range of individual differences that influence and are influenced by the learning process.

I do think I can find some alternative materials, a video or something I think could be more useful, I will use it, as long as I keep to the outcome, you know, the purposes what the syllabus is. It might be reading skill for specific information, so I'll keep that outcome, but I transfer it to some material which I think might be better. (T19-2)

Students further expressed how certain EAP materials remained pertinent to their academic experiences. All students confirmed teachers' utilisation of videos that addressed similar academic subjects. Subsequently, they engaged in discussions with fellow students and instructors, prepared presentations, and ultimately completed written assignments. This suggests that the writing skills, presentation skills, and knowledge cultivated through the EAP programme proved applicable to their written tasks and provided them with distinct advantages. Once again, this outcome is not unexpected, as local investigations exploring

the impact of EAP, primarily centred on writing skill development, have likewise demonstrated beneficial transfer (Martala, 2006; Green, 2015; Huang and Kingsford, 2017; Matthews, 2017; Fouche et al., 2018).

8.5.4 Difficulties faced by teachers and/or designer

The teacher who contributed to this research project identified several key challenges, namely syllabus design, classroom management, working with students from diverse countries and backgrounds, and finding appropriate learning activities and resources.

Firstly, the design of the syllabus presented a significant challenge for the teacher due to the requirement of specialised knowledge, time, and extensive research. Developing a new syllabus also entails conducting trials, tests, and pilot programmes. In this particular case, as mentioned in the interviews, the teacher had to create the syllabus without the opportunity for piloting and testing. The teacher expressed the need for more information about the students to gain a better understanding of their needs and to create a more effective curriculum.

Designing your course is challenging, because you have to factor in what the core objectives are, you have to factor in the level of the students, what they know about it, what they don't know, you'll also have to factor in the subject major and what they're interested in... I was like designing it on the hoof. (T19-2)

However, the designed course presents inherent challenges of its own. When educators strictly adhere to the prescribed curriculum, educational institutions distribute the syllabus and instruct them to implement it. Consequently, the challenge lies in the process of customising it to effectively fulfil the students' needs. It is the responsibility of teachers to carefully select, exclude, modify, and revise the syllabus accordingly.

Personally speaking, I sometimes find it difficult to teach 'someone else's course'. Yeah, because they've chosen the material, you know, it's quite prescribed, and I think in some perspectives that's kinda counted teaching. To some degrees, you

gotta be interested in what you're teaching. That's more beneficial to the students.
(T19-1)

Managing multiple levels of students presents a significant challenge. The design, development, and selection of learning activities, materials, and resources must take into account their diverse needs, abilities, and requirements. The teacher acknowledged that he lacked alternative strategies due to the absence of guidance during his initial training or from his employers through induction, in-service support, or university discipline policies. To address this issue, the teacher may benefit from acquiring cultural competence, which entails understanding the learners' context, whether it is their country or a specific group, in a manner that resonates with them. This cultural competence is equally relevant in the realm of teaching English to international students, encompassing considerations of how students learn and what they can achieve. Therefore, any information that can facilitate the new teacher's integration into this cultural environment should be embraced. However, the successful design and implementation of such activities may necessitate specialised skills and knowledge that can only be acquired through training.

8.5.5 Difficulties faced by students

It is crucial to consider that my objective was to enquire about the specific challenges students encounter when communicating in the target language during class. This allowed me to assess whether teachers were cognisant of the learners' needs and how they could address them. A large majority of the students who participated in this study did not hesitate to articulate the difficulties they face in the target language within the English language classroom. Their openness and willingness to provide responses and comments came as a surprise, as I had presumed that language learners might feel self-conscious and be hesitant to disclose their weaknesses to someone investigating language learning and their English proficiency.

The learners believed that increased opportunities to engage in communicative situations would enhance their confidence, albeit acknowledging that such situations could also

contribute to language anxiety. However, the majority of their remarks emphasised that incorporating a significant amount of communicative interactive activities in the language classroom would alleviate their language anxiety and foster their confidence in verbally utilising the target language during class. Students recounted their initial encounter with language anxiety during the first week of the course. This issue was quickly resolved with the guidance and assistance provided by the instructors, who skilfully implemented a variety of teaching strategies customised to meet the individual needs and diverse backgrounds of the learners.

8.6 Chapter summary

Regarding the five steps in the curriculum implementation (Scott, 2016), the findings from this case study institution confirmed the successful performance of teachers from the first step of the development of curriculum standards to the final one as individual student progression.

This chapter begins by examining the intended EAP curriculum, the perspectives of English teachers on EAP teaching approaches and methods that they prefer or consider suitable for the university-level language classroom. It also discusses strategies for involving students in real-life language situations, rather than relying solely on textbook materials, and how these strategies promote interaction and engagement among international students. The chapter explores the importance that international students place on the use of English in the context of the UK, highlighting their perception that English is significant due to social and cultural factors. This leads them to recognise the need to learn and use English for their own prestige and for intercultural communication with international students studying in the UK or citizens living in the country. In addition, the chapter focuses on language learning and teaching at both school and university levels, discussing the apparent differences in approaches between the two and exploring students' perception that transitioning to university-level EAP can be a shock due to the high standards of English learning and

teaching. The experiences faced by international students in the UK context closely resemble those of EMI students in university case 1. The chapter also examines the effective EAP teaching and learning methods at the university level, which receive a positive response from international students. The use of efficient pedagogic and assessment practices in the EAP courses enabled students to become confident English users and enhanced their English competence. The chapter suggests that the backgrounds of English teachers may encourage the engagement and involvement of EAP students in using English in this course.

The teacher in this institution, who possessed a high level of linguistic proficiency, advanced qualifications, and extensive experience in language instruction, devised several solutions that were deemed effective in his particular situation. His role in the implementation of curriculum standards was executed admirably, particularly in the final aspect: individual student progression. It was imperative for him to identify and cater to the unique needs of every learner, as educators worldwide encounter learners with diverse dynamics throughout their teaching careers. Consequently, a diagnostic test was administered at the onset of the course to identify his students' areas of weakness, followed by the implementation of measures to assist them in overcoming these deficiencies. In this manner, challenged learners did not feel excluded or discriminated against, nor did they experience diminished motivation. To engage introverted or passive students, the teacher endeavoured to leverage their past experiences, interests, and abilities, not solely in language acquisition but also in extracurricular activities, to inspire them to utilise English as a means of expressing their thoughts and sharing their interests, thereby enhancing their language proficiency.

In this chapter, students also emphasise the uniqueness and support provided by the approaches to EAP teaching in the university EAP classroom. Their EAP teachers employ various teaching approaches and techniques to involve them in language learning and extensively use the target language. The students express their admiration for the EAP curriculum and the materials used in class, which contextualise real-life situations in both formal and informal settings, allowing them to engage in real-life and academic communication. They acknowledge the benefits they have gained from their EAP modules, as the curriculum has enhanced their English language proficiency and academic skills. They

have also become familiar with university life and have adapted to their living and learning environment.

The next chapter will discuss the findings from the curriculum implementation across the three university cases.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION AND WIDER LITERATURE -
IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM
IMPLEMENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter presents the empirical findings of three case studies in order to address four research questions and establish connections between the findings and existing literature. The first and second sections comprise a cross-case analysis of the three case studies, with a specific focus on curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment standards and practices. These sections also consider the significant results presented in the previous three chapters, integrating them with the literature on curriculum policy development and implementation. The purpose of these sections is to compare, synthesise, and discuss the main themes that emerge from the analysis of the three cases, specifically addressing the first three research questions. This comparative analysis involves identifying the roles of policymakers, administrators, teachers, and students in implementing the English curriculum, as well as the challenges they face. Moreover, these sections examine the use of Scott's new curriculum model as a comprehensive conceptual framework, critically reflecting on the current curriculum standards, pedagogic standards, and evaluation standards in research universities to identify gaps in implementation and areas for improvement. The sections also explore factors that may hinder or facilitate these practices, and present the difficulties associated with them. The third section addresses the fourth research question regarding the implications for curriculum innovation, particularly in resource-limited contexts like Vietnam, and for ELT approaches that support tertiary teachers in multilingual and multicultural contexts. This section establishes a connection between the research findings and the pertinent literature, specifically focusing on the Teaching English as an International Language framework (Rose et al., 2020; Selvi et al., 2024). These findings are then examined within the wider context of ELT, with the aim of suggesting potential modifications to the content and emphasis of the ELT curriculum in both the UK and Vietnam contexts. The section also considers effective curriculum design, pedagogy, and evaluation, as well as the implementation of the English curriculum in higher education. Finally, the chapter summary provides a concise overview of the key points discussed in these three main sections.

9.1 Cross-case analysis in Vietnam higher education context (Case 1 vs Case 2)

This section not only summarises the findings of chapters six and seven, but also provides a comparative analysis aimed at presenting a comprehensive overview of various approaches to curriculum implementation in each case. The purpose of this analysis is to assist the

researcher in identifying the discrepancy between the intended and enacted curriculum, as well as the roles of stakeholders in the implementation process within the context of Vietnamese higher education.

9.1.1 The top-down language policy and the role of policymakers

This section provides a critical analysis of the context and policy surrounding the development and implementation of the new English curriculum in Vietnamese universities. The curriculum innovation in this particular context was initiated through a top-down policy approach, wherein the government or official bodies handed down guidelines to encourage HEIs to embrace new and innovative approaches to language curriculum design, with a particular emphasis on leveraging new technologies. Consequently, institutions were granted the freedom and flexibility to design their own curriculum, while educators had the opportunity to implement the language policy within their own practices. However, this also presented a challenge. Notably, the revised Higher Education Law (2018) introduced more flexible management structures and delegated greater managerial autonomy to the top-tier HEIs. In this regard, the government assumed the role of a steward, serving as the governing body for autonomous universities. The open-ended nature of curriculum policymaking and the ambiguous statements within the curricular guidelines necessitate interpretations, adaptations, and modifications by administrators, teachers, and students.

In the interview dataset, policymakers demonstrated high expectations regarding teachers' language proficiency and pedagogical skills, as well as students' growth in their learning performance. The academic performative nature of Vietnam's higher education system not only poses tremendous challenges but also appears to undermine the foundations of the credit-based curriculum that emphasises skills development and student independent learning. Promoting the inclusion of these two areas would also entail a departure from traditional teaching methods (such as the teacher-led model and content-based curriculum) towards a student learning outcomes-based system and a student-centred approach. According to the National Languages Project, students need to engage in global citizenship as members of the twenty-first century. One way to achieve this is through a

reconceptualisation of linguistic norms and a complete transformation in the way language teaching and learning are conducted, in order to prepare learners for today's superdiverse world. Furthermore, there is a need to foster critical thinking, develop appropriate skills, and encourage student autonomy. Another factor to consider is the deregulation of education policies, which grants institutions more autonomy in programme selection. However, the government has also introduced policies that promote academic performativity as a countermeasure to the diverse curricula adopted by institutions, aiming to prevent fraudulent practices and maintain high quality. For instance, language teachers at the tertiary level are required to achieve a minimum level of proficiency (C1 or a 7 in IELTS), while foreign language students must attain a B1 or level 3 (CEFR - VSTEP) proficiency level in order to graduate from their university. The plans exhibited a perceptible underestimation of the challenges inherent in the Vietnamese context, impractical timeframes, coupled with inadequate funding streams and inappropriate support. As a direct consequence, Project 2020 has fallen short of its intended objectives, necessitating an extension of its timeline to 2025.

9.1.2 Institution curriculum standards and the role of administrators

The two institutions examined in this study presented evidence to support the notion that the level of institutional autonomy is directly associated with the success of quality improvement efforts (Sursock and Smidt, 2010). In essence, they have achieved 'earned autonomy' (Perryman et al., 2011). These institutions have adopted forward-thinking approaches and subsequently translated them into a transformative vision and strategic plans for implementation. Despite encountering numerous challenges, the administrators in the two Vietnamese cases have effectively put the prescribed national language policy into practice within their institutions. The findings from the interviews indicate that they possess a comprehensive understanding of the policy and are committed to its successful execution. Interestingly, the departmental administrators in these two universities are individuals who received PhD scholarships funded by the Vietnamese Government to pursue their studies abroad and subsequently returned to Vietnam. The presence of high-quality lecturers-turned-administrators serves as a tangible example of the success of these funding initiatives. Overall, the two language programmes have proven to be successful regarding

the improvement of students' communicative competence, yielding impressive student outcomes. However, both curricula have not fully incorporated the objectives of the national language policy.

Both institutions participating in this research recognized the importance of English and English education, which is in line with the goals set forth in national language policies about improving students' ability to communicate effectively. However, neither institution's curriculum explicitly stated the objective of preparing students for successful communication in the multilingual and multicultural context of the global community. This raises concerns about correctly interpreting changes in frameworks and achievement standards. The overarching objectives of the two programmes were developed to cater to the needs of students, institutions, and society as a whole. The 'curriculum standards' (Scott, 2016) for these two language programmes, which were derived from these objectives, exhibited slight differences in terms of the types of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for engaging in society.

In terms of knowledge, both language programmes included provisions for English language standards for students. These standards varied between institutions but were compulsory according to the MOET. The EOP English programme required students to meet the EOP B1 language requirement, which is equivalent to B1 (in CEFR) or Level 3 (in VSTEP) as mandated by the MOET. EAP students, on the other hand, needed to achieve a higher level of English (B2, or Level 4, or IELTS 5.5) in order to study content subjects in the EMI programme. This indicates that the language standards for EMI students were higher than those for EFL students. Additionally, EMI students were expected to enhance their language proficiency while studying content subjects in English and were required to provide evidence of IELTS 6.0 (or an equivalent) upon graduation.

Moreover, in Case 1, the language programme focused on English for academic purposes, where EMI students learned how to study content subjects in English and develop long-term goals such as research or future employment. On the other hand, the language programme in Case 2 emphasised occupational purposes and competency-based skills that are in demand in the labour market, aligning with the needs of students, institutions, enterprises,

and society. According to the Continuum of Programmes that Integrate Content and Language Learning (adapted from Thompson and McKinley, 2018), both EAP and EOP programmes primarily concentrate on teaching the language but not solely teaching general English itself. They are expected to include some content knowledge to a certain extent (see Figure 6.11, p. 197).

In Case 1, the curriculum and syllabus did not clearly state the objectives for academic English and academic skills. Findings from student interviews indicated that they highly valued the inclusion of knowledge or topics related to their academic majors in the language programme. In this EAP curriculum, the first two courses focused on general English, while the other two following courses were centred around IELTS preparation, highlighting the influence of high-stakes testing on the curriculum innovation at this institution. Textbooks and supplementary materials used in these four courses were authentic and imported from English-speaking countries in the West. In contrast, Case 2's EOP curriculum, EOP textbooks, the EOP online programme, and other supplementary materials were designed based on a formal needs analysis and tailored to the specific disciplines of each group of students. These materials integrated language studies with varying amounts of relevant academic knowledge according to the course levels.

In relation to skills and dispositions, the EAP syllabus placed a higher emphasis on improving language skills, particularly those required for IELTS exams, while neglecting to highlight the core academic skills and study strategies that are vital for students to excel in EMI programmes. Conversely, the EOP curriculum and each syllabus clearly outlined the goals for both language skills and other generic skills that are essential for achieving success in the professional sphere. It is worth mentioning that the curricula of both institutions have failed to sufficiently underline and elucidate the primary objective of the national language policy, which is to enable students to become proficient users of English within multilingual and multicultural contexts and prepare them for global citizenship with the skills required for success in the globalised world.

In order to facilitate these innovative educational approaches, classrooms in both programmes were adequately equipped with projectors or TV screens to leverage digital

and disruptive technology during face-to-face lessons. This can be viewed as a noteworthy advancement in curriculum innovation within these two institutions, notwithstanding the limited foundational infrastructure and ICT technology typically observed in Vietnamese universities. Dedicated computer rooms with internet access were made available to students for their independent and online learning activities. Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all classrooms and university campuses were equipped with internet connectivity.

In summary, in Case 2, the university effectively interpreted and designed EOP curricula for various disciplines at both the institutional and departmental levels, aiming to cater to the requirements of EOP students, institutions, enterprises, and society. Nevertheless, the university overlooked the integration of a multilingual and multicultural context for language users as outlined in the language policy, in both curriculum development and implementation at the institution. In terms of productive curriculum model, they derived 'curriculum standards' from the aims and objectives, and derived 'evaluation standards' from their 'curriculum standards'. The new curriculum did not follow a traditional content-based approach, but instead, it adopted an innovative student-based approach with a strong emphasis on independent learning and skill development.

On the other hand, the national university in Case 1 achieved the desired curriculum with their 'curriculum standards' and desired outcome, as evidenced by students' good scores on the test. However, they failed to implement the EAP curriculum in terms of pedagogic and evaluation standards. According to Scott's model, evaluation standards should not directly impact the learning process in the classroom. However, in the case of the EAP curriculum, the use of standardised high-stakes tests such as IELTS or VSTEP for the University final exams had a negative influence on the syllabus design and pedagogic standards. The last two EAP courses solely focused on teaching and learning for the IELTS or VSTEP in some classes, which was not considered to be an effective curriculum. Furthermore, despite the high level of autonomy granted by the government, the institution couldn't fully utilise its existing talent and capacity due to dispersion across a large number of separate member institutions. The first design of the EAP curriculum, which included multiple successful and effective pedagogic practices, was discontinued in 2016, not only because of budget

reductions but also because each member institution had its own campus, agenda, and priorities, and they didn't effectively share their financial and human resources.

These institutions have allocated significant resources to foster collaborative thinking and discourse concerning pedagogy and educator practice, thereby emphasising the pivotal role of these practices in the successful implementation of the new curriculum. As a result, a sustainable community of practice has emerged, where teachers assess and share their ideas, enabling continuous enhancement and innovation in instructional approaches, whilst also fostering a collective understanding of the new curriculum. This type of professional learning conversation has contributed to the growth of teachers' collective and individual pedagogical content knowledge.

9.1.3 Teachers and students' perceptions and attitude

Students in both institutions held highly favourable views regarding the prominent status of the English language. They recognised the significance of all language aspects in acquiring English proficiency, acknowledged the importance of all four language skills in achieving success in their respective majors, and exhibited diverse purposes for utilising English to fulfil both immediate needs and long-term aspirations. In the case of students enrolled in the EAP programme, reading skills were perceived as the most crucial for success in their majors. Conversely, students in the EOP programme rated speaking and listening skills as the highest priority. The majority of students in both cases possessed an accurate understanding of the language standards expected in their respective EAP and EOP programmes, with case 1 achieving a 100% comprehension rate and case 2 reaching 96.2%. These findings suggest that students had received thorough explanations of the programmes' intended objectives from instructors and other courses. Consequently, this informed their motivation and attitudes towards learning English, not solely for the purpose of passing university exams and studying other subjects, but also to meet their future career or further education goals.

In terms of the syllabus, most teachers in both institutions (a total of 39 teachers surveyed in Case 1 and 91 in Case 2) were well-informed and had a sound knowledge of the

curriculum, with 94.88% in Case 1 and 93.4% in Case 2. They agreed that the English Syllabus aimed to develop students' communication skills (94.88% in Case 1 and 95.61% in Case 2). In these two contexts, what they teach and how they teach were not strictly guided by the English syllabus, as they had the freedom to adapt and adjust to meet students' needs and characteristics. Additionally, the teachers in this study demonstrated a high level of understanding that interactive learner-centred learning is one of the pedagogical principles underlying the syllabus. This approach expects students to be active participants rather than passive listeners, and to engage in all activities facilitated by the teacher.

Regarding CLT, some inconsistencies or discrepancies were found in teachers' responses to descriptions of CLT in both institutions. However, teachers agreed that the CLT method is useful as it helps students communicate in English (97.44% in Case 1 and 100% in Case 2). Interestingly, teachers in both cases had the same perceptions about the three most important CLT practices for students, including effective communication, enjoyable communication, and collaboration among students. They also agreed on the three most required CLT practices for teachers, serving as a facilitator, a co-communicator, and a communication model.

In terms of testing scales, 100% of teachers in both cases were aware of CEFR and VSTEP from different resources. However, while CEFR was regularly used in a wide range of domains in both institutions, VSTEP was not utilised in Case 2, although it was fully taken advantage of in Case 1.

In relation to teachers' attitudes towards curriculum implementation, the data from both cases indicated a highly positive attitude among teachers. They greatly appreciated the usefulness of the new curriculum, displayed a heightened level of interest, and experienced a slightly elevated degree of anxiety regarding its implementation.

As for students, the data indicated a positive attitude towards curriculum implementation in both universities. Students highly valued the importance of the language courses, demonstrated a heightened level of interest, and experienced a slightly elevated degree of anxiety concerning the challenges posed by the new curriculum. This finding further

confirmed the strong correlation between students' perception of the significance of English and their positive attitudes towards the implementation of the English curriculum.

Additionally, there was some ambiguity in students' attitudes towards the EAP and EOP courses. They expressed interest in both general and specialised English, with a higher percentage of respondents preferring specialised English in their English courses. This recurring theme emerged in the students' interviews, as EOP students highly appreciated the inclusion of specialised English in their courses, while EAP students expressed their high appreciation if specialised English was incorporated into their EAP courses to better prepare them for studying content knowledge in English. Among various pedagogical activities, games and role-play emerged as the favoured choices of students in both institutions. However, students in Case 1 also expressed a preference for 'discussion', while students in Case 2 favoured 'listing/ranking'.

Regarding the importance of English areas in university final examinations, both teachers and students in these institutions recognise the significance of various language areas. EAP teachers and students share the belief that reading is the most crucial area, while EOP teachers and students prioritise speaking and listening in their final exams. The alignment of perceptions between teachers and students demonstrates their well-informed understanding of the curriculum.

In relation to the implementation process, both EAP and EOP teachers display a notable level of self-efficacy. Within the context of curriculum reform, teachers who possess confidence are better equipped to effectively manage teaching materials and instructional methods, thereby facilitating the teaching and learning process. Having a high level of self-efficacy may lead to a more positive attitude towards the new curriculum, while also reducing stress, fear, and uncertainty that might impede successful implementation of the reform. Among the three types of implementation activities - implementation planning, implementation main tasks, and implementation supplementary activities - participants demonstrate the highest level of self-assurance in the supplementary activities but express less competence in implementation planning. It is noteworthy that designing the syllabus is identified as the implementation task that teachers in both universities feel the least

confident in handling. Therefore, there is an urgent necessity for additional in-service teacher training in the field of curriculum and syllabus design in order to enhance their perceived ability to effectively handle changes.

9.1.4 Pedagogic and evaluation practices

Pedagogic practices

Regarding the teaching and learning approaches for the delivery of the curriculum standards, the data analysis from various sources (teachers and students) and using different methods (quantitative and qualitative) consistently indicated a high level of implementation of different pedagogical practices by teachers. The most commonly used activities were those related to communicative teaching. On the other hand, the least frequently chosen activities were those that made use of new technologies. Both university teachers still considered the correct use of traditional teaching techniques or activities as a requirement for communicative competence. The overall high level of implementation of CLT by the participants in both cases was confirmed by asking teachers about the frequent use of CLT pedagogical practices, by conducting a survey among students regarding the activities used in their lessons, and by observing classroom activities.

Given students' low-level proficiency, tendency to focus on exams, and inclination to be passive learners, teachers in both cases adopted a heavily scaffolded approach in the introductory courses. For instance, they provided detailed instructions, instructions in Vietnamese and other languages, and technical support to familiarise students with the new curriculum and learning approaches. This finding is consistent with the perspectives of certain scholars, who argue in favour of utilising a translanguaging approach to pedagogy in the EAP and ELT contexts. In Case 2's blended-learning programmes, teachers not only provided detailed instructions but also closely monitored and facilitated students' independent online tasks. This scaffolded support was gradually reduced in later courses as students became more active and confident in the new curriculum.

However, findings from interviews and observations in both cases indicated that

experienced teachers with a high level of language proficiency and commitment to their students and teaching were more effective in meeting the different needs of their learners and adapting the curriculum to the most suitable and effective pedagogical approaches and strategies. Another finding was the imbalance in focus between language forms and meanings in some classes, and classroom activities did not encourage spontaneous and natural language production due to time constraints. Particularly in the two IELTS-oriented courses in the EAP curriculum, teachers did not implement the interactive learner-centred approach in many teaching activities, as observed in the classrooms. This suggests that when designing a learning approach, careful consideration should be given to the assessment requirements, and classroom teaching pedagogy needs to be continuously reviewed and refined accordingly.

Furthermore, the integration of different pedagogical practices in both the EAP and EOP curricula has proven to be effective in establishing a conducive language learning environment for EFL students, both in online and face-to-face settings. However, there has been a reduction in the implementation of these activities since 2016 in Case 1, primarily due to their dispersal across separate member institutions. In terms of resources and technology, teachers in both universities have been provided with readily available PowerPoint lesson plans, a wide range of supplementary teaching materials, and well-equipped infrastructure to facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum. Such comprehensive support has played a crucial role in ensuring that teachers in both cases frequently employ diverse and effective pedagogical practices. Regarding online programmes, students in Case 2 of the EOP reported a high level of enjoyment and perceived them as a significant component of their learning experience. These online programmes have been specifically designed and integrated as an essential preparation for the face-to-face lessons of the new curriculum. On the other hand, there is a lack of interest among many students in Case 1 towards the online programmes, mainly because they are not compulsory and not integrated into their EAP curriculum.

Evaluation practices

Several recent studies conducted in Vietnam have indicated that summative tests continue to be the predominant mode of assessment, despite the government's efforts to promote both formative and alternative assessment in all levels of education (Ngo, 2018; Nguyen and Gu, 2020; Pham, 2017; Tran, 2015; Vu, 2017). Classroom-based assessment tasks, such as presentations, quizzes, portfolios, and projects, are either optional or non-existent in non-major programmes (N. Lam, 2018; T. L. Lam, 2019; Ngo, 2018). However, these tasks hold significant value and are regularly implemented in language curricula in the two Vietnamese universities under examination.

In Case 1, formative assessment tasks were more commonly employed in the first two EAP courses compared to the other two courses, which were focused on IELTS preparation. Conversely, a variety of formative assessment tasks were used throughout all six EOP courses in Case 2, including online and face-to-face lessons. In terms of evaluation standards, which are distinct from formative assessment processes and are derived from the 'curriculum standards' (Scott, 2016), EOP tests were created by well-trained teachers for EOP students in the final exams of the six courses, as well as in the university final exam upon graduation. These tests assessed not only the students' language proficiency in the four skills but also their knowledge acquired from the EOP courses, encompassing other aspects of language such as vocabulary and grammar. In contrast, EAP evaluation tests were CEFR-based, CAT, PAT, and IELTS tests that were all prepared by teachers. For the university final exam, students had the option to take the VSTEP or IELTS. However, findings from the teacher interviews revealed that IELTS tests were sourced from different providers and therefore not suitable, as the teachers had not received training to be IELTS examiners. Consequently, these tests did not adequately assess the competencies of EAP students.

Interestingly, while the curriculum designers and teachers in Case 2 argued that the examination system undermined new pedagogical initiatives that were not aligned with high-stakes testing, there are indeed advantages to the examination system, particularly in Case 1. The evaluation standards in the EAP curriculum directly influenced the teaching and learning processes in the classroom during the last two courses, which focused on IELTS

preparation. As mentioned in section 6.1.4, the CEFR-V and VSTEP have been endorsed by Project 2020 as the national foreign language curriculum and assessment tools to measure the attainment of Project 2020 goals. They are recognised and accepted by all institutions and organisations in Vietnam. However, data from these two cases indicated that these frameworks were not being utilised appropriately. While the CEFR was regularly applied across various domains in both institutions, VSTEP was not extensively utilised in Case 2, despite being fully embraced in the Case 1 institution. VSTEP was accepted but not widely used in Case 2, as this university developed its own testing system, which was EOP-focused and based on the CEFR, to document EOP student learning and achievements. For the EAP programme in Case 1, IELTS was preferred as an assessment tool to record students' language learning progress due to its academic relevance in the EMI curriculum.

9.1.5 Roles of teachers and students

The students within Vietnam's education system are, to a certain extent, inculcated with some of the characteristics of Asian learners (Braddock et al., 1995; Cheng, 2000; Ho, 2009; Kember and Gow, 1991; Kennedy and Fox, 2013; Tavakol and Dennick, 2010). For example, students tend to be quiet and inactive in their learning, expecting more didactic teaching or examination strategies. Recent research on Asian students shows a preference for teacher-centred learning (Thang et al., 2015) due to the close link between their 'practical conceptions of learning' and 'academic performativity' (Tavakol and Dennick, 2010: 374). In the context of higher education in Vietnam, students are more performance-oriented than learning-oriented. To some extent, this is true in the two cases presented in this research. During interviews, students expressed a focus on their experience with the new curriculum or the development of skills and independent learning with great interest, but placed even more importance on high-stakes examinations and the grades they could achieve in these exams. Therefore, students tend to be more focused on learning specifically for the purpose of passing tests.

However, based on the interviews, students in these two cases showed great interest and willingness to participate in pedagogical practices. They had highly positive perceptions of the prominent status of English and recognised the importance of the language for success

in their majors. Additionally, they had positive attitudes towards curriculum implementation and appreciated the importance of the courses, although they expressed some concerns about the difficulty of implementing the new curriculum.

The new curriculum required students to improve their communicative competences and develop their skills through active engagement in various forms of communicative, critical, and independent learning and thinking. However, the level of student engagement in these two universities largely depended on the role, ability, and enthusiasm of the teachers, as well as how the teachers implemented the curriculum. The findings from the students' interviews indicated that the English proficiency, personality, commitment to students and teaching, and teaching approaches of the EAP and EOP lecturers were the major factors contributing to the effectiveness of the English courses. According to the students' experiences, teachers who acted as facilitators, were committed to their students, utilised different teaching and learning approaches, and created an effective classroom learning environment, were successful in fostering higher levels of interest and motivation among students, thus encouraging them to actively participate in pedagogical activities.

Regarding online tasks in Case 2, EOP students found actual benefits due to their integration into the new curriculum, which provided profound learning resources and activities. However, they encountered challenges in terms of 'forced' independence, as there was a lack of support from teachers. Consequently, they had to conduct online research to complete these tasks, as there was no communication or support channel between teachers and students, or among students themselves in online programmes. This not only provided them with opportunities to conduct research, but more importantly, required them to distil the key learning points as independent learners. However, some EOP students expressed discomfort with the new online learning pedagogy and the perceived lack of teacher feedback. They suggested that a two-way interaction between students and teachers on online platforms would be a potential solution. Although students' experiences of the blended learning approach in Case 1 were heavily influenced by the academic performativity culture of the education system, the summative and formative evaluation system did, to some extent, encourage students to engage more closely with interactive and independent

learning. In Scott's words, students in these two cases did not fully meet the goals of being 'self-directed learners'.

Although the teachers possessed a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum and a solid theoretical and pedagogical grasp of English language teaching principles and key concepts such as the communicative approach and interactive learner-centred teaching, not all of them effectively implemented facilitation techniques with a communicative and learner-centred approach. While both universities ensured that teachers provided students with clear explanations of the intended aims and objectives of the lessons, granting them opportunities to complete the assigned tasks, not all teachers successfully concluded the lessons by evaluating whether or not the students had achieved the goals as 'self-directed learners'. To some extent, certain teachers interpreted communicative and interactive teaching solely as encouraging students to participate in lesson activities and respond to teachers' questions. Insufficient emphasis was placed on facilitating the use of the target language during discussions, and in certain classes, there was a lack of substantial and sustained dialogue and interaction.

Teachers' limited understanding of teaching principles and the aim of the curriculum has led to a lack of emphasis on and commitment to the development of communicative competence. Consequently, the lesson activities carried out in the classroom have not been fully communicative, failing to provide maximum opportunities for students to engage in or practise language in communication, where they can actively negotiate meaning as participants. Furthermore, students' chances to experience using the language creatively have been hindered when the language used in communicative tasks is not authentic or naturally produced.

According to survey reports, the duration of English language learning for students prior to university was found to be roughly nine years on average. The findings from focus-groups also indicated that this long learning process followed a conventional approach, with teachers taking the lead and students assuming a passive role. However, students confirmed that despite the extensive learning period, they had achieved only modest levels of proficiency with many of them as 'false beginners'. Consequently, instructors in both

universities had to exert significant effort within the classroom environment, particularly in lower-level classes, owing to students' reluctance to actively engage. In certain instances, teachers faced challenges in successfully implementing interactive and learner-centred lessons.

In the case of two courses focused on IELTS preparation in Case 1, the teachers followed the teaching syllabus, which also served as the 'testing syllabus'. This means that the syllabus provided guidance on the content to be tested in the IELTS exam, as well as strategies for test-taking. In these courses, all the textbooks and supplementary materials were centred around test preparation, and the teachers took on the role of IELTS specialists, providing instruction specifically geared towards the exam. The research findings, based on focus-groups with students and classroom observations, revealed that teaching to the test had negative consequences on the teaching approaches used and the students' learning experiences in these two courses. For instance, the teachers primarily employed lecture-style teaching methods, which resulted in students experiencing test anxiety, fear of underperforming, and psychological pressure. Consequently, the students became resistant to participating in class and their attendance rates declined. In this scenario, some teachers failed to prioritise individual student progression as they did not make efforts to identify each student's weaknesses, assess their current abilities, or determine strategies to improve their performance. As a consequence, certain students, who had grown demotivated to attend the IELTS-oriented courses, opted to engage in self-study at home or enrol in English courses offered by private language centres, incurring additional costs in order to enhance their English skills.

9.1.6 Factors and difficulties

The analysis of the survey data from both cases yielded a generally positive perception of 17 personal and contextual factors, their influence on teachers' implementation activities, and their availability at the two universities. Interestingly, the two most influential factors in teachers' implementation processes were consistent across both cases: teaching experience and students' English abilities. At both institutions, teachers faced significant challenges due to students' low language proficiency, with most students classified as false beginners based

on government reports, institutional placement tests, and student focus groups. Furthermore, many teachers at these universities were young and had limited teaching experience, hindering their ability to address the diverse needs of their learners and adapt the curriculum to the most effective pedagogical approaches and strategies. Other factors that had a substantial impact included resource support, tests, textbooks, class size, workloads, and language proficiency. These findings align with the existing literature, which highlights the influence of resource support and testing on teaching and learning. The significance of these factors was also confirmed through interviews with administrators and teachers. Both universities displayed a strong commitment to providing essential support in terms of materials, infrastructure, and teacher training, which greatly facilitated the successful implementation of this curriculum innovation by teachers. The findings regarding the implementation of the CEFR-based curriculum in two Vietnamese institutions align with scholarly discussions on how test-based accountability measures have shaped teachers' behaviours. Teachers have been compelled to compete against themselves and their colleagues, adhere to standards and performative expectations, and embrace a mindset of continuous growth (Holloway, 2019; Perryman et al., 2017).

The only issue that arose was the limited financial support, which was more severe in Case 1 due to the discontinuation of government funding in 2016. As a consequence, teachers experienced a decrease in income and a decline in motivation. Through surveys, teacher interviews, and classroom observations, it was determined that class size and workload were factors that influenced teachers' implementation of activities. In interviews, teachers disclosed that their increased workload during the first term of the academic year, characterised by a high number of English classes, negatively impacted the quality of teaching. In classes with a student population exceeding thirty, I have observed teachers encountering difficulties in effectively managing the students, particularly during communicative activities. However, it is noteworthy that this student count is relatively favourable in the context of Vietnamese higher education, especially when compared to the previous programmes where the number exceeded forty, even fifty. These two institutions demonstrated that teachers' proficiency in the language was an essential requirement for effectively implementing the innovative communicative curriculum. Enhanced language proficiency resulted in greater confidence in implementing the new curriculum and

communicative approaches, as well as a more effective utilisation of classroom instructions. This finding demonstrates the interrelationship between teacher proficiency and professional confidence (Burns, 2017).

Although the teachers possessed extensive knowledge of the curriculum and a strong understanding of English language teaching principles and key concepts such as the communicative approach or interactive learner-centred teaching, they faced several challenges. Teacher surveys indicated that educators in both Vietnamese institutions encountered difficulties such as students' limited English proficiency, resistance to participating in class, a restricted number of teaching hours, and large class sizes. These challenges were substantiated by data illustrating the impact of various factors on teachers' implementation activities and were further corroborated through interviews with administrators and students, as well as observations. Moreover, teachers in Case 1 perceived insufficient funding and inadequate institutional facilities as consequences of reduced budgets and the dispersion among member institutions within the National University. Conversely, teachers in Case 2 lacked authentic teaching materials due to their reliance on sets of textbooks and supporting materials compiled by in-service Vietnamese teachers.

Interestingly, most teachers in both universities did not encounter difficulties when using the English language to teach the CLT curriculum or when using the prescribed book for teaching. This was mainly due to the support provided by colleagues and administrators through various meetings, trainings, and seminars in both universities. Additionally, teachers in Case 1 were allowed to create and innovate their lessons. Although the educational context of these two universities is in Vietnam, the findings from this study align with the preferences reported by studies on East Asian learners. However, the paradox of learning within Vietnam's high-stakes examination environment poses challenges to the long-term sustainability of Western curriculum adoption. While student-centred approaches have their advantages, it is crucial to incorporate teacher-centred approaches as well. The implementation of these approaches should be determined by specific factors such as when and to what extent they are utilised in classrooms.

9.2 Cross-case analysis in the UK and Vietnam higher education context

This section critically analyses the similarities and differences observed in case analysis between the United Kingdom and Vietnam, with particular emphasis on three key components of standards outlined in Scott's model. The concepts and topics examined in this section, along with those presented in section 9.1, will serve as a foundation for the arguments presented in section 9.3 and the main findings discussed in the Conclusion chapter. The interconnectedness of the three institutional narratives has led to the recognition that the process of implementation is unlikely to be straightforward and linear. Rather, it necessitates a significant investment of time and a continuous commitment to change.

9.2.1 The curriculum standards

All institutions in this research clearly set out the aims and objectives for the three programmes and from which curriculum standards were derived. Curriculum standards for students were various from programme to programme and from institution to institution in terms of forms of knowledge, skills and dispositions. The two EAP programmes in the UK and Vietnam had some similarities in their aims and objectives which are to prepare students with academic English and study skills for undertaking a degree in English such as EMI programmes in Vietnam or university studies in the UK. All three universities developed their own programmes, syllabus, and assessment procedures with the involvement of experienced academics within the institutions. The six-week EAP programme in the UK was designed for students needing to improve half an IELTS band to meet the university language requirement and progress onto their main course of study. In EMI programme in Vietnam, preparation courses were longer for students with a wide range of language proficiency to reach 5.5 in IELTS (or equivalent). Programmes in Case 2 included six compulsory subjects continuously in the first three years in university study to achieve EOP B1 in CFFR (or level 3 in VSTEP).

Most of the students in the two institutions in Vietnam were considered false beginners after studying English in general education for several years, whereas students in Case 3 had already achieved a score of 5.5 in the IELTS. The emphasis on academic English and study skills differed between Case 1 and Case 3. Case 3 in the UK clearly stated these aims in its skills-based syllabus, which included a detailed list of topics designed to develop academic and study skills. In contrast, Case 1 did not prioritise these aims. Case 2's six-level EOP syllabus focused on EOP English and generic skills. A formal needs analysis was conducted before designing the EOP programmes and an informal needs analysis was performed at the beginning of the EAP course in the UK. The results from these needs analysis did support administrators and curriculum designers in developing curricula that met the needs of students, institutions and the society. However, diagnostic tests or placement tests were administered at the beginning of the course in all three universities to identify students' weaknesses.

In terms of pedagogic standards, all three universities employed a variety of teaching and learning approaches to effectively deliver the curriculum standards. This included considering the pedagogic mode, learning mode, resources and technologies, formative feedback mechanisms, and other arrangements for classroom activities. Moreover, they emphasised the transferability of learning to other environments. In terms of evaluation standards, the three cases utilised standardised high-stakes tests such as IELTS, CEFR, VSTEP, or EOP tests to assess students' language proficiency. These tests had both positive and negative effects on curriculum design as well as teaching and learning practices in each case.

9.2.2 Pedagogic and evaluation practices

At the institutional level, blended learning programmes were equipped with diverse sets of textbooks, supplementary materials, and extracurricular activities to foster a vibrant, amicable, and cooperative English learning environment for students. Furthermore, these three universities provided extensive resources and technological support, including readily available PowerPoint lesson plans, a wide selection of online materials, and well-equipped infrastructure. Among the three cases, the UK university boasted a standardised integrated

infrastructure comprising smart lecture halls, classrooms, and computer labs with high-speed campus networks. Moreover, user-friendly e-learning platforms, e-libraries, and a central data centre offering cloud services proved highly effective in supporting students' learning. Notably, the objectives of EAP courses at the UK university aimed not only to enhance English language proficiency to meet language requirements but also to develop strategies, study skills, and students' independence. The use of English in both formal and informal contexts necessitated a greater emphasis on language and academic skills, which, in turn, led to shifts in students' attitudes towards English language learning, learning processes, language usage, and behaviour. Consequently, students were able to leverage the universities' resources as independent learners and achieve success in their degrees.

At the classroom level, the findings from the three cases revealed the utilisation of different pedagogical practices supported by new technology. Interestingly, among the students in the UK EAP programme, there were Vietnamese students who shared similar demographic information and characteristics. Specifically, these students had previous experience learning English in Vietnam prior to attending university and were inclined towards passive and examination-oriented learning. In order to accommodate these students with shared characteristics, a heavily scaffolded approach was implemented across the three cases. A range of pedagogical practices, including lectures, seminars, portfolios, presentations, project work, classroom-based e-learning, and self-directed learning, were utilised within a supportive language environment. The findings further indicated that the students displayed diversity in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, personalities, learning styles, and English abilities across the three universities. In the UK context, the EAP teacher acknowledged this diversity more thoroughly after conducting an informal needs analysis and effectively integrated various teaching approaches into a comprehensive method referred to as the 'big happy method' (T19) during their lessons, in order to meet the individual needs of the students.

More importantly, this teacher integrated the unique and invaluable experiences brought forth by each student, whilst also incorporating his own personal interests and encouraging

students to do the same. This teaching approach, commonly known as ‘personalised learning’²⁴ in English Education, has been in practice since 2004²⁵. As such, the teacher employed different teaching methods, class activities, and even adjusted the curriculum to cater to individual needs. This discovery further emphasises the importance of curriculum design and the need for effective redefinition and revision of classroom teaching pedagogy. With his friendly teaching style, the EAP practitioner was not just a linguistic educator, but also a facilitator of social interaction, aiming to actively and effectively engage students in the lesson. Additionally, at the university level, various pedagogical activities were conducted outside of class hours, including projects, speaking tasks, English clubs, buddy programmes, and independent and self-directed learning. These extracurricular activities proved to be helpful for independent learning in the three cases, enabling active learners to deepen their understanding of language usage, empowering passive learners to become independent learners, and fostering a greater awareness of English usage. Students from the three universities also acknowledged the relevance of EAP and EOP materials to their academic experiences and content subjects in their undergraduate courses, providing them with an advantage in preparing for content knowledge study.

In terms of evaluation practices, each of the three universities designed and implemented specific assessments. In the cases of Vietnam, summative tests remained the most commonly used method of evaluation, whereas in the UK, student evaluation was primarily based on their class performance and participation. Nevertheless, classroom-based assessment was also frequently employed in the EOP programme and the initial two EAP courses in Vietnam, representing an innovative approach within the new curriculum. This indicates the Vietnamese stakeholders' commitment to incorporating both summative and formative assessment, which has been met with initial success. The development of proficiency criteria across all three cases has helped to reduce subjectivity in student evaluation and ensure a consistent level of expectation for all students. Additionally, the UK

²⁴ Personalised learning which appears to be an ideal theory originated from Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (Guldberg, 2004; Johnson, 2004).

²⁵ Personalised learning is the ‘Big Idea’ (Pollard & James, 2004) for education in England. ‘In education this can be understood as personalised learning - the drive to tailor education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to fulfil every young person’s potential’. (DfES, 2004a: 4) (DfES: Department for Education and Skills)

context has seen positive reception to the use of an ongoing reflective blog, where students write weekly diaries and submit them to their teachers, as well as weekly tutorials.

9.2.3 Difficulties and modifications

Teachers at the three universities encountered various difficulties during the implementation process, some of which were similar. The first common challenge stemmed from the students' diverse socio-economic backgrounds, personalities, learning styles, and English proficiency levels. In the context of the UK, the teacher suggested several effective strategies based on personal experience. The teacher played a crucial role in implementing the curriculum standards, particularly concerning each student's individual progression. To begin with, an informal needs analysis and diagnostic test were administered at the outset of the course to identify the students' characteristics, needs, and weaknesses. Consequently, appropriate measures were implemented to assist them in overcoming these weaknesses. As a result, the students facing difficulties did not experience exclusion, discrimination, or lack of motivation. To engage introverted or passive students, the teacher incorporated their previous experiences, interests, and abilities, not only in language-related activities but also in diverse tasks, to motivate them to use English as a means of expressing their ideas, sharing their interests, and enhancing their language skills.

In similar circumstances, many teachers at the two institutions in Vietnam opted to take charge of the lessons instead of relying on student involvement as a means to address students' lack of engagement and resistance to active class participation. Another approach employed by these teachers was to motivate students by establishing standards, benchmarks, and goals. However, in doing so, they neglected to fulfil the fifth component of the curriculum standards, which is individual student progression (Scott, 2016). Several students from the National University shared their experiences of feeling demotivated by strict teachers who employed a teacher-centred approach and placed excessive emphasis on academic achievements and requirements. Consequently, some students ultimately dropped out of their classes. Not all teachers, but only a select few, were capable of accommodating the diverse needs of their learners and adapting the curriculum to suit the specific learning contexts by employing the most suitable and effective pedagogical

approaches and strategies. The findings from the three cases indicated that teachers who successfully implemented appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches and strategies tailored to individual needs were those with a high level of language proficiency, experience, and a strong commitment to their students and teaching. Interestingly, students from all three universities believed that teachers who adopted a friendly teaching style were more likely to facilitate effective lessons and foster successful learners.

9.3 Considerations

9.3.1 Considerations of policy and change in Vietnamese higher education

Despite all hopes and efforts, it has been reported that Project 2020 is not feasible in terms of its scope and unrealistic goals. After two-thirds of the designated timeframe (2008-2016), less than 50% of the set tasks were completed (Bui et al., 2018). Although a number of HEIs have revised their curricula to enhance the quality of English teaching and learning, the government has recently emphasised the inadequate proficiency in foreign languages, particularly English, among the workforce. This deficiency has hindered the country's ability to meet the requirements of international integration (GoV, 2024). Despite the adjustments made to Project 2020, which has been extended to 2025 and given a new focus, a more comprehensive and detailed implementation roadmap is still necessary to achieve the project's objectives. Merely developing a vision is insufficient. There is a consensus in the literature that the facilitation of a periodic curriculum review cycle can assist in the cultivation of long-term vision and related practices (Gray, Scott and Auld, 2014).

Considering the disparity between the objectives of the national language policy and the curricula of the two universities under investigation, as well as a thorough review of recent research on Vietnamese higher education, it is recommended to redefine the language policy and transform it into a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan should aim to establish measurable long-term goals for various subsectors and categories of institutions. In other words, supportive frameworks are needed not only for institutions but also for various subsectors, including teachers and students (Wenner and Settlage, 2015).

Furthermore, it is crucial to take into account the potential impact of the innovation on implementers whilst formulating strategies to facilitate its implementation (Wedell, 2022).

As an attempt to interpret the objectives of enhancing students' ability to communicate in multicultural and multilingual settings as well as preparing them for global citizenship with the skills required for success in the digital economy era, the goals of student learning should emphasise practical objectives for individuals who possess fluency in multiple languages and are capable of engaging in intercultural communication with individuals hailing from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Given the misinterpretation of this objective in the institutional curricula of the two case study institutions, it becomes imperative to effect a paradigm shift in the teaching and learning of English within the Vietnamese context at the epistemological, ideological, and pedagogical levels. Focusing on this objective in today's globalised world could lead to expanding traditional target interlocutors and promoting linguistic and cultural exchanges with diverse language users in real-life situations for English learners. In this sense, the curriculum should reflect the global ownership of English and incorporate references from both the source culture and the international target culture. Furthermore, teachers should go beyond providing the traditional idealised 'native speaker' norms in the classroom and instead include practices that reflect the diversity in English usage and transcultural uses of English. Role models in this regard should be successful multilingual figures from both global and local contexts. As a consequence, educators in Vietnamese higher education should engage in a critical evaluation of current materials that endorse the Anglocentric ideology of 'native speakerism'. Subsequently, they should diversify their sources of instructional materials to ensure contextual relevance and cultural sensitivity. In order to facilitate students' engagement in multicultural and multilingual settings, it is essential to incorporate students' linguistic and cultural repertoires in various domains of interaction and instruction, as well as the implementation of translanguaging and translingual practices in assessment. By doing so, educators can contribute to the academic achievement of students, empowering their students to become discerning users of English in a multilingual context.

Particularly, policymakers in Vietnam should provide comprehensive guidelines that define new language policies and objectives, establish language standards, create an effective

curriculum model with specific pedagogic and evaluation standards, and develop a framework for implementation processes for universities, stakeholders, and other participants involved in the reform. In this regard, the TEIL framework (Selvi et al., 2024; Rose et al., 2020) and the GELT framework (Rose and Galloway, 2019) along with thirteen practical implications can provide valuable support in achieving the goals of Project 2020 by preparing Vietnamese learners for global communication in lingua franca. As mentioned in section 3.4, the GELT framework is not only designed for curriculum research or design, but also for curriculum evaluation. The practical implications of the thirteen major dimensions of TEIL can serve as detailed guidelines and a roadmap for change for Vietnamese educators and practitioners who are currently implementing the language policy in their own practices. Furthermore, the policy should be aligned more effectively with other policies, higher education strategies, and the country's socio-economic development strategy by providing a relevant blueprint. Detailed guidelines should be provided to support universities in planning and effectively implementing the proposed reforms, with a focus on developing 'basic skills and knowledge, creative thinking, and adaptability to the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution' (GoV, 2017).

The findings from this research indicate that Project 2020 had impractical timeframe, coupled with inadequate funding streams and inappropriate support. This aligns with existing literature, which indicates that the focus is often primarily on policy formulation, while the implementation phase is often rushed in order to reach the routinisation phase as quickly as possible. Therefore, it is advisable to develop a more detailed and fully costed implementation road map to ensure the achievement of project goals. Additionally, regular measurement and evaluation of the implementation progress of language policy and curriculum innovations should be conducted to allow for modifications and further refinement in internationalisation. It is worth noting that evaluating the educational effects of curriculum change is challenging due to numerous variables and lengthy timeframes, but periodic assessments are still necessary (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012).

Findings from the World Bank skills and enterprise survey (2019)²⁶ reveal significant disparities between the skills expected by enterprises and the competencies possessed by graduates from Vietnamese universities. A recent report released by the Vietnamese government (GoV, 2024) also brings attention to the existing discrepancy between higher education and the labour market and the failure of higher education institutions to effectively meet the human resource needs of emerging industries, particularly those in the high-tech sector. This report emphasises the importance of adopting innovative pedagogical and learning approaches that foster positivity, initiative, and creativity among both educators and students, while also comprehensively enhancing the abilities and qualities of learners. This underscores the urgent need for curriculum reforms in Vietnamese higher education that prioritise the development of competency-based skills demanded by the labour market. The research also demonstrates that the university in Case 2 has effectively formulated and implemented the national language policy, in conjunction with other strategies aimed at fostering higher education and socioeconomic development. The university has actively engaged industry partners in the curriculum design process, resulting in the creation of an EOP curriculum that closely aligns with the needs of employers. Extensive needs analysis has been conducted with ESP students, ESP teachers, academic content teachers, and approximately two hundred enterprises across Vietnam. Consequently, educational leaders at this university considered integrating institutional and departmental strategies with the expertise of disciplinary specialists, as well as recognising the pivotal role of language in facilitating successful implementation. Regarding ELT innovation, the utilisation of Waters and Vilches' framework of needs analysis (2001), which encompasses four levels and four areas of learners' needs, deficiencies, and preferences, has greatly enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse range of needs associated with the implementation process.

Considering the success achieved in Case 2 and 3, it is imperative to acknowledge and promote effective designs and exemplary teaching within Vietnamese universities. This could potentially lead to the implementation of national initiatives aimed at recognising and

²⁶ According to the World Bank skills and enterprise survey (2019), 73% of sampled Vietnamese firms report difficulties in recruiting employees with leadership and managerial skills, 54% with socio-emotional skills, 60% with foreign language skills, and 68% with job-specific technical skills.

fostering teaching excellence schemes, similar to the Teaching Excellence Framework implemented in the United Kingdom in 2016. Such initiatives would facilitate the sharing of acknowledged effective designs and pedagogical practices among universities facing comparable contexts. The accomplishments of the Vietnamese state university in Case 2 may also serve as an impetus for the MOET to cultivate a culture of 'earned autonomy' within educational institutions across the nation.

9.3.2 Considerations of effective curriculum design

At a theoretical level, this research project espouses an effective curriculum model proposed by Scott (2016) that focuses on three key components (refer to figure 2.1: 27). The development of curriculum or curriculum design is thus regarded as an ongoing and dynamic process involving decision-making regarding the objectives, knowledge types, skills, dispositions, teaching and learning approaches, and evaluation of the entire process (refer to figure 2.2: p.28). This model, comprising a set of questions for curriculum designers, a detailed curriculum development process, and an implementation framework, serves as a theoretical and conceptual guide for curriculum design, implementation, and assessment across various fields of teaching and learning.

In terms of standards, it is crucial that EAP curricula do not solely prioritise language proficiency as a means to fulfil language prerequisites. Instead, they should encompass a broader range of components, such as strategies, study skills, and student autonomy, in order to adequately equip learners for English-based academic pursuits. Additionally, EAP curricula in Vietnamese HEIs should not solely consist of preparatory courses but should also facilitate the establishment of in-sessional English support programmes within the university. This is especially vital in the emerging context of EMI in Vietnam, where a diverse selection of curricula and textbooks is adopted from Western countries and students are in dire need of support. Meanwhile, EOP curricula should prioritise competency-based skills demanded by the labour market in the digital economy era, in addition to fundamental language knowledge and skills. In this sense, both curriculum designs incorporate the essential aims and objectives of the programmes as well as broader institutional and societal goals into curriculum, pedagogical, and evaluation standards. Furthermore,

integrating an appropriate amount of specialised English into both EAP and EOP curricula, harnessing blended learning and especially new technologies, will prove advantageous in enhancing students' motivation, interest, and implementation effectiveness. To ensure effective EAP and EOP design for change, a formal needs analysis involving teachers, students, disciplinary experts, and other stakeholders should be conducted for a more efficient design.

At the practical level, the context surrounding a research study plays a crucial role in effectively implementing a teaching and learning approach. For example, in the context of this study, it is important to not view the Case 1 EAP curricula as mere Western imports, such as textbooks pedagogic approaches from the West that embrace Anglocentric ideology of 'native speakerism'. Additionally, given the emphasis on academic performance in the Vietnamese educational context, it is necessary to include realistic examination preparation tasks. East Asian learners' focus on high-stakes examinations is often seen as contrasting with their Western counterparts (Kember and Gow, 1991; Kim, 2009; Marton, Dall'Alba, and Tse, 1993; Tan, 2017; Watkins, Regmi, and Astilla, 1991; Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Therefore, when designing and implementing a curriculum, it is critical to consider the cultural background of the learners, especially because an exclusive focus on examinations could hinder learning. In fact, the literature on East Asian learners indicates that they tend to engage in rote learning, which is discouraged in Western educational contexts (Purdie and Hattie, 2002). The tasks described in the two IELTS-oriented courses were intended to elicit aspects of learning for high-stakes examinations but were found to be ineffective in Case 1. This finding indicates that high-stakes examinations possess a profound washback effect on both teaching and learning in this institution, leading to a decrease in student motivation and reduced levels of participation. Furthermore, although the Asian learner mentality has some influence on the Vietnamese education system and the focus on academic performance, all students expressed a preference for communicative and collaborative pedagogical practices because they found them helpful. It is important to note that academic performance plays a significant role in the education system, and students who are acculturated in this environment tend to prioritise work that prepares them for examinations. However, considering Vietnamese students' aspirations to become independent and self-directed learners, their positive perceptions of the importance of

learning English for success in their majors, and their diverse purposes for using English in fulfilling immediate needs and long-term goals for future jobs and research, there should be a shift away from traditional test-focused teaching towards interactive skills-based teaching and independent learning, moving from a focus on summative tests to formative assessments. Therefore, the UK EAP curriculum in this research can be viewed as an effective skills-based design, encompassing a comprehensive range of topics and pedagogical practices to develop language, academic, and study skills.

In conclusion, it is crucial to adopt curriculum innovations based on international best practices and to recognise and address students' cultural background and potential constraints in the local educational system when implementing a new and different pedagogy.

9.3.3 Considerations of effective pedagogical and evaluation practices

Pedagogical considerations play a crucial role in the development and implementation of a new English curriculum. In this study, Scott's (2016) five-element framework for curriculum standards implementation is recommended as a tool to analyse pedagogical and evaluation practices. The findings from the three cases indicate that students found the content knowledge and vocabulary of ESP to be more engaging and applicable to their studies (refer to section 7.5.4). In the conceptualisation of ESP, the curricula drew upon various pedagogical foundations, including inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, situated and embodied cognition modelling, self-regulated learning, collaborative learning, and integrative approaches. What is noteworthy about these student-centred pedagogical approaches is that they share common characteristics that can inform the design of a blended learning approach for English instruction.

It is evident that there are overlapping elements in the categorisation of the approaches, as their purpose is not to compartmentalise pedagogical methods that specifically address different areas of the curriculum. Instead, these approaches should be integrated and applied in order to fulfil various instructional objectives. Effective collaborative learning necessitates the development of inquiry cycles (i.e., inquiry-based learning approaches)

within students, and the introduction and facilitation of authentic problem scenarios (i.e., problem-based learning approaches) in the classroom. Students do not possess self-directed learning skills (i.e., self-regulated learning approaches) innately and thus necessitate guidance. Consequently, teachers must initially adopt an integrative approach to curriculum design, considering the interdisciplinary model of curriculum design, and assuming a supportive role in establishing conducive learning environments. This type of practice has been demonstrated to be effective in the development and execution of the EAP curriculum within the UK context. Teachers should inform students of the intended aims and objectives, explain them, provide opportunities for students to carry out tasks, and assess their progress as 'self-directed learners.' Subsequently, effective scaffolding in instruction becomes crucial in supporting students to achieve learning outcomes. This is contingent upon the opportunities teachers afford students for practice and how skilfully they combine techniques and tasks. At this stage, teachers should employ a holistic approach that integrates various pedagogical approaches and strategies or the 'big happy method' (T19). In this regard, teachers should have the autonomy to employ innovative and progressive pedagogies, a privilege referred to as 'earned autonomy' (Perryman et al., 2011). In the initial phase of the new curriculum, a more heavily scaffolded approach should be adopted to assist students facing difficulties. Finally, teachers can identify students' weaknesses in the standards, reflect on their current capabilities, and determine ways to enhance progress through 'individual student progression' (Scott, 2016). In this sense, personalised learning, which encompasses both a teaching style and a learning style, should be employed to accommodate individual needs, interests, and potential, with the aim of nurturing lifelong learners. To summarise, a comprehensive grasp of the aims and objectives of the programme, or curriculum standards, along with the syllabus, is indispensable in the planning and implementation of teaching and learning approaches within an existing education system.

9.3.4 Cultural and technological considerations

Cultural considerations play a pivotal role in the design and implementation of a blended learning approach, particularly within the education contexts of Vietnam and the UK that are examined in this study. These considerations entail the examination of culture or the

academic performativity that permeates within these contexts. It is imperative to consider students' cultural backgrounds from two perspectives when discussing these considerations: as East Asian learners and as learners within an educational system heavily influenced by Western culture in Cases 1 and 2, or as students from diverse cultural backgrounds within English-speaking developed countries. In essence, the cultural background of students significantly influences the planning and implementation of a learning approach within different contexts. In order to achieve the objective of enhancing students' communicative competence in multicultural settings, it is imperative to transition from a singular focus on the target culture to a broader emphasis on the international target culture, whilst also integrating the students' own culture. Kirkpatrick (2012) posits that curricula within ASEAN should incorporate topics pertinent to regional and local cultures that facilitates students' critical engagement in discussions concerning their own cultures, values, and interests in the English language. This revised perspective should be evident in the intended curriculum, as well as in pedagogical guidelines designed to foster the development of students' multicultural competencies.

One of the primary considerations necessary for the efficient design and implementation of innovations in pedagogical practices is the utilisation of digital and disruptive technologies. According to the findings from interviews and observations, the accessibility and functionality of a technological platform are crucial. Given the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Project 2020's revised timeline, which aims to prioritise materials, resources, and online interaction for the Vietnamese population (BC Report, 2017), Vietnamese higher education institutions should embrace opportunities to pursue technology-based innovation. Insights from the UK Case demonstrate that universities in the digital economy era should possess standardised integrated infrastructure, including smart lecture halls, classrooms, and computer labs equipped with high-speed campus networks. User-friendly e-learning platforms, e-libraries, and other e-learning resources are viewed as effective means of support for student learning, particularly self-learning. Additionally, the adoption of e-assessment should be considered due to its well-documented advantages for both institutions and learners, as it has become a strategic institutional development in higher education (Tomas et al., 2015). Ultimately, the accessibility and seamless login

processes to central data centres with cloud services are deemed beneficial and most conducive to student learning.

9.4 Chapter summary

This chapter first discussed cross-case analysis on the ways EAP and EOP curricula could be implemented in Vietnamese higher education. Additionally, it explored the similarities and differences among teachers' and students' perceptions of curriculum change and their implementation experiences in different contexts in terms of curriculum standards, pedagogical and assessment practices, as well as difficulties and modifications. Lastly, it proffered considerations needed for policy and change in Vietnamese higher education and for effective curriculum design and its implementation in a globalised context.

In discussing policy and change in the context of Vietnamese higher education, the concept of curriculum change is further complicated by clashes and contradictions within and between value systems. Achieving significant and sustainable change requires a considerable amount of time and the facilitation of a periodic curriculum review cycle. The incorporation of English use within a multilingual and multicultural context in the national language policy was not indicated in either Vietnamese institutional curriculum. There is a lack of clarity on the diverse cultural tapestry of the globalised world, Vietnamese values, and the learning culture within the planned curriculum. It is necessary to redefine the language policy and transform it into a comprehensive strategic plan with clear guidelines, an effective curriculum model, and a framework for implementation processes for universities, stakeholders, and other participants involved in the reform.

The centralised decentralisation of the Vietnamese education system has enabled HEIs to design various programmes such as EAP or EOP explored in this research. However, this approach has also led to the regulation of these educational programmes through academic performativity, resulting in minimal or no change in students' learning mindsets.

The considerations outlined regarding change management, curriculum, pedagogy as well as culture and technology have the potential to facilitate the successful implementation of curriculum change in Vietnamese higher education in the years to come. The consideration of theoretical models, an effective design of EAP and EOP curriculum, and their implementation can prove valuable for researchers, curriculum designers, and practitioners facing similar contexts.

CHAPTER 10:

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter critically reflects upon and evaluates the research presented in this thesis. It is structured into five distinct sections. The initial section, 10.1, provides a concise restatement of the objectives and purpose of the study, the research enquiries, underlying assumptions, and hypotheses, as well as the methodological frameworks and approaches employed to investigate and analyse these enquiries and assumptions. The second section, 10.2, presents a succinct overview of the principal discoveries and establishes their relevance to the research enquiries. Subsequently, in section 10.3, the contribution of this research to the existing literature and current body of knowledge on this subject is examined. The next section 10.4 acknowledges certain limitations of the research and sampling techniques, justifies the chosen research sample within the context of this study, and suggests alternative methodologies that could supplement the questionnaire, interview, and observation techniques implemented here. Section 10.5 deliberates on the implications for the ELT industry and the field of teaching English as an international language in Vietnamese and UK higher education. It proposes practical applications of the key recommendations and potential avenues for future research in this domain. Finally, section 10.6 concludes the thesis by summarising and reinforcing the principal findings of the research.

10.1 Research review

This study draws upon my experience of teaching English to undergraduate students in Vietnamese higher education, both as an English instructor in Vietnam and as a researcher in the United Kingdom. The research is guided by several assumptions, which are explored in Chapters Two and Three: (i) there has been a global increase in the number of international students in the UK, yet there is limited literature on pedagogies for and with them; (ii) teaching English in Vietnamese higher education to enhance communicative competence in multilingual and multicultural contexts poses challenges and necessitates different skills and methods; (iii) there is a need to address research gaps through conducting classroom-based, context-specific studies that describe the current implementation of English curriculum and address the 'implementation gaps' and the mismatch between ELT curricula and the actual use of English, particularly in Vietnamese

higher education; (iv) it is crucial in the context of Vietnam to focus on the paradigm shift in ELT to meet global and local needs and diverse realities; (v) there is a requirement for an effective curriculum model for examination, as well as an excellent framework for teaching and learning English in the globalised world.

The research aimed to explore these assumptions and determine their accuracy. It sought to understand how practising teachers in three universities perceive the curriculum and institutional situation. Additionally, the study aimed to examine how teachers utilise personal and contextual factors to achieve their teaching goals, and how they develop the practical knowledge necessary for the new curriculum and changes they implement in response to issues. The research had three main objectives: (i) identifying the gap between the intended and enacted curriculum and determining the factors contributing to this gap, (ii) examining the challenges faced by teachers of English as a foreign language to tertiary students and assessing the extent to which pre- and in-service training and development programmes support teachers in addressing these challenges, and (iii) contributing to the existing literature on teachers' beliefs, attitudes towards teaching English in higher education and their practices, including confidence and personal aspiration, by providing insights into institutional practices in curriculum design, pedagogical practices, assessment, training, and development.

Four research questions were developed:

1. What is the gap between the intended English curriculum and the implemented one at the tertiary level? What factors account for this gap?
2. How do language teachers and students make sense of and implement the English curriculum that utilises communicative approaches?
3. What internal (personal) and external (contextual) factors contribute to designing, planning, and implementing this English curriculum?
4. What are the implications for curriculum innovation, especially in resource-limited contexts like Vietnam, and for English language teaching approaches that support EFL tertiary teachers within multilingual and multicultural contexts?

By addressing these enquiries, it is expected that Vietnamese viewpoints on this sector of the industry, which has received limited attention yet has considerable impact, will enrich the worldwide comprehension of the teaching and learning of the English language. This will strengthen the existing body of comparable evidence, thus providing valuable insights for various stakeholders, including policymakers, administrators, and educators, within the language teaching field. The findings resulting from these research questions may yield practical recommendations to tackle the challenges posed by the implementation of new language policies and the expansion of English language teaching in Vietnam. Moreover, the significance and usefulness of the chosen conceptual frameworks carry important implications for future research endeavours.

The research was designed as a phenomenological study to explore human experience within a specific context. The data collected aimed to interpret key aspects of the experience and generate new knowledge to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon. A mixed quantitative-qualitative approach was employed, combining elements of both methodologies to provide a comprehensive account. This involved analysing numerical data in the form of descriptive statistics, as well as examining oral and written evidence for content. The study involved the participation of 131 EFL teachers, 349 students selected through simple random sampling, and 14 other stakeholders from three public universities in the UK and Vietnam. Four data collection instruments were used: survey questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and documents. The data triangulation technique was also utilised.

A mixed-method approach was adopted, starting with a self-reporting questionnaire distributed electronically and in print. This was followed by in-depth interviews, focus-groups, and observations. Quantitative data was initially gathered and analysed to address descriptive and relational research questions. Qualitative data collection and analysis followed, enriching, explaining, or triangulating the quantitative findings. The questionnaire received 130 responses from teachers and 344 from students in Vietnam. Additionally, 36 semi-structured interviews, 10 focus-groups, and 22 observations were conducted in the three universities to explore the intended and enacted curriculum, as well as delve deeper into relevant issues.

To minimise researcher's influence and ensure objectivity, a standardised schedule was used for all interviews, with the same questions asked in the same sequence. Interviewer intervention was kept to a minimum to avoid influencing participants' responses. The research sample was selected based on predetermined criteria, specifically individuals who had taught or learned English at the participating institutions. The sample consisted of experienced and knowledgeable practitioners working in influential universities.

The data were grouped, categorised, transcribed, and cleaned. They were then coded for presentation and display in numerical and graphical form using SPSS27 and Nvivo. The authenticity of the data was further ensured by sharing it with specialists in teaching English, who were part of the research sample for the preliminary findings.

10.2 Key findings

Based on the research findings outlined in chapters 6 to 9, there are nine significant conclusions that can be drawn in relation to the research questions and the relevance of the theoretical frameworks. The *initial conclusion*, pertaining to research question 1, suggests the existence of a discrepancy between the intended and executed curriculum, both at institutional and classroom level. To bridge this gap, various factors and circumstances must be taken into consideration, namely enhanced practical support from policy makers and administrators (e.g., detailed guidelines and supportive frameworks for institutions and various subsectors to avoid misinterpretations, increased time and budget allocations for the implementation roadmap at the national level or teaching activities in the classroom), a stronger emphasis on intensive teacher training programmes (e.g., training focusing on high-level skills like curriculum design or testing design, as well as frequent training on practical skills such as pedagogic practices and learning approaches), and educational leaders simultaneously addressing all types of challenges that teachers may encounter. Finally, teacher training manuals authored by academics should incorporate self-reflection teaching methodologies, pedagogical practices, and adjustments made by teachers in response to obstacles, in order to enhance the quality of curriculum implementation.

The *second conclusion*, which pertains to research question 2 regarding teachers, suggests that Vietnamese and UK tertiary teachers are currently involved in curriculum changes and are utilising various teaching and pedagogical practices to a moderate extent. Teacher perceptions have a significant impact on their pedagogical practices; however, different cognitive constructs demonstrate varying degrees of influence. In the context of Vietnam, teachers' conceptions of the curriculum play a crucial role in determining the teaching methods and pedagogical practices they choose to employ in their classrooms. Furthermore, three significant predictors of teachers' successful implementation were identified, ranked in descending order of impact: teachers' attitude and their perceived confidence in carrying out tasks, and their belief in the effectiveness of the new curriculum for their teaching and its potential for implementation at their university. Conversely, teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of the new curriculum, their positive predisposition, and their perceived ability to design, plan, and implement the curriculum's main tasks or supplementary tasks were found to predict the extent of their engagement in curriculum implementation. Therefore, this research highlights the necessity of comprehensively considering the entire cognitive system in order to explain curriculum innovation in Vietnamese universities, potentially leading to successful outcomes.

The *third conclusion*, pertaining to research questions 3 and 4, suggests that, from a practical standpoint, the findings from the three universities indicate the importance of focusing on equipping teachers with comprehensive knowledge of curriculum design and planning, teaching and learning approaches, and skills. Additionally, it is crucial to provide teachers with ongoing opportunities to reinforce and enhance their skills and knowledge, as well as support them in addressing their curriculum implementation challenges. In the context of Vietnam, policymakers should offer detailed guidelines that define new language policies and align with other higher education strategies. Furthermore, an effective curriculum model and an implementation framework should be established to guide participants in the reform. Universities should develop clear and consistent implementation guidelines for teaching and learning approaches, evaluation of teaching quality, and assessment. These guidelines should not only assist novice teachers, but also allow for

flexibility to accommodate unconventional yet feasible and manageable pedagogical practices and teaching methods among experienced teachers.

The *fourth conclusion*, which relates to research questions 3 and 4, suggests that there is a significant connection between teacher perceived confidence and their implementation of teaching practices. However, it should be noted that both confidence and its impact on teachers' efforts to implement the new curriculum are not static, but rather subject to change. These factors are influenced by various elements, including the teachers' need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, as well as the immediate context in which they operate. Teachers are inclined to engage with new teaching activities, curriculum design, and pedagogical practices when they perceive that it will contribute to their personal growth, enhance their ability to independently perform teaching practices, and increase their income. Similarly, their participation in the implementation of the new curriculum is contingent upon these factors. However, it is important to acknowledge that personal and contextual constraints can reduce the significance of the desired type of confidence and give rise to the need for less desirable forms of motivation. Specifically, when faced with numerous challenges, a teacher's genuine interest in implementing different pedagogical practices may not always be enough to sustain their engagement in the new curriculum implementation. On the other hand, external pressure plays a critical role in initiating and maintaining a teacher's commitment to the implementation process.

Therefore, it is recommended in the *fifth conclusion* that both pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development programmes equip teachers with a comprehensive understanding not only of the potential benefits of curriculum implementation, but also the inherent challenges associated with it. These programmes should provide teachers with effective teaching practices, knowledge, and skills to effectively navigate difficulties during the implementation process. Furthermore, universities should strive to ensure that teachers have a positive experience during the implementation of the new curriculum, within reasonable means. This can be achieved by reducing teaching workload, increasing financial support, and maximising opportunities for teachers to enhance their competence, autonomy, and sense of social belonging. For example, universities can facilitate team discussions with senior academic leaders, encourage self-improvement in language

proficiency to meet language requirements, and promote their engagement in the implementation of change.

Based on the conclusions mentioned above, a practical *sixth conclusion* can be drawn regarding the effective design of an EAP and EOP curriculum in higher education. It is recommended to conduct a formal needs analysis involving teachers, students, disciplinary experts, and other stakeholders to inform the goals and objectives of the overall educational programme, as well as develop a more effective curriculum. In this sense, the effective curriculum design should encompass the fundamental aims and objectives of the programmes, as well as the broader institutional and social objectives, into the curriculum standards, pedagogical standards, and evaluation standards. Specifically, incorporating students' linguistic and cultural repertoires, a sufficient amount of specialised English in both EAP and EOP curriculum, along with the utilisation of blended learning and new technologies, would enhance students' motivation, interest, and the overall effectiveness of implementation.

The *seventh conclusion* highlights the changes in assessment within Vietnamese higher education. The research findings raise concerns regarding policy-driven assessment and assessment-driven teaching, which could have negative effects. Given that Vietnamese students aim to become independent and self-directed learners and have diverse motivations for using English to meet immediate needs and long-term career goals, a shift from traditional test-oriented teaching to interactive skills-based teaching, independent learning, and practices that promote English as an international language is necessary to empower students to confidently use English in multicultural and multilingual contexts. It is also important to emphasise both summative and formative assessments and to integrate translanguaging and translingual practices into the assessment process.

The *eighth conclusion* derived from the research findings pertains to effective pedagogical practices in the globalised world. It is recommended to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach that integrates various pedagogical approaches and strategies, along with personalised learning, to effectively address individual needs, interests, and potential. This approach also aims to foster a lifelong learning mindset among students. In the context of

Vietnamese higher education, it is suggested to consider the framework of teaching English as an international language and its practical implications in order to fulfil the overall objectives of the national language policy.

The *nineth conclusion* drawn from this study concerns the study frameworks which includes 'curriculum policy' (Pinar, 2015), the intended and enacted curriculum (McCormick and Murphy, 2000), the new curriculum model (Scott, 2016). Besides, this research also embraced on framework from Westbrook et al. (2013) for understanding the relationships between the intended and enacted curriculum and other participants in the implementation process, and TEIL (Rose et al., 2020; Selvi et al., 2024) as well as the GELT framework (Rose and Galloway, 2019) as the reference point to inform the findings. These frameworks demonstrate its effectiveness as a theoretical and conceptual map for identifying gaps between the intended and implemented curriculum at national, institutional, and classroom levels. They served as theoretical support in examining the interactions between teacher behaviour, teacher cognition, motivation, other internal factors, and the external environment in both developing and developed country contexts. Not only did the frameworks significantly inform the research design, particularly in redefining the research questions, but it also guided the analysis and discussion of the data. The study's findings have also supported the key insights of these frameworks. Overall, the study model serves as a relevant and powerful tool for advancing the understanding of the intended curriculum among policymakers, interpretations of administrators, perceptions of teachers, and teaching practices in higher education in both the UK and Vietnam. In summary, the study successfully addresses its research questions and contributes to the existing understanding of curriculum implementation in the field of ELT.

10.3 Contributions of the study

The findings of this study not only address a significant research gap but also contribute to the existing body of knowledge across various disciplines relevant to curriculum development, curriculum reform, and English Language Teaching (ELT) within the context of Vietnamese higher education reform. Furthermore, this research situates itself within the

broader framework of teaching English as an international language in an increasingly globalised world. Consequently, the implications of this research appear to be beneficial for a diverse audience, including educators, teacher educators, administrators, curriculum developers, and material designers.

Firstly, the findings related to effective pedagogical practices can serve as a reflective tool for educators to evaluate their current methodologies. These findings align with Alexander's (2015) assertion that pedagogic universals can be delineated, referring to pedagogical practices applicable across various cultural and contextual settings. In light of the internationalisation of higher education and the processes of globalisation, the findings resonate with the scholarly call for a more globally oriented approach to language teaching and learning, particularly within EAP programmes designed to support EMI and international students. Additionally, there is an emphasis on integrating students' linguistic and cultural repertoires into the ELT curriculum.

Secondly, this research underscores the necessity of a comprehensive understanding of curriculum design and planning, as well as teaching and learning methodologies and competencies. It highlights the significant relationship between teachers' perceived confidence and their execution of instructional practices. Accordingly, it is recommended that pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development programmes be structured to provide educators with a thorough understanding and to enhance their competence, autonomy, and sense of social belonging. In the context of educational change, it is essential that such training be continuous and intensive, incorporating updated knowledge and skills that enable teachers to navigate ongoing challenges and maintain positive experiences throughout the implementation process.

In terms of curriculum planning and policymaking, the findings illuminate the challenges and obstacles faced by teachers and administrators in executing reforms within Vietnamese higher education, alongside offering recommendations for enhancing language education. These findings provide empirical evidence that contributes to a more nuanced understanding of curriculum reform, its execution, and its implications for the quality of

language teaching and learning. The identified implementation gaps, along with the proposed recommendations, may offer valuable insights for revising the curriculum and managing change effectively. A noteworthy outcome of this research is the recommendation of using the TEIL conceptual framework (Selvi et al., 2024; Rose et al., 2020), which integrates students' linguistic and cultural repertoires across various domains of interaction and instruction to support the objectives of the national project.

Lastly, this research enriches the extant literature pertaining to language curriculum design and evaluation, curriculum change, and ELT. It provides valuable insights into the current practices of ELT, the challenges encountered by various stakeholders within Vietnamese higher education, and the perspectives

of teachers in the UK context. Theoretically, it advocates for the application of a mixed methods approach and a novel curriculum model (Scott, 2016) in the examination of curriculum change and implementation. The findings of this study can thus serve as a reference point within the relevant academic literature.

10.4 Limitations of the research

First and foremost, it is imperative to acknowledge that the study presented in this paper has a restricted scope, thereby encompassing only a specific range of topics. This limitation stems from the temporal and financial constraints associated with a doctoral-level thesis. The principal focus of this study is specifically on language instructors who cater to students pursuing non-English majors at two Vietnamese public universities and one UK university. This particular focus enables a comprehensive analysis of these specific elements. However, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge that the findings and implications of this research cannot be generalised or applied to other cohorts of instructors, such as language teachers for English-major students, or to different educational sectors beyond the realm of public universities, such as the private university sector. The working conditions of distinct cohorts of instructors and the functions of diverse educational sectors exhibit significant variations, thus rendering the findings potentially inapplicable in those contexts. Further extensive

research is warranted to gain a deeper comprehension of how change is interpreted and implemented in these disparate settings.

Secondly, regarding the methodology employed, the utilisation of self-report instruments such as surveys and interviews may pose limitations to the outcomes of the study. This is due to the absence of assurance regarding the veracity and precision of respondents' recollections, as well as the stability of their perspectives (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). Participants might not divulge their genuine perceptions but instead offer information that they perceive as aligning with the researchers' expectations (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 1996). Consequently, the dependability of the findings derived from self-report data hinges on the honesty exhibited by the respondents. In contrast, the augmented qualitative outcomes derived from observations may be deemed as more reliable and accurate compared to relying solely on questionnaires or interviews.

Another methodological limitation is the restricted sample size, which is due to the limited number of respondents for certain statistical analysis in the two universities of Vietnam (130 teachers and 344 students) and for qualitative analysis in the UK context (only one teacher and five students). The utilisation of a single data collection instrument format to gather data from multiple respondents can also be seen as a potential limitation, considering the diverse individual preferences. The employment of face-to-face interviews for all participants and the distribution of paper-based questionnaires to almost all survey participants in this research may have resulted in 'common method bias', as some informants might not have been entirely comfortable with these formats.

10.5 Implications for future research

First, the frameworks used in this study work well as a theoretical and conceptual map for identifying the gaps between the intended and implemented curriculum at the national, institutional, and classroom levels in the context of the UK and Vietnam. Not only did the frameworks significantly inform the research design, especially in redefining the research questions, but it also guided the analysis and discussion of the data. They provide a useful

way to examine how curriculum is designed, conceptualised, and implemented at higher education institutions. Therefore, scholars and practitioners can make use of these frameworks as theoretical and conceptual models to design, develop, and evaluate curriculum at different levels and in various areas and inform the findings.

Second, this study sheds light on the topic of curriculum implementation in Vietnamese and UK public universities, particularly among teachers of English who teach non-English major students. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study in other contexts and with different groups of teachers where empirical investigations have not yet been conducted. By doing so, they can explore the challenges faced by educators, the strategies they employ to cope with change, and how these factors influence curriculum implementation in the classroom. The findings of these replication studies will further enhance our understanding of teaching and pedagogical practices, taking into consideration teacher beliefs, perceptions, and practices related to changes in the English language curriculum at the undergraduate level. These studies will contribute to the development of a comprehensive evidence base that is necessary for informing context-specific policies on curriculum implementation (Borg, 2007).

Third, this research study has identified personal and contextual factors that may explain why some language teachers succeed or fail in implementing the curriculum, establishing certain causal relationships through statistical analysis. Future research could employ an experimental design to determine the causal direction of the significant relationships identified in this study, such as investigating the characteristics of effective teacher development programmes that facilitate and support teachers when they need to modify their beliefs and practices to implement innovations and changes. Further research should also consider other factors beyond the scope of this study when examining the reasons behind teachers' instructional practices. The results of these studies, combined with the findings of the present study, will contribute to expanding the list of potential predictors of teachers' teaching approaches and pedagogical practices, thereby providing guidance to policymakers and teacher educators in future planning and improvements to the current curriculum change.

Finally, the effective model of blended learning, specifically in terms of integrating technology in the classroom, may serve as a foundation for future research, not only in language teaching and learning but also in other disciplines. This research can be conducted not only at the tertiary level but also at different levels of education.

10.6 Conclusion

This study seeks to provide insights into the modifications made to the English language curriculum and its implementation in higher education in the UK and Vietnam. It contributes to the existing literature by situating the findings within a broader context and exploring how effective curriculum design, which encompasses standards, pedagogy, evaluation, culture, and technology, can be applied in diverse settings. The research concludes by emphasising the urgent need to evaluate EAP curricula in EMI programmes and other ELT curricula, as well as redefine the objectives of the national language policy in Vietnam. Additionally, there is a need for supportive frameworks for institutions and various stakeholders in Vietnamese higher education. Therefore, further research on EAP curricula and their impact on the success of EMI programmes, as well as other ELT curricula in Vietnamese higher education, is necessary to address the implementation gap. Given the broader context of internationalisation in higher education and globalisation, it is imperative to adopt a more globally-oriented approach in language teaching and learning, as well as incorporate students' linguistic and cultural repertoires into the ELT curriculum. This suggestion holds significance not only in the educational context of Vietnam but also in the traditional EMI setting of the United Kingdom, especially in international institutions where students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and speak different languages alongside English. Given the growing global interest in language policy and curriculum reform, as well as the commitment of Vietnam and the UK to advancing research and development in their higher education systems, the implications of this research are significant. Finally, it is important to acknowledge the necessity of aligning teachers' individual factors, contextual factors and reform policies for the successful implementation of a new curriculum within a specific context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Information letter
Appendix 2	Consent form
Appendix 3	The questionnaire for teachers (The printed and online versions)
Appendix 4	The questionnaire for students (The printed and online versions)
Appendix 5	Interview instrument for policymakers
Appendix 6	Interview instrument for administrators
Appendix 7	Interview instrument for teachers
Appendix 8	Interview instrument for students
Appendix 9	A sample of lecturer interview transcripts
Appendix 10	List of Documents
Appendix 11	Schedule for Research and Changes

Appendix 1. Information letter



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Research Project: A Critical Examination of Curriculum Implementation in UK and Vietnamese Higher Education

About the Research

Thi Ngoc Bui is conducting this field research as part of her PhD degree at the Institute of Education, University College London.

Research Questions

- (1) What is the gap between the intended English curriculum and the implemented one at tertiary level? What factors account for this gap?
- (2) How do language teachers make sense of and implement the English curriculum? What teaching practices did teachers report they carry out and what teaching practices they actually used in their language classrooms?
- (3) What internal (personal) and external (contextual) factors contribute to teacher skills and will in designing, planning, and implementing this English curriculum?
- (4) What are the implications for the curricular innovation, especially in resource-limited contexts like Vietnam, and for the communicative language teaching that support EFL tertiary teachers within multilingual and multicultural context?

To Answer these Questions:

Ngoc Bui will conduct and record individual and focus group interviews with a number of policymakers, administrators, teachers and students.

Ngoc Bui will also conduct teacher and student surveys to discover teachers' and students' perceptions of the CLT curriculum and determine the factors affecting their implementation activities.

Ngoc Bui will also be conducting classroom observations to in order to better understand:

- How the English curriculum is being implemented in classrooms;
- The methods used by the teachers;

- The interaction between students and teachers;
- The learning environment;
- The perceptions of students and teachers about the English curriculum that targets communicative language teaching approach;
- How teachers and students approach and deal with controversial issues.

The observations will take place in three selected universities in Hanoi, Vietnam and London, United Kingdom.

Use of Data and Anonymity

Recordings of the interviews will be encrypted and no real names will be used in transcripts and reports. The data will be used primarily for academic purposes and the PhD thesis.

For further question please do not hesitate to contact Ngoc Bui; or via email

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2. Consent form



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

Dear Policymaker/Administrator/Teacher/Student,

I am writing to you in hope that you will be able to participate in interviews which concerns the implementation of English curriculum at tertiary level.

My research focus is the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within Vietnamese and UK contexts. Using a mixed methods approach, I am conducting in-depth interviews with policymakers and administrators to determine their intentions, perceptions and their roles in the implementation process, with teachers to discover their perceptions of the English curriculum and the factors affecting their implementation activities. I am also observing a number of classrooms and conducting student focus group interviews which, guided by open-ended questions, will focus on the effectiveness of the English curriculum implementation.

Interviews will be organised at a mutually convenient time on one of the days I am visiting the university and will last no more than 90 minutes each. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed and you will be offered a summary of the transcript to check before it is analysed. You will also be able to ask to have the recording equipment to be turned off at any point during the interview.

You will remain anonymous in the research report. With your permission i will record your name and details during our conversations but you will not be identified by name in any report of research findings, and I will make every effort to keep what you say during discussions confidential. The data will be securely stored on an encrypted external hard drive and laptop. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you will have the freedom to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. I will send a copy of the final report to the university and to you if you would like to receive it.

If you have any queries about the research, please contact me, Ngoc Bui;
or via email or directly during
the interview.

Many thanks,
Thi Ngoc Bui

If you are happy to participate in this research, please tick the options below to confirm:

- ☐ I have read and understood the information sheet provided about this research
- ☐ I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason
- ☐ I understand that the research will not identify me
- ☐ I consent to participating in this research.
- ☐ I am happy for the interview to be recorded and transcribed

Signature: _____

Date: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT WITH THIS RESEARCH

Appendix 3. The questionnaire for teachers



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Thank you very much for being willing to complete this 30-minute questionnaire which concerns the implementation of English curriculum at tertiary level. The information that you provide is an important part in PhD research: ***A critical Examination of Curriculum Implementation in UK and Vietnamese Higher Education*** by Doctoral student Ngoc Bui, Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education, University College London.

As responses will be treated confidentially, no names of individuals or the university will be used in reporting the results of this questionnaire.

PART 1: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM AND COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

Question 1-8: Please fill in the number (in the blank at the beginning of the statement) which best describe the level of the accuracy of the information

Absolutely not	May be not	May be Yes	Yes, definitely
1	2	3	4

1. _____ The English Syllabus is a clearly written document.
2. _____ The English Syllabus is complicated and difficult to follow
3. _____ The English Syllabus is practical.
4. _____ The English Syllabus aims to develop students to communicate in English.
5. _____ The English syllabus is based on grammar translation method.
6. _____ The English syllabus is based on Communicative Language Teaching.
7. _____ What I am expected to teach under the guidance of the English Syllabus.
8. _____ How I am expected to teach under the guidance of the English Syllabus.
9. Have you heard about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) before?
☐ Yes/ ☐ No
10. Where did you learn about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)? (*You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable*)
 - ☐ Books or journals
 - ☐ TESOL seminars/lectures
 - ☐ Teachers' manual
 - ☐ Teacher training course
 - ☐ Workshop held by the ministry of education and training/ the board of education
 - ☐ University degree program
 - ☐ Workshop held by a teachers' association
 - ☐ Others -----

11. What is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in your view?

Please circle the number which best describe your agreement with the statement.

1 = True

2 = Not True

3 = Don't know

a. CLT is student/learner-centred approach	1	2	3
b. CLT means strategic and socio-linguistic competence	1	2	3
c. CLT means discourse competence only	1	2	3
d. CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy	1	2	3
e. CLT emphasizes communication in foreign language	1	2	3
f. CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills	1	2	3
g. CLT requires the teachers to have high proficiency in English	1	2	3
h. CLT means only group work or pair work	1	2	3
i. CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture	1	2	3
j. CLT means not teaching grammar	1	2	3
k. CLT means teaching speaking only	1	2	3
l. CLT puts too much pressure on teachers	1	2	3
m. CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities	1	2	3
n. CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL	1	2	3
Other			

12. Communicative Language Teaching method is useful as it helps students to communicate in English.

☐ Yes/ ☐ No

13. What do you think is important for students in CLT classrooms? (You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable)

- ☐ To talk to a native speaker
- ☐ To acquire native-like pronunciation
- ☐ To acquire native-like fluency
- ☐ To acquire native-like accuracy
- ☐ To communicate effectively in L2
- ☐ Never to use L1 (Vietnamese)
- ☐ To collaborate with each other

- ☐ To enjoy communicating in L2
- ☐ Others -----

14. What do you think is required for English teachers in CLT classrooms? (*You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable*)

- ☐ To be a native speaker
- ☐ To have native-like pronunciation
- ☐ To have native-like fluency
- ☐ To have native-like accuracy
- ☐ To provide teaching materials
- ☐ To be a facilitator
- ☐ To be a communication model
- ☐ To be a co-communicator
- ☐ Other -----

PART 2: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCES FOR LANGUAGES (CEFR) AND THE VIETNAMESE STANDARDIZED TEST OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (VSTEP)

15. Have you heard about the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) before?

- ☐ Yes/ ☐ No

16. Where did you learn about the CEFR? (*You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable*)

- ☐ Books or journals
- ☐ TESOL seminars/lectures
- ☐ Teachers' manual
- ☐ Teacher training course
- ☐ Workshop held by the Ministry of education and training
- ☐ University degree program
- ☐ Workshop held by a teachers' association
- ☐ Others -----

17. How widely used is the CEFR as criteria to evaluate graduate students' English proficiency in your institution?

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Very widely
- ☐ Quite widely
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Not at all

18. In which domain(s) is the CEFR used in your institution as a reference?

- ☐ Language teaching
- ☐ Language learning
- ☐ Language testing/assessment
- ☐ Textbook/material production
- ☐ Foreign Language curriculum development

- ☐ National language curriculum development
 - ☐ Pre-service teacher training
 - ☐ In-service teacher training
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-
-

19. Please estimate in general how useful has the CEFR been as criteria to evaluate graduate students' English proficiency?

- ☐ Extremely useful
- ☐ Rather useful
- ☐ Of some use
- ☐ Not useful
- ☐ Difficult to say

20. Have you heard about the Vietnamese Standardized test of English (VSTEP) before?

- ☐ Yes/ ☐ No

21. Where did you learn about VSTEP? (*You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable*)

- ☐ Books or journals
- ☐ TESOL seminars/lectures
- ☐ Teachers' manual
- ☐ Teacher training course
- ☐ Workshop held by the Ministry of education and training
- ☐ Workshop held by a teachers' association
- ☐ Others -----

22. How widely used is the VSTEP as criteria to evaluate graduate students' English proficiency in your institution?

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Very widely
- ☐ Quite widely
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Not at all

23. In which domain(s) is the VSTEP used in your institution as a reference?

- ☐ Language teaching
 - ☐ Language learning
 - ☐ Language testing/assessment
 - ☐ Textbook/material production
 - ☐ Foreign Language curriculum development
 - ☐ National language curriculum development
 - ☐ Pre-service teacher training
 - ☐ In-service teacher training
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

24. Please estimate in general how useful has the VSTEP been for your institution?

- ☐ Extremely useful
- ☐ Rather useful
- ☐ Of some use
- ☐ Not useful
- ☐ Difficult to say

PART 3: FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHERS' CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The following personal and contextual factors may affect teachers' implementation activities. In the first column, please circle the number which indicates your agreement with each of the statements about the factors that may affect teachers' English curriculum implementation. In the second column, please circle the abbreviation that describe the availability of each factor at your institution.

Column 1:

- 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)
- 4 = Agree (A)
- 3 = Neutral (N) (Neither agree nor disagree)
- 2 = Disagree (D)
- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Column 2:

Absolutely not	May be not	Don't know	May be Yes	Yes, definitely
N	MN	O	MY	Y

	Column 1					Column 2				
	<i>Your agreement with the factors that may affect</i>					<i>The availability of each factor at your institution</i>				
25. The English Test influences my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
26. The teaching and research committee and colleagues in my department evaluates me and this influences how I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
27. My students evaluate me and this influences how I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
28. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence what I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
29. The textbooks that I am told to use by my department head influence how I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y

30. My students' English abilities influence my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
31. My students' expectations about how to study English influences my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
32. The size of my classes influences my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
33. My workload influences my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
34. The way I learned English as a student influences the way I teach English.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
35. My level of English-speaking ability influences my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
36. My teaching experience helps me in my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
37. In-service teacher training improves my classroom teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
38. In-service teacher training is not available in my university and teachers find it difficult to implement the English curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
39. English teaching resources contributes to my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
40. Audio-visual resources contributes to my teaching	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y
41. Grammar-translation method is useful as it helps my students to understand the texts.	1	2	3	4	5	N	MN	O	MY	Y

PART 4: TEACHERS' OPINIONS AND CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTING CURRICULAR INNOVATION

42. Please circle the number which best describe your agreement with the implementation of the English curriculum.

- 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)
- 4 = Agree (A)
- 3 = Neutral (N) (Neither agree nor disagree)
- 2 = Disagree (D)
- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

a. Curricular innovation is good for my teaching	1	2	3	4	5
b. My teaching improves as I gain more experience from my classroom instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
c. It is interesting to implement the new curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
d. I feel worried when implementing this English curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
e. I feel stressful when implementing this English curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
f. CLT is the best teaching method.	1	2	3	4	5
g. It is difficult to use CLT method in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I feel comfortable with CLT method.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I would like to learn more about CLT.	1	2	3	4	5
j. I would like to learn more about computer-assisted teaching.	1	2	3	4	5

43. Please write down the number which best describe your confidence in curriculum implementation activities:

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Completely impossible

possible

Completely possible

	Confidence
a. Interpret the English curriculum correctly	
b. Design the English syllabus	
c. Plan the teaching activities	
d. Implement the student-centered approach	
e. Implement communicative language teaching method	
f. Use English as a medium of instruction in my classes	
g. Make use of teaching resources	
h. Use audio-visual resources in class	
i. Implement computer-assisted teaching	
j. Discuss with other colleagues about the curriculum implementation	

PART 5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

44. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is rarely practice and 5 is practice fully, how would you rate your current implementation of each principle of CLT? (Rarely practice 1 2 3 4 5 practice fully)

a. The objective is to develop student's communicative competence	1 2 3 4 5
b. The role of the student is a communicator.	1 2 3 4 5
c. Four skills "listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the classroom practice.	1 2 3 4 5
d. Instructional materials may include thematic development materials, task-based materials, and authentic, real life materials.	1 2 3 4 5
e. Students are evaluated both on fluency and accuracy by being asked to perform a real communicative function. (I.e. To assess students' writing skill, they are asked to write a letter to a friend.)	1 2 3 4 5

45. How often do you use the following procedures as part of your English language teaching? Please circle the number which best describe your regularity.

1-Never 2-Hardly ever 3-Sometimes 4-Often 5-Usually

a. Grammar explanation	1 2 3 4 5
b. Group discussion	1 2 3 4 5
c. Pair work	1 2 3 4 5
d. Translation	1 2 3 4 5
e. Dictionary vocabulary exercises	1 2 3 4 5
f. Simulations/role play	1 2 3 4 5
g. Reading and reporting from websites	1 2 3 4 5
h. Reading and reporting from newspapers	1 2 3 4 5
i. Reading aloud	1 2 3 4 5
j. Pronunciation drills	1 2 3 4 5
k. Games	1 2 3 4 5
l. Listening to audio file and answering questions	1 2 3 4 5

m. Call on students to orally respond to any issue/topic	1 2 3 4 5
n. Reading and reciting dialogue	1 2 3 4 5
o. Other.....	

46. Do you think CLT is employed effectively in your university?

☐ Yes/ ☐ No

47. The following are some difficulties that some EFL teachers have had in curriculum implementation adopting CLT. Did you encounter these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties in your universities? Please rate the following items on a scale of 1= not a problem, 2= potential problem, 3= a problem, circle the option that you think best reflects your opinion.

a. Teacher's limited proficiency in spoken English.	1 2 3
b. Teachers' limited sociolinguistics/ cultural competence.	1 2 3
c. Teachers' lack of training in CLT.	1 2 3
d. Teachers have few opportunities for in-service training in CLT.	1 2 3
e. Teachers have little time for teaching materials for CLT class.	1 2 3
f. Lack of authentic teaching materials.	1 2 3
g. Large classes. (Class size)	1 2 3
h. Insufficient funding, school facilities (few language labs, technology equipment).	1 2 3
i. Lack of support from colleagues and administrators.	1 2 3
j. Grammar-based examination.	1 2 3
k. Lack of assessment instruments.	1 2 3
l. Students' low English proficiency.	1 2 3
m. Students' resistance to class participation.	1 2 3
n. Students' resistance because teacher is central and knowledge transmitter.	1 2 3
o. Students' resistance because of the concept that learning should be serious, not playing games.	1 2 3
p. Using the prescribed book in teaching.	1 2 3
q. Using English language to teach CLT curriculum.	1 2 3

r. Emphasizing the process or the product.	1	2	3
s. The conflict of doing grammar explanation and error correction.	1	2	3
t. Focusing on rote memorization and repetition.	1	2	3
u. Limited number of class hours	1	2	3

48. Are there any other factors that influence your teaching practice?

☐ Yes / ☐ No If yes, (please specify)

49. Do you want to provide your students with more communicative activities? Why?

☐ Yes / ☐ No

Your reasons:-----

50. What do you think should be changed first in order for **you** to apply CLT more effectively in your lessons?

51. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to learn English? (Circle the number that best describes the degree of importance that you attach to the item on the left.)

Importance Skill	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5

52. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to pass university final examinations?

Importance Skill	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5

53. Could you please describe how you implement the CLT curriculum in your class? Could you give some examples of how you teach?

54. What can be done to facilitate the teaching and learning of the CLT curriculum?

55. Do you have any comments/suggestions about the implementation of CLT method?

PART 6: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

56. Name of Institution:

57. How old are you?

Under 25	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

58. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

59. How long have you been teaching English?

Years Months.....

60. What is your employment status as a teacher at this university?

Please do not consider the probationary period of a contract as a separate contract.

- ☐ Permanent employment (an on-going contract with no fixed end-point before the age of retirement)
- ☐ Fixed term contract for a period of more than 1 school-year
- ☐ Fixed-term contract for a period of 1 school-year or less

61. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Please mark one choice.

- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Other (please specify)

62. Where did you complete your highest education?

- ☐ In a Vietnamese institution
- ☐ In an international institution in Vietnam
- ☐ Overseas
- ☐ Other (please specify)

63. What teaching method were you taught by at university?

- ☐ Grammar – translation method
- ☐ Communicative language teaching method

64. What is your first language?

- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other (please specify):
.....

65. How do you evaluate your abilities and knowledge in using English as a medium of instruction at this university?

- ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Very good ☐ Excellent

66. How many hours do you teach a week at your institution?

- ☐ Less than 10 hours
- ☐ 10-14 hours
- ☐ 15-20 hours
- ☐ More than 20 hours

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any queries about the research, please contact me,

Appendix 4. The questionnaire for students



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

In English:

Thank you very much for being willing to complete this 15-minute questionnaire which concerns the implementation of English curriculum at tertiary level. The information that you provide is an important part in PhD research: *A critical Examination of Curriculum Implementation in UK and Vietnamese Higher Education* by Doctoral student Ngoc Bui, Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education, University College London.

As responses will be treated confidentially, no names of individuals or the university will be used in reporting the results of this questionnaire.

- The questionnaire is written in English, followed by its Vietnamese translation. You can either use English or Vietnamese to respond to each statement or question
- Please note that this is not a test and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers
- Please answer honestly and frankly
- Please complete all questions by yourself

Bản tiếng Việt:

Xin cảm ơn bạn đã đồng ý trả lời bảng hỏi về việc áp dụng chương trình dạy và học tiếng Anh ở bậc đại học. Thông tin bạn cung cấp rất quan trọng cho nghiên cứu của nghiên cứu sinh Ngọc Bui, Học viện Giáo dục, trường Đại học tổng hợp Luân Đôn.

Mọi câu trả lời sẽ được hoàn toàn giữ bí mật, tên trường và tên của người tham gia trả lời phỏng vấn sẽ không được sử dụng và nhắc đến trong báo cáo nghiên cứu.

- Bảng hỏi này được viết bằng tiếng Anh, có bản dịch tiếng Việt đi kèm theo. Bạn có thể sử dụng tiếng Việt hoặc tiếng Anh để trả lời câu hỏi
- Lưu ý là bảng hỏi này không phải là bài kiểm tra và không có câu trả lời 'đúng' hoặc 'sai'
- Xin hãy trả lời thẳng thắn và trung thực
- Hãy tự mình trả lời hết các câu hỏi

1. You are (Giới tính của bạn)...

☐ Male (Nam) ☐ Female (Nữ)

2. Your major at university (Please write down in the space in either English or Vietnamese. E.g. Computer Science)/Ngành học của bạn ở đại học (viết câu trả lời ngắn gọn bằng tiếng Anh hoặc tiếng Việt. VD, Khoa học máy tính)

3. How many years have you spent learning English before entering university?/Số năm học tiếng Anh trước khi học đại học:

4. Where did you study English before entering university? (You can select more than one option) /Trước khi học đại học, bạn học tiếng Anh ở đâu? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều khả năng)
☐ I studied English as a subject at school/Tôi học tiếng Anh như một môn học ở trường
☐ I attended an English-medium school/Tôi học ở trường dạy bằng tiếng Anh
☐ I lived abroad/Tôi sống ở nước ngoài
☐ Other (please specify)/ Trường hợp khác (giải thích)
5. Is your native tongue Vietnamese?/Tiếng Việt có phải tiếng mẹ đẻ của bạn không?
☐ Yes/Có ☐ No/Không
6. Where do you use English? (You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable)/Bạn sử dụng tiếng Anh ở đâu?(Bạn có thể chọn nhiều câu trả lời nếu phù hợp)
☐ In class/Trên lớp
☐ At work /Ở chỗ làm
☐ At home/Ở nhà
☐ Other (please specify)/Nơi khác (xin nêu rõ)

7. What activities do you use English for (You may select MORE THAN one activity if applicable)?/Bạn sử dụng tiếng Anh trong hoạt động gì? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều câu trả lời nếu phù hợp)
☐ Studying/học
☐ Entertainment/giải trí
☐ Meeting other people/gặp gỡ người khác
☐ Other (please specify)/Hoạt động khác(xin nêu rõ)

8. Why are you studying English? (You may select MORE THAN one answer if applicable)/Tại sao bạn học tiếng Anh?(Bạn có thể chọn nhiều câu trả lời nếu phù hợp)
☐ Because I need it to study my major which taught in English/Vì tôi cần Tiếng Anh để học chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh
☐ Because I will need it for my work in the future/Vì tôi cần tiếng Anh trong công việc sau này
☐ Because I like English/Vì tôi thích tiếng Anh
☐ Other (please specify)/Hoạt động khác(xin nêu rõ)

9. Which are the most important English skills for success in your major? Number choices 1–4, with 4 as the most important./ Kỹ năng tiếng Anh nào quan trọng nhất để bạn học chuyên ngành thành công? Chọn số thứ tự 1-> 4 vào mỗi kỹ năng, 4 là quan trọng nhất.

Reading/Đọc	1	2	3	4

Listening/Nghe	1	2	3	4
Speaking /Nói	1	2	3	4
Writing /Viết	1	2	3	4

10. The following statements are about English curriculum. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each idea/ Dưới đây là ý kiến về chương trình giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở đại học. Hãy cho biết mức độ đồng ý của bạn với mỗi ý kiến.

5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

4 = Agree (A)

3 = Neutral (N) (Neither agree nor disagree)

2 = Disagree (D)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

More time should be given to English instruction./ Cần dành nhiều thời gian hơn cho việc dạy tiếng Anh	1 5	2	3	4
The content of my English course is interesting./Nội dung khóa học tiếng Anh thú vị	1 5	2	3	4
Instruction should focus on General English./ Nên tập trung vào tiếng Anh phổ quát	1 5	2	3	4
Instruction should focus on the English needed for my specialised studies./Nên tập trung tiếng Anh dành cho chuyên ngành của tôi.	1 5	2	3	4
More should be done to help students with speaking. /Cần phải có thêm hoạt động hỗ trợ kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên.	1 5	2	3	4
I enjoy my English class. /Tôi thích lớp học tiếng Anh	1 5	2	3	4
Having good English is important in this university./Có tiếng Anh tốt rất quan trọng ở trường này.	1 5	2	3	4
English is my least important course./Tiếng Anh là môn ít quan trọng nhất.	1 5	2	3	4
My English course is easy. /Khóa học tiếng Anh dễ.	1 5	2	3	4
The English language lecturers here do a good job. /Giáo viên tiếng Anh ở đây dạy tốt.	1 5	2	3	4
My English course helps me in my major study. /Khóa học tiếng Anh giúp tôi học chuyên ngành.	1 5	2	3	4
My English lecturers teach me study skills. /Giáo viên dạy tôi kỹ năng học.	1 5	2	3	4

The teaching methods at university are interesting. /Phương pháp giảng dạy ở đại học thú vị.	1 5	2	3	4
I have trouble understanding my English lecturers./Tôi thấy khó khăn để hiểu được giảng viên tiếng Anh.	1 5	2	3	4

11. Select the appropriate answers to indicate your opinion about English usage and activities in your English courses./Chọn câu trả lời phù hợp cho biết ý kiến của bạn về việc sử dụng tiếng Anh và tham gia hoạt động trong lớp học tiếng Anh.

5 = Always

4 = Mostly

3 = Sometimes

2 = Occasionally

1 = Never

The lecturers use only English in class./Giảng viên chỉ sử dụng tiếng Anh trên lớp.	1 5	2	3	4
Students ask questions in English./Sinh viên đặt câu hỏi bằng tiếng Anh.	1 5	2	3	4
I take lecture notes in English./Tôi ghi bài bằng tiếng Anh	1 5	2	3	4
I use English for group discussions./ Tôi sử dụng tiếng Anh khi thảo luận nhóm	1 5	2	3	4
I can understand the lectures in English. / Tôi có thể hiểu bài giảng bằng tiếng Anh.	1 5	2	3	4
I can understand my classmates when they answer the questions in English./ Tôi hiểu bạn học khi các bạn trả lời câu hỏi bằng tiếng Anh.	1 5	2	3	4
Textbooks are printed in English./ Giáo trình in bằng tiếng Anh	1 5	2	3	4
The lecturers explain difficult terms in Vietnamese. /Giảng viên giúp giải thích từ khó bằng tiếng Việt.	1 5	2	3	4
Students in my class need more in-class language support. /Sinh viên trong lớp tôi cần được hỗ trợ hơn về ngôn ngữ trên lớp.	1 5	2	3	4
I can express myself easily in English. /Tôi có thể dễ dàng thể hiện bản thân bằng tiếng Anh.	1 5	2	3	4
Four skills “listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the classroom practice./ Bốn kỹ năng Nghe,	1 5	2	3	4

Nói, Đọc, Viết được kết hợp thực hành trên lớp.				
The objective is to develop student's communicative competence. / Mục đích của hoạt động học là phát triển khả năng giao tiếp của sinh viên	1 5	2	3	4
I take part in group/pair activities in lessons/ Tôi tham gia hoạt động theo cặp/nhóm trong giờ học.	1 5	2	3	4

12. Which of the following activities has your teacher used in English lessons? /Hoạt động nào dưới đây giáo viên tiếng Anh của bạn đã sử dụng trong giờ học?

- ☐ Information gap
☐ Problem solving
☐ Discussion
☐ Listing/ranking
☐ Role-play
☐ Games
☐ Other

13. Which of the following activities do you prefer? /Hoạt động nào dưới đây bạn thích?

- ☐ Information gap
☐ Problem solving
☐ Discussion
☐ Listing/ranking
☐ Role-play
☐ Games
☐ Other

14. Do you want your teacher to provide more communicative activities? Why? / Bạn có muốn giáo viên cho thêm các hoạt động giao tiếp không? Tại sao?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your reasons:

15. In your opinion, how important are the following areas to learn English? (Circle the number that best describes the degree of importance that you attach to the item on the left.) / Theo quan điểm của bạn, lĩnh vực hoặc kỹ năng dưới đây quan trọng như thế nào đối với việc học tiếng Anh? (Khoanh tròn con số chỉ mức độ quan trọng)

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very important
Skill						
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5

16. In your opinion, how important are the following areas to pass university final examinations? / Theo quan điểm của bạn, lĩnh vực hoặc kỹ năng dưới đây quan trọng như thế nào trong việc vượt qua bài thi cuối kỳ?

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very important
Skill						
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. What is the English requirement for your course? Please write briefly. /Yêu cầu tiếng Anh dành cho ngành học của bạn là gì? Hãy viết ngắn gọn.

18. Why is it important for you to study English? (You may choose MORE THAN one option if applicable) /Tại sao học tiếng Anh lại quan trọng với bạn? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều câu trả lời nếu phù hợp).

- ☐ Because it is a requirement of the program/Vì đó là yêu cầu của chương trình học.
- ☐ Because good English helps me to succeed in my major/Vì tiếng Anh tốt giúp học chuyên ngành thành công.
- ☐ Because I can get a scholarship to study abroad with good English/Vì tôi có thể nhận học bổng đi học nước ngoài nếu giỏi tiếng Anh.
- ☐ Because I can get a good job with good English in the future/Vì sau này tôi có thể tìm được công việc tốt nếu giỏi tiếng Anh.
- ☐ Other (please specify)/Hoạt động khác(xin nêu rõ)

19. From which of the following sources did you get information about the English requirement? (You can choose MORE THAN one option if applicable)/Bạn biết thông tin về yêu cầu tiếng Anh từ các nguồn nào sau đây? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều câu trả lời nếu phù hợp)

- ☐ My language lecturers/Giảng viên tiếng Anh
- ☐ My university website/Trang web của trường
- ☐ My course outline/Đề cương môn học
- ☐ My program coordinator/Giáo viên phụ trách chương trình
- ☐ The university admission booklet/Cuốn thông tin tuyển sinh đại học
- ☐ Senior students from the same program/Sinh viên học cùng chương trình của khóa trước
- ☐ Other (please specify)/Hoạt động khác(xin nêu rõ)

20. Is there anyone who motivates you to learn English? If Yes, please explain /Có ai tạo động lực cho bạn học tiếng Anh không? Nếu Có, xin giải thích rõ:

a) who they are/Người đó là ai:

b) in what way they motivate you/Họ tạo động lực cho bạn bằng cách nào:

21. Do you have any comments/suggestions to improve the English courses at this university to meet students' needs? Bạn có nhận xét/đề xuất gì để cải thiện khóa học tiếng Anh của trường nhằm đáp ứng nhu cầu của sinh viên không?

If you are willing to be contacted for the follow-up interview about English needs, please give your contact details:/ Nếu bạn đồng ý tham gia vào phần phỏng vấn về nhu cầu học tiếng Anh, xin hãy cung cấp thông tin liên hệ:

Your contact

number: _____

Your email address: _____

Please note that once you provide your e-mail address, your responses to this survey will not be completely anonymous. However, all of your information and the data obtained will be confidential. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to your identity. When quotes are used, your identity will not be revealed.

Xin lưu ý khi bạn cung cấp thông tin, câu trả lời của bạn không còn ẩn danh nữa. Tuy nhiên, tất cả thông tin và số liệu sẽ được bảo mật, Chỉ có tác giả nghiên cứu và giáo sư hướng dẫn có thể biết cá nhân bạn. Tên bạn sẽ được giữ kín khi số liệu được trích dẫn.

Thank you very much for your help!

Appendix 5. Interview instrument for policymakers

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

Policy makers IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Bui Thi Ngoc and I am conducting this field research as part of my PhD degree at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education University College London. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your intentions, perceptions and your roles in the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within Vietnamese context. It is closely related to a new policy issued by the Vietnamese Government. It is known as ***the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*** which can be seen as the National Language Teaching and Learning Reform. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time. This interview will be audio-recorded (tape recorded) and will take approximately 30 -40 minutes.

Thank you for your time.

Name of person interviewed	FIRST NAME	SURNAME
Gender	☐ Male	☐ Female Tick as appropriate
Age		
Organisation		
Title		
Date of Interview		
Recording number		
Interviewer name		
Additional information		

Introduction Questions

1. Please share with us your educational background (degrees, certification, teaching)
2. Your administrative experience
3. Your interest in this position

National Project Manager

4. What was the language policy for the National Education system in Vietnam in 2008?
5. What changes have been made to the language policy since then?

6. Are there any related regulations in relation to the national language policy? If so, what are they?
7. How appropriate is the policy in terms of the tertiary English education for the local teaching context?
8. Why is the policy designed the way as it is?
9. How clear is the policy in order for the local universities to understand?
10. How practical is the policy in terms of language teaching and learning in the local context?
11. To what extent does MOET expect the local universities to follow the policy?
12. How is the policy communicated to the respective local universities?
13. To what extent does MOET get the teachers involved in the development of the policy?
14. To what extent does MOET take into account teachers' language proficiency when delivering the curriculum?
15. What are the biggest challenges do you see universities face when implementing the tertiary English Curriculum?

Testing Team Leader

1. What is the rationale for conducting VSTEP?
2. What changes have been to VSTEP since its inception?
3. How appropriate is VSTEP for the Vietnamese teaching context?
4. Why is VSTEP designed the way as it is?
5. How practical is VSTEP for the Vietnamese tertiary language teaching and learning?
6. What do you do with the results from VSTEP?
7. What impact, if any, does VSTEP have on teachers' classroom teaching?
8. What impact, if any, does VSTEP have on students' language learning?
9. To what extent does the National English Testing Committee expect VSTEP to be implemented in the respective universities?
10. What is the general rule for respective university students to take the test?
11. To what extent does the Committee take into account the students' language proficiency when taking the test?
12. What happens if students fail to pass the test?

Appendix 6. Interview instrument for administrators

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

Administrators **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE**

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Bui Thi Ngoc and I am conducting this field research as part of my PhD degree at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education University College London. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your intentions, perceptions and your roles in the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within Vietnamese context. It is closely related to ***the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project*** which can be seen as the National Language Teaching and Learning Reform. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time.

This interview will be audio-recorded (tape recorded) and will take approximately 30 -40 minutes.

Thank you for your time.

Name of person interviewed	FIRST NAME	SURNAME
Gender	☐ Male	☐ Female Tick as appropriate
Age		
Organisation		
Title		
Date of Interview		
Recording number		
Interviewer name		
Additional information		

Introduction Questions

1. Please share with us your educational background (degrees, certification, teaching)
2. Your administrative experience
3. Your interest in this position

Administrative Practice

4. What are the specific regulations in relation to the national language policies for the

English education in your university?

5. Why is your university policy in terms of English teaching designed the way as it is?
6. Is the policy clear and straightforward in order to implement it? If not, what do you think is not clear or is lacking?
7. How appropriate are those policies in terms of the English Curriculum for the teaching context of your university?
8. How clear is the Syllabus for teachers of your universities to understand?
9. How practical is the Syllabus in terms of language teaching and learning in your university?
10. To what extent do the textbooks that teachers use now accurately represent the English Syllabus?
11. What is the benefit of English Test from your perspective as a university rector?
12. What impact, if any, does the English Test have on teachers' classroom teaching?
13. What impact, if any, does the English Test have on students' language learning?
14. To what extent does the school policy take into account teachers' language proficiency when delivering the curriculum?
15. What kind of support does your university provide to your teachers?
16. What are the biggest challenges do you see your university faces in implementing the English Curriculum?

Appendix 7. Interview instrument for teachers

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

Teachers **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE**

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Bui Thi Ngoc and I am conducting this field research as part of my PhD degree at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education University College London. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your intentions, perceptions and your roles in the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within the UK/Vietnamese context. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time.

This interview will be audio-recorded (tape recorded) and will take approximately 30 -40 minutes.

Thank you for your time.

Name of person interviewed	FIRST NAME	SURNAME	
Gender	Male	☐ Female	Tick as appropriate
Age			
Organisation			
Title			
Date of Interview			
Recording number			
Interviewer name			
Additional information			

Introduction Questions

1. Please share with us the following:
 - (a) Your educational background (degrees, certification, teaching)
 - (b) Your interest in this position

Teaching Practice

2. What are the typical characteristics of English class you teach?
3. Do you follow any national or university English curriculum?
4. Do you think that teachers should have a national English Syllabus?
5. Do you follow any syllabus (textbook) instructions during your teaching?
6. If yes, what are the teaching methods and activities that are used in these syllabuses?

7. How would you describe your experience following the Syllabus?
8. What do you think of the clarity of the English Syllabus? Is it clear and easy to follow? If not, why not?
9. What do you think of the practicality of the Syllabus in terms of your language teaching? Is it practical for you to use? If not, why not?
10. How appropriate is the English Syllabus for your teaching context?
11. What skill(s) or sub-skill(s) do you place more emphasis on? Why?
12. What do you think language teacher should emphasize more at communication or mastery of language patterns? why?
13. Could you please describe how you implement the CLT curriculum in your class? Could you give some examples of how you teach?
14. What kind of technological devices do you use them to support your teaching?
15. What are teaching materials (textbook and other teaching materials) do you use in your class?
16. What impact, if any, does the English test have on your classroom teaching?
17. What impact, if any, does the English test have on your students' learning?
18. How do you actually conduct your classroom teaching to achieve the objectives stated in the official syllabus?
19. Why do you organize your classroom activities that allow your students to work with their peers / to work alone?
20. How much support do you receive from your department head regarding how you teach English?
21. What kinds of support would you like to receive from your department and university in your teaching of English?
22. What are the most challenging aspects that you face regarding implementing the English Curriculum?

Appendix 8. Interview instrument for students

Name: Thi Ngoc Bui

Institution: Institute of Education – University College London

Department: Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Date:

Students INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Bui Thi Ngoc and I am conducting this field research as part of my PhD degree at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education University College London. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your intentions, perceptions and your roles in the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within UK and Vietnamese context. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time.

This interview will be audio-recorded (tape recorded) and will take approximately 30 -40 minutes.

Thank you for your time.

Name of person interviewed	FIRST NAME	SURNAME
Gender	☐ Male	☐ Female Tick as appropriate
Age		
Organisation		
Title		
Date of Interview		
Recording number		
Interviewer name		
Additional information		

Sign consent form

Check the recorder

State the length of the interview, refreshment

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

1. Please briefly introduce yourself. Tell us your name, your major, and what English courses did you study at university (A1-C1 or exempted).
2. How important is English?
3. How long have you learnt English before university?
4. How do you evaluate your communicative ability in English? Before university/course and now?

MATERIALS:

Tell me about the materials for your English courses

5. What textbooks did you use for the English courses? What other materials did you use for your English courses? (HINTS: Other commercial textbooks, supplementary materials from the same publisher? Teacher-prepared materials? Other sources)
6. How did you get these materials?
7. Some students say they want more ESP and technical vocabulary in the English courses. Other students say they want to study general English. What is your opinion about this?
8. How helpful were the materials for your learning purpose? (Give examples)
9. Would you like to change anything in the learning materials? If Yes, please explain.

DIFFICULTY/CHALLENGES:

Now, please tell me more about your experience in your classroom.

10. When you studied in English classes, what were the main issues for you?
11. In what areas of using English (HINTS: skills, vocabulary, grammar...) do you think you have more issues?
12. Do you have any suggestions to improve the situation?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

13. Tell me any difference you notice about using English in your previous English classes and your classes now? Give some examples. (HINTS: class activities, teacher's role, student's role, materials...)
14. What activities do you suggest to help students in your program learn English better? (For teachers, students, university...) CUES: Extra-curriculum activities: English contest, video watching, group discussion, etc...
15. Tell me more about the activities outside classroom that you join to improve your English?

LECTURERS AND STUDENTS:

Now we will discuss the role of lecturers and students on program.

16. Lecturers might play different roles in student's English learning. What do you think is/was the lecturer's role in your case? Can you give an example?
17. How do you describe a good language lecturer?
18. How did your teacher implement the new curriculum?
19. From student side, what do you think you can do by yourself to learn better in English?

SUMMARY AND CLOSING

Summary of question 1-20

20. Of all the topics discussed, what do you think is the most important for you to succeed in a course which is taught in English?

Thank the participants and 'sign off'

Appendix 9. A sample of lecturer interview transcripts

Name: Lecturer Interview Transcripts Case 3-T19-1

Date of Interview:

Length: 57 minutes

Interviewer: Ngoc **Interviewee:** Case 3- T19-1

Interview language: English

Ngoc: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is Ngoc Bui and I am conducting this field research as part of my PhD degree at the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institute of Education, University College London. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your intentions, perceptions, and your roles in the implementation of the English curriculum at tertiary level within the UK context. As explained, you are free to stop the interview at any time. This interview will be audio-recorded and will take approximately 30 -40 minutes.

T: In case of this university, I basically created, designed the course myself

N: Excellent

T: It was a new setup. They are the existing university so what I was given is that has been running for a while. I was given their curriculum, but I was given a kind of freehand to revise what I thought would be appropriate for a long in this college. And then what I did is I called my knowledge and experience in previous present note and creating 6-week course. I factored in need analysis, you know I did some diagnostic work, you know classic things with Long with his friends. That included what topics they are going to study, there are some business, some tourism. so I draw on some topic things...

N: But first of all, I would like you first to introduce something about yourself, your background.

T: Sure. Ok well My background... I think I have been teaching English as a piece of languages and English for academic purposes for about 30 years now. I started teaching in Spain which is like classic route when you have done your certificate, in Barcelona. I really enjoyed that, I couldn't stay, I came back to London because I feel quite at home in London. I worked at private language colleges, teaching Japanese students, Swiss students. Gradually I got into in Stage 1 London Borough Colleges where the money is better. This became teaching quite a lot of refugees and asylum seekers, quite a mix of nationalities: Ethiopian, Somalis, South American. So I stuck with that all about 13 – 15 years may be. Then I was pulled toward university teaching where certainly the money is better. I am kind of prefer that work academic approach. I also started a Master Degree in 1996, having done the diploma in teaching English as a foreign language. But I wasn't able to finish that as a family stuff. But I got into university teaching academic approach. And then I did my master at UCL,

pretty late comer to the academic stage but I always wanted to develop myself as a teacher, read about stuff, so I finished that only 3 years ago.

N: Oh really? It is interesting to know that.

T: I came as a practitioner, you know I have my diploma in teaching. I have my DOT qualifications. So my interest is also being a practitioner, just being in class, that's always be the same I think. I think that's where I'm most useful. But then, you know, I wanted to explore theories and ideas about it. So I finished in 2016 the master I started in 2014 at UCL. And a year later, you know what, I'd like to pursue this, so I registered to study a PhD, and I've done a year, but for one reason or another, I dropped out of that course, and now I'm looking for a new supervisor and got 2 or 3 things to apply, will see what happens, yeah.

N: That's great. Can you tell me the typical characteristic of your English class, the pre-session courses?

T: You mean the body of students or the way I teach, or the classroom methods.

N: Let's start with the students first.

T: Well, as I referred to you earlier, there're a lot of Chinese students who coming over, South East Asia students, so there're Vietnamese and Thais, South Korean as well, they dominate now in the pre-session that I'm teaching, I'd say generally their English needs working on, but I've motivated and diligent students very high level yeah, and they have pretty good work ethic, they're there to study, and you know, you can't take these things to granted. Obviously, what you can fund as a teacher is the kind of learning style that they are used to, I'm bringing it into the kind of style I like to teach, just you know, more interactive. So, it kinda fused them together, it kinda gradually bring them into activities where they do power in group work. Generally, the outcome results are really positive. Sometimes they have the point where I have to stop them communicating. So that's good, that's refreshing, yeah. But I do attend to the thing they kinda expect which is attention to details and accuracy in grammar, so you know I do kind of make sure they do the book work which they're comfortable, I don't disregard that at all, yeah. So, I think they appreciate structure, they appreciate well planned lessons, they appreciate knowing exactly what they're doing in achieving. I think it's pretty much basic of a thing I teach anyway, yeah. But to bring out their interests and what they have to say, I feel it's my task and there are some subjects which land themselves to that more easily so, with the art students for example, they have a common interest so they can talk about art, helpfully art is a useful medium for expression, so you know, you lead with the art and it provokes English language uses, yeah, so that was useful. So that's the class.

N: And what about the teaching material?

T: At this university as I said, I balanced it between the assessment outcome, so there were a body of you know, practice paper, because they have to do an end-of-course test on reading and short essay and listening and an interview and a presentation. So quite a bit of the courses devoted to test practice, they have to be ready for that, they have to be familiar with the format, the other side of it is leading through subjects' interesting material which

related to that courses, so I tried to source material myself if I'm creating it myself, otherwise, other pre-sessional I've done, actually I see that there's sort of direction towards subject and material, yeah. In the past, it was not so long ago, a lot of pre-sessional were generic material, you know, I've been teaching criminology and law students, with material about Brexit, disrelated and there's an issue there, they weren't really interested that much, but now it's getting better, now it's subject specific material more and more, so that an immediate interest and I think that's the way to go for. In fact, 1 issue is to draw in together the courses and teachers, they'll be progressing too with the pre-sessional, I think up until recently, but I now they kind of bring them together so that pre-sessional teachers have a better idea by speaking to the people in the department of, you know, what they want, simply by asking them what essay title would be useful for my students to explore, that would help me go through, yeah. Does that make sense?

N: Yes.

T: So, more liaison with the department that the students learn to work in.

N: And do you use any official books for the class?

T: Uhm, as I said, pre-sessional tend to have their own material, handbook, you know, material books, course book, creative, so they'll give you this at the induction. This is the course book which they devised.

N: But do you use it in your teaching?

T: Generally, have to use it. I meant, if they got a lot of materials, they would say you don't have to do everything, you can set it for homework. But they've got their own idea of what they want to cover, yeah, but the way you use it, how you use it is generally up to you.

N: And how did you do in your class?

T: It depends on what the topic is for each session. So if you got a reading lesson, I'll focus on reading skill, and I'll go through the very strategy to get students to read globally and become more specific. So it depends on what the aim of the lesson is. If it's the speaking lesson, you know, I'll design some activities, some questions, you know, I'll spend some time prepping and planning and using that file of activities and strategy that I've got. So depend on the lesson's aim, yeah.

N: And if possible, can you send me some maybe samples of your textbook or teaching material that you have used in your class?

T: Yeah, I will. I can send you, I've got everything here, so I'll select a few things and send them to you, yeah.

N: Oh that's great, thank you so much. And the national curriculum, maybe something compulsory for the university that need to follow, you know, as I told you for the national teaching and learning reform, the university's advised to have its own curriculum, but I'd like to know whether in the UK, do you have any compulsory curriculum for the university to follow?

T: I don't think in the case of pre-sessional and even in-sessional English teaching, I don't think there's any national prescribed curriculum. What they tend to do is follow a course which ticks the boxes for academic study skills, and one body and the other is the language skills. And you know, English language skills, there many textbooks and there's a kind of standard syllabus used in there which they think is the order in which you should learn English, you know, from simple to more complicated, yeah.

N: And can you tell me a little bit more about the requirement or criteria for academic skills as an outcome for the course?

T: What they do is assessment oriented so for pre-sessional course there're an ex amount of the sessional that students have to pass, generally the in-course assessment, the formative assessment is working on a long essay, so each week they add a further skill, writing skill, so the first one will be plan an essay, research the essay, so there're a number of skills they take off each week, and develop their essay which they hand in the end. And the other one which goes side by side, you probably know this, is they have to do a presentation, usually a Power Point presentation, and that is usually connected to the essay. This is the kind of ongoing development, you know, they upload the skill required to write an essay. At the same time, they do work on their English language levels and they'll have, at the end of the course, a test – as I said – with the 4 skills and the grammar, so they also work on that, they have to do some test practices, and that's classic English language teaching, if you know what I meant, so we do a diagnostic test which identifies their weaknesses. I find exercises, grammar practice, vocabulary extension and we do that, if you know what I meant. So, it's fairly organized. The key thing I think is the vocabulary extension, you know they get quite a lot of texts, quite a lot of extra readings to do, which they access through whatever, the module, yeah, so that's quite a lot of vocabulary input, and that's the key thing. Going back to the study skill, I meant, to some extents it's a new subject for them, to understand the requirement in English, the academic requirement for English University essay, so they got to be taught and learn those requirements, you know, so basic things like searching for sources, inputting sources, how to reference correctly, what's the component of an introduction, what's the structure of a main body paragraph. Somebody think they might be familiar with, you know, from their home country, but as a teacher you have to go through this. So that's where the requirement.

N: Yeah, and all that requirement and criteria to assess are introduced in your syllabus?

T: Yes. they tend to be a week by upload, graduated upload the skills and requirements.

N: So is this the compulsory syllabus or curriculum of your University?

T: I think can call it compulsory, yeah, from the Uni, from the people who want pre-sessional, because they have to get the essay writing up to a certain standard.

N: Can I have a copy of the syllabus?

T: Yes, I've got the RCA Royal College of Art one, I'll give to you, no worry.

N: Thank you so much.

T: I don't have a pen, so I'll text myself so that I'm not gonna forget. So, copy of the syllabus you be handing, teaching material, maybe a lesson plan I did, idk.

N: Yeah, lesson plan pls. I'll send you an email with the list of material.

T: I've already done that. I always think that first interview is a little bit imperfect, if something comes to you later, don't hesitate to drop me a line or if you need to meet me again because I think the nature instinct, because I try to gather my own thoughts and express it to you but it isn't perfect exercise.

N: Thank you, it's very kind of you. And do you follow all the syllabus instructions during you teaching at St Mary?

T: It's not instruction, it's just the day by day timetable, that's what it is, and pretty much we follow it because they got this amount of work that needs to be covered, yeah. As I said to you, the flexibility is you can't do everything that they prescribe, but they know that, so what you can do is to set for homework. What you decide to focus on as well, you know, it's up to you and what you think the class needs, so you can zoom in or zoom out, according to what the class needs. But generally, you follow what's given to you. However, I do think I can find some material, and I really like looking for alternative material before I find something, a video or something I think could be more useful, I'll use it, as long as I keep to the outcome, you know, the purposes what the syllabus is. It might be reading skill for specific information, so I'll keep that outcome, but I transfer it to some material which I think might be better, yeah. I think that's ok, you know, I think they can understand, yeah.

N: As far as I know, you have maybe online system for students to do exercises right? Upload the material online for students.

T: Yeah, let me just think. They obviously have their own student portal access to that, what happen is the University will have preloaded a body of exercises, the teacher direct the students' attention "here is the exercise", and usually they're divided up week by week, and that's what the University's done, extra exercises. But I also upload some stuff, you know, my stuff or stuff or stuff that we didn't get through during the lesson and make sure that everybody's looking at that. What I did in my last 2 courses including St Mary, I can show you quickly, is I used some Google classroom, Idk if you have used this, maybe Long's showed it to you. So I created this Google classroom. I think it's quite easy to use compare to.. I don't know. I'm signing in, instantly here.

N: Yeah, very useful, I know this one from Google, very interesting.

T: So I keep them, you know "new assignment/extended file", okay you need to correct reference sources, so I've got that for them, and I think really handy. So I did the same, that's long class, yeah. You know, look, I meant I'm aware that I don't want to overuse this, I want to keep things relatively simple, I don't want students think "OMG what did I forget, what I didn't do", so I kinda tell them these are just reinforced messages of what I said in class, so don't kill yourself. But I try to create this community idea, I don't want them to be worried.

N: Yeah, sometimes they feel overwhelmed

T: Oh I hate that myself, thinking “Oh I gotta look at it again” but you know, just tune in once a day and everything is kind of what you’ve already known, I’m just putting it there so you have a record, otherwise it gets complicated. I don’t want things to creep up, stress faster yeah So again I have 2 classes, researching writing 1 and 2. So, things like example essay conclusion, but you know this is stuff you get in class, I just put it there again.

N: Are you going to take any other pre-sessional courses from this university?

T: Well, I’m waiting to hear that from UCL actually. I was planning not to work this summer except having some homestay students, that’s what I do sometimes, perhaps, usually teenagers from France. I work with the agency, they’re very good. I was planning to do some of that, so that I can do some reading and work on. So I’m thinking that actually I would like to do a pre-sessional, but I left a little bit late, but UCL was advertising for a part-time pre-sessional tutor, I hope I hear from them today or Monday because the job starts in 3 week time so, finger cross.

N: So can you tell me the teaching methods and activities that are used in syllabus that you used in this University.

T: You meant my methods or...

N: Your methods, how you dealt with teaching material and students in your class. What did you do?

T: Yeah, exactly. You know, the danger of studying, you know, pedagogy, is that your method become kind of like a centrifuge, they become mixed methods or post methods. One thing I want to do is to deconstruct the role of a teacher, you know, I really want to get the students owning their learning. Now I know this is a cliché but the more and more I teach, the more and more I think I want to kind of dissolve myself as a teacher. However, I realize that a lot of students depend on that present of a teacher and that the centralizing figure, so I try to work between those 2 things, which means yes I give instructions, yes I stand up but I don’t want to present myself like the body of knowledge, I know how to do this, I know, you know, there’re students who expect that, from the culture and background they come from. So I just keep my instruction short and clear and hand on and practical and “OK, don’t sit there, let’s get on and we’re doing it”. The need to be sensitive to people’s expectation and communicative skill is really key I think. So I kind of try to graduate this, how do I do it? By not insisting pair/group work – do it. I’d like to scaffold – another cliché word – but I like to demonstrate. [fire alarm] OK so just to sum up, what I like to do is I like to have formal syllabus and this is the amount of work we need to get through, I think that’s important to have the work ethic, so that at least students can look back at their lesson and say “I did this, this, this and this”, how to present it and how to interact with that is something else. So I like to scaffold approach it, I like to lead them into it, I want them not to be uncertain or confused, because you know I’ve been a student myself and I don’t want anybody to sit there thinking “I don’t get this”. So I break it down for them, I have lead in and a little warm ups and activities, but they get together and they’re not thinking too much

about the outcome of the lesson, they just engage in the material, engage in with each other. If I need to model something, I'll do it in a sensitive way, I don't like picking student out, you know I like to devolve this teacher thing, yeah. So example, taking them through .. for some students it can be a really pedantic thing to do it, like yeah, I know. So there was another time I was giving them a task and see what they bring to it because clearly students have got a lot of previous knowledge and strategies. So you could almost say that this is of oldest method of test-teach-test so the test in the sense of [can you do it, I'm not gonna help you to] see what they can bring to it and then add my guidance to it. So there's a lot of tune throwing, a lot of toggling between me being kind of instructional or me sitting back and see what they can do. I try to toggle between those 2 things.

N: So can you tell me your experience conducting speaking lessons, maybe a lesson, any lessons. Oh before that question, can you answer me another, do you have any focus on any specific skills, language skill like reading, speaking, listening and writing. Do you have any more focus on any skill?

T: I try not to separate them too much. I think they're all kind of dependent on each other. So if you reading and finding resources for your essay, I think it'll be useful if you can hook up with somebody else who's doing similar topic, and you discuss and pull your searching. So if I'm focusing on the writing class so I'll be focusing on the process of writing, and simple things like sketching your introduction, making notes for your introduction, presenting to your partner, and then your partner just investigate and ask "what this means", "oh you put that note there, what do you mean by that", what I'm planning to taught the class so they can intercheck, I try to integrate all these skill even though it might be one point focused. You see what I meant. I think when you watching a research essay, it is an active communication isn't it, somebody is gonna read it, somebody is gonna give you feedback, you're communicating with your resources, like a dialogue with academic so I try to keep that as something underpinning, you know, communicative aspect of what we're doing. The other thing I want to say is I try to get a personal connection with students and the material I'm doing, I try to swing them in as personal as it is, sensitively. I don't want to probe into people you know, personal or whatever. One activity I used at the beginning of the writing process is to get students to draw their writing locations, back home or wherever they do it, I often say to them it's no matter if you can draw or not, you can label it as well, so it takes as a way, they draw a desk and what they have surrounding them. I give them something so they can think about what drink would you have, what time of day would it be, what would the light condition be, would you be listening to anything, so it's kinda personal approach, it's something. It's a technique which actors can use when they want to inhabit a character, they identify personal connections with the character, and move to one.

N: I really like your idea, personal connection.

T: This is the center of my research, really, to investigate people's personal biography, the keyword is "sensitively", yeah, because this investigation into drama, yeah.

N: Thank you. You know, I'd like to tell you about one of the case in my research. In Vietnam, they have the focus on the communicative competence of the students, and

they like CLT, in that Uni, they have the syllabus focus on face to face lessons, just teach speaking and some listening. And for the reading and grammar and vocabulary, they upload the lesson onto their online system, the students need to do that online before going to class. And what is your idea of that?

T: I initially think it sounds quite good. My worry is when you ask the students to speak, what would the reaction be? Obviously it would take time for it to start working, I think. But I think the basic idea is quite useful. But it will become getting them interested in what they talk about. It'll be kind of formalize generalize situations, like going to the post office, you know what I meant, it's the material that directed in their interest. This's personal connection vibe where they begin to use language without thinking about language, yeah. They just begin to generate words, maybe sentences, this is key, so it's quite dependent on finding topics, projects, interests, which drive the need to communicate.

N: Actually in that case, they have the official textbook, and all the textbooks are compulsory, and teachers will follow all the lessons in that textbook, and students have that textbook, they have all of the topics and all the lessons, from the 1st lesson to the end of the term, and everything is the same for the online system. And you're doing different here in this university right?

T: We all work with textbook, inescapable, generally that's always there, so I would work with textbook. I think it's good for students have felt that they have completed a body of work, this topic, this text, this week, for me that's fine. But for them to engage in it, you know, something I would work on, as a teacher I would set up some small leading activities to drive and find the interest, the connection with the topic, because otherwise, somebody's topic can be quite dry and as a teacher, we think, we plan, I meant things like: saving the environment is a classic topic yeah? And recycling and questions like "what do you do to recycle", you might make students feel nothing or feel quite bad about it, so as a teacher I'll be thinking on my feet or preplanning, and turn it into something: "what do you think about it", "what would you do if..." and be a little creative as a teacher, yeah. And also try to put emphasis on the students, you know, "can you do some research tonight?", "can you find an article which associates/connects with your feelings about it" or "investigate about...". So I try to introduce sort of investigative angle to think, to put it onto them. The other crucial thing at the University level is to get students to critically analyze as they progress, this tend to be the kind of difference between high school stuff and tertiary level, you know, so to be critical and evaluative of what they read, so you got to start that up early, so you know, is it a reputable source or things like that, you got to inculcate with that to work, encourage them to be analytical early, because from there they develop their strategy for developing argument. So it does not usually come easily but it's helpful to start that from the beginning.

N: So come back to the last question that I asked you, to describe a typical lesson that you do in this university.

T: Oh, as I said to you, I turn and throw between activities and techniques, so in the case of writing for example, what I like to see originally is what they bring to the process, so I will

get them/ they will have to generate an essay question and from that developing to a plan and an introduction, and I like to see from the beginning what skill they've got, what knowledge they've got originally. So that's kind of focusing on the process, but then what I might do if I see they need some help in this and to understand the requirement then I'll bring in an example. I tend to keep example back, because I want them to have their own voice and their own style, but then at some stage I will probably bring in some examples, make it quite clear, but it points out that it got some basic features that you need. So what I'll do is some analysis on example, yeah, I'll have a list of elements mixed up, they match the elements to the parts of the introduction, yeah. Then we'll do some language focus, you know I would say underline, highlight some expressions which you could reuse to structure your own introduction, you know, the aim of this essay is.. And I'll bring in some textbook exercises as well which focuses on language for introduction or academic language to you know. So it's kind of a build of approach to it and deepening it. And then of course the discussion element, so things to suggest "what else do you need to do", "what should you add" and this is where you can work with your colleagues, you can proofread each other's work, ask questions and state yourself some further tasks, "what do I need to improve my introduction", and that kind of building process, using a lot of reflective processes, a step back and looking at your work and deciding what is your next course of action, so reflection is a key thing.

N: That's really great. The teachers in Vietnam find reading essays maybe boring because you have very long post for students to read. What's your idea on that and what did you do in your reading lesson?

T: I think reading in class should be limited, I think you can read at home, much more effective actually. So I'll zoom in, I'll focus on a reading skill with a bunch of guide questions, you know, which I design or already there, the reading will have a purpose, actually introduce, I should have some critical questions as well where you identify the writer's stand and perspective, which might lead to a discussion of what you think about it. Usually I just have one reading on its own and might have some readings to compare, because this is what you do. When you're researching anyway, you compress, so I make it with some specific purposes/aims, rather than just readings. You know, I think you can best read outside class, it just wastes time, so it should focus on skills which they can take away, yeah, so we do work like that. It might mean you have to do some extra work, it might mean I select some passages, some useful sources and I generate some questions. You see what I meant? I don't mind that, that will help them guide further on, yeah. So that's it, micro skills are focused on.

N: Can you tell me how you teach speaking skill in your class?

T: 1st thing for me is to generate the interest in the topic, because then I think the students will have things to say, most probably. So I think carefully setting up an activity, using visuals or sound clips, asking for opinions, observation, evaluation. so questions are set up to get students to engage in the topic.

N: Can you give me an example?

T: yeah, I meant, I ask students to sometimes, you know, the container that you fill with artifacts that represent your time period, and you bury them in the ground with the hope that future generation discover this capsule yeah, which represent, as you see today, I get them to select a number of artifact objects which they think represent today, and that can generate a lot of discussion, so initially, I meant you can set this up as a group activity, students all have to suggest and discuss and agree and disagree on items to put in the capsule, yeah. We can do it start off individually where they individually select things that represent, I also tend to leave this activity with a reading about somebody who already did it, this can generate some ideas, so they can do on their own or do it in a group and have discussion. As a teacher, what I tend to do when they have discussion is moving, I meant look, I can do several things, I can work on before some language for discussion, I can set them a textbook page, we can do it in class as a short activity depending on the level of students, like can get them to listen and repeat just to get them more confident, you know, the language of discussion, agreement/disagreement, those things. As a teacher I monitor the discussion and I make a little note of things I think I can focus to afterwards, so that's the kind of thing, yeah. I think it's dependent on finding the topics which you think will work. The other way in finding the topics is: at the beginning of the course, when you do a need analysis and your interview, and your first tutorial, you collect ideas and interests, then..

N: So the topics in your speaking lessons are maybe not from the syllabus, you just pick up like that?

T: No no, they will generally be pulled from the syllabus, but if I find some material I thought might be useful as well, the topic generally similar and all the same. Talking about topics, not every topic has to be person's interesting, as a research, not everything necessarily interest you but you need to read about it anyway, you need to be informed about it, you know, so of course I do topics which might not be personally interesting but they need to do it, so I tend to focus on the skill, the reading skill, whatever skill they need, it's like the topic then become achieving skill, yeah, outcome.

N: And do the students get learning material every lesson?

T: Yeah, they will have the course book, they will have the same material book.

N: The course book for the whole course?

T: Yeah.

N: But every lesson, do you give them any more material or something?

T: If I found something which I thought could supplement or be an alternative, you know, a like for like, yeah.

N: And they have the official textbook for the whole course from the beginning?

T: Exactly. A lot of these pre-sessional, most of them have trips, excursion, visits, lectures from outside, you know, and it will be silly not to use that in lesson. So if you have the

course book but you went to the gallery the before, and they notice something, I try to make use of that material.

N: And all of those activities are included in the syllabus?

T: Yeah, I meant it depends on the course. For the art students, there were 2-3 visits per week to a gallery, that was part of the course.

N: For the course at this university?

T: No it wasn't, but I had 1 social visit every week, so we went to the cinema, students would tell you, we went to a local museum, yeah, so we did something.

N: And he said that you went to the park.

T: We went to the park, that was on the last. Yeah, you know, I just thought it's an English context, I suggested to them, what do you think for our last farewell goodbye.

N: So in the syllabus you just mentioned social visit.

T: That was social yeah, we did some museum, cinema, just some different contexts for us to operate in. I think really important, you know, group thing.

N: So what's your idea of listening skill?

T: Well, they have to prepare some lecture listening skill, you know, because this is what they will be exposed to, and most of textbook and course book are giving to you that will be video clips, lectures, ted talks, and you will have a set of questions and you will go through those with them, that's a big focus, and other University related things, you know, in one course book, there were a tutorial, example tutorial, listening so you have tool to talking, you know, for the students and they will have a set of questions. So I think it's just to cover those University related anticipated listening things, yeah. And you know that listening, you've got certain strategies, prediction, there's a predictive element which can generate discussion and building awareness of the University culture in England, you know, simple things like, you know, do you have tutorials in your home country? Are you expected to discuss things with your tutor? Are you in your country allowed to propose an opposite view to your teacher? You know, listening give you opportunity to discuss what you think about.

N: So thank you very much for this time and also for very interesting sharing. See you in the second interview.

T: You are welcome. See you.

Appendix 10. List of Documents

1. National policies including Project 2020, the 6-level National Foreign Language Reference Framework (CEFR-V), the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP), EMI programmes and other initiatives regarding changes in Vietnamese higher education. For example:
 - Decision of The Prime Minister on Approving the 10-year National Plan for *‘Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Education System in the period of 2008-2020’*. Hanoi: Government.
 - Decision No. 1505/QĐ-TTg on ‘The Introduction of Advanced Programmes in Some Vietnamese Universities in the Period of 2008–2015’.
 - Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg of The Prime Minister on ‘Strategy for education development for Vietnam 2011–2020’.
 - Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg of The Prime Minister to approve the Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF) in 2016.
 - Decision No. 69/QĐ-TTg of The Prime Minister on the approval, adjustment and supplementation of the project ‘Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system for the period of 2017 – 2025’
 - Decision No. 69/QĐ-TTg of The Prime Minister - Approving the Project ‘Improving the Quality of Higher Education Period 2019–2025’
 - Conclusion No. 91-KL/TW on continuing to implement Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW, dated November 4, 2013, ‘On fundamental and comprehensive innovation of education and training, to meet requirements of industrialisation and modernisation under the conditions of a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration.’
 - Ministry of Education and Training – MOET (2007). (Institute of Educational Strategies and Curriculum Development). English Curriculum. Educational Publishers.
 - Ministry of Education and Training – MOET (2010). Letter No. 2196/BGDDT-GDDH
Re. Guidance on construction and announcement of graduation standards for training disciplines.

- Ministry of Education and Training - MOET (2014). Circular No. 01/2014/TT-BGDĐT on the Foreign Language Competency Framework for Vietnam.
 - Ministry of Education and Training - MOET. (2015). Decision 729/QĐ-BGDĐT on the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency.
 - Ministry of Education and Training - MOET. (2016). A Review of Impacts of the National Foreign Language Project 2020 in the first implementation phase of 2008–2016.
 - Ministry of Education and Training - MOET (2018a). Total general education curriculum (Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT)
 - Ministry of Education and Training - MOET (2018b). General education English curriculum (Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT)
 - Ministry of Education and Training - MOET (2019). Ministry's Education Quality Management Agency report, 2019.
 - Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2022). Easy step guide on education cooperation and investment in Vietnam.
2. Institutional policies in response to the national policies
- language policies regarding EMI programmes and EAP courses in Case 1
 - VNU. (2009a). Directive on combining Talented Program with Advanced Program and Strategic Program.
 - VNU. (2009b). Temporary regulations on developing and implementing International Standard Programs.
 - VNU. (2011). Temporary regulations on 1st year ISP student education at VNU. Hanoi: VNU. <https://vnu.edu.vn/home/?netoffice/N554/436--Qd-dT.htm>
 - VNU. (2017). Decision 4848/QĐ-ĐHQGHN on attracting and administering international students at the Vietnam National University Hanoi (VNU). <http://admissions.vnu.edu.vn/index.php/Home/viewstatic/9>
 - VNU. (2023). VNU's history of establishment and development <https://www.vnu.edu.vn/home/?C1916>
 - language policies regarding EFL and EOP courses in Case 2
3. Curriculum standard documents

- Case 1: module specification documents (EMI), curricula, syllabi, teaching schedules of EAP courses
 - Case 2: curricula, syllabi, teaching schedules of EOP courses
 - Case 3: module specification documents, curricula, syllabi, scheme of work, timetable of EAP courses (PSE courses)
 - Different test samples (paper-based tests, online tests, oral tests and criteria)
4. Textbooks used in the three Cases
- The *New English File* series (Case 1)
 - Tactics for Listening, Let's Talk, Weaving It Together, Reading Maker, the Collins English for Exams series (Listening for IELTS, Speaking for IELTS, and Reading for IELTS), and The Best Preparation for IELTS. (Case 1)
 - Series of English for Mechanical Engineering and English for Tourism (Case 2)
 - RCA Booklet (Case 3)
5. Teacher guidebooks
6. Supplementary teaching and learning materials (provided by the three universities and teachers observed)
- Supplementary materials (listed in the syllabi)
 - Teachers' handouts (collected during observations)
 - Students' finished works (collected during observations)
7. Websites:
- Websites of the Vietnamese government (Project 2020, VSTEP)
 - Websites of the three universities
8. E-learning resources
- The three institutional online programmes
 - E-learning resources from other websites such as YouTube or TED (both listed in the syllabi and suggested by the teachers during the lessons observed)

Appendix 11. Schedule for Research and Changes

Time	Research Title/Notes	Research Design/ Changes/Practices	Explanations
Sept 2016	The proposed research: A Critical Examination of the CEFR-based English Curriculum in the periphery countries: A Vietnamese University Case study.	-Single Case study in Vietnamese context -CIPP Evaluation Model -Mix-methods design	The problem statement addressed by this research is situated within the context of higher education in Vietnam, where I serve as both a researcher and a teaching professional involved in the early implementation of language curriculum reform. This study was motivated by the necessity to investigate the 'implementation gap.'
Early 2017	A Critical Examination on the Implementation of the English Curriculum at tertiary level in the UK and Vietnam	- Multiple Case study in the UK and Vietnamese contexts - Mix-methods design - Three levels of examination: national, institutional and classroom	The multiple case study aims to address enquiries regarding what and how to teach in response to the increasing demand for a more globally oriented approach in ELT. The CIPP evaluation model was deemed insufficient, prompting the exploration of a more effective curriculum model suitable for cross-case analysis.
Aug 2017	Pilot in Vietnam	- Decision on the two university cases in Vietnam (EAP and EOP curricula): include	Scott's curriculum model was taken into consideration during the pilot trip due to its potential to establish an exemplary teaching framework

		participants of students as end-users of curriculum - Considering a new curriculum model and another case in Japan	relevant to the context of Vietnam and to promote a more globally oriented approach in ELT. I came up with the idea of the 4th Case in the Japanese context during this time after I applied for the Academic Exchange at Waseda University.
Nov 2017	Academic Exchange programme in Waseda University	- One interview with the head of Education Department about ELT in Japanese higher education and some classroom observations	Based on the information gathered during the trip, I identified the potential to conduct a case study at a university in Japan, which may enhance the cross-case analysis and contribute to broader contextual findings.
Dec 2017	Upgrade	-Multiple Case study in the UK and Vietnamese contexts -Mix-methods design	Despite the potential contributions of the 4th Case in Japan, I opted not to pursue it due to constraints related to time and budget.
Feb-Apr 2018	Data Collection in Vietnam	Questionnaires, Interviews, Observations, Focus Groups	A substantial volume of data was collected at two universities in Vietnam.
May 2018 – April 2009	Data Collection in the UK	EAP curriculum Qualitative data	Several challenges encountered during the process of obtaining permission to collect data have resulted in delays in data collection and a shift in methodology from mixed methods to qualitative data

			in Case 3.
2018	Data analysis: Within-case Analysis	In-depth interviews, questionnaires and follow-up interviews	The transcription of data required a significant amount of time. I encountered an issue with one of the questionnaires: I was unable to export the detailed summary report. I submitted an enquiry through the UCL system; however, the problem remained unresolved. Consequently, I spent additional time seeking an alternative method to obtain the necessary values for the findings.
2019	Data Analysis - Within-case Analysis	Observations, post-observation interviews, focus groups, field notes and compare results	Half of my field notes were lost due to a malfunction in the personal locker management system, rendering them irretrievable.
2020	CRS status	Cross-case Analysis and Writing up	My research has been impeded as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2021	CRS status	Writing up	I submitted a request for a CRS extension due to significant health issues affecting the entire family, and I was granted an additional year to complete my research.
2022	CRS extension	Finalizing thesis	I submitted in March 2023