An Investigation Of The English Teaching Programme At Primary School In Vietnam In Relation To Implementing A Curriculum Innovation

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An Investigation Of The English Teaching Programme At Primary School In Vietnam In Relation To Implementing A Curriculum Innovation

Khuong Thi Bich Diep

This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the conferral of the degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisors:
Dr Barbra McKenzie
Dr Steven Pickford

The University of Wollongong

August, 2017
DECLARATION

I, Khuong Thi Bich Diep, declare that this thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree Doctor of Philosophy, from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

KHUONG THI BICH DIEP

August 30, 2017
ABSTRACT

Since its introduction to second language teaching, the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) has become a worldwide approach and focal point in second and foreign language education policy in many countries (Butler 2011; Nguyen and Nguyen 2007; Littlewood 2007). In Vietnam, it has been officially presented in the curriculum for English language teaching in secondary schools released by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) since 2006 (Tran, 2015), and implemented in a curriculum for English language education in primary schools.

This thesis investigates how English teachers in a Vietnamese context implement the English teaching programme for primary schools designed by the MOET in terms of applying CLT. Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCT), with its notions of scaffolding and mediation, was used as the framework to explore teachers’ perspectives and teaching practices in relation to the following research question: How is CLT implemented in the MOET program of English Language Teaching for primary schools?; and the following subsidiary questions: How is CLT understood by Vietnamese teachers in this context?; How is CLT practiced by Vietnamese teachers in this programme?; How can CLT be adapted in this context to improve MOET outcomes?

A qualitative multiple case study was conducted in three classes with three teachers at two primary schools in a town in Vietnam. Data were collected during three months of a semester. Two cycles of action research were conducted, providing insights into what teachers’ understandings of CLT were and how they adapted their teaching practices to the MOET’s requirements. Various sources of data were collected from interviews, class observations and stimulated recall sessions.

Findings of the study indicate that teachers lacked understanding of CLT and did not adopt CLT principles in their practice. Instead, they used a hybrid of CLT and non-CLT approaches in their teaching. Using both CLT and non-CLT teaching techniques as scaffolding, the teachers in this study generated interaction and authenticity in the classroom, mediating students’ learning. The study provides evidence for educational policy makers, teacher educators and teachers to consider in relation to teaching a foreign language in local Vietnamese contexts.
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My heart is full of thanks to colleagues and friends who shared their time and laughter during the time I lived and studied in Wollongong.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my family, to my parents, my brothers, my sisters-in-law, and especially to my little nieces, Châu Châu, Cào Cào and Má Phính, who have been inspirations to me.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
EFL: English as a foreign language
ELT: English language teaching
IRE/F: Initiation-Response-Evaluation/ Feedback
L1: First language
L2: Second language
MOET: Ministry of Education and Training
NiM: Negotiation for meaning
NS: Native speaker
P-P-P: Presentation-Practice-Production
SCT: Sociocultural Theory
SLA: Second language acquisition
TBLT: Task-based language teaching
TESEP: Tertiary, secondary, primary
ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development
LIST OF TRANSCRIPT CONVENTIONS

T: Teacher
S: Student
S1, S2: Individual student
SS: Students
(Trans: *Italics*): *English translation* of Vietnamese speech
&: and
[…] : Overlapped speech
(...) : Explanation
S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G: Spelling
…: Unfinished speech
**Bold**: Emphasis made by the speaker
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Since the Vietnamese government began to implement the Resolution adopted by the Sixth Party Congress in 1986 called Reform (Đổi Mới), in order to develop the economy, English has become the most important foreign language in Vietnam. It is a compulsory school subject in the general education curriculum and in most higher education systems. Most students begin to learn English in grade 6 or grade 10 of the 12-year general education system. In the last ten years, English has been taught as an extra subject in some primary schools in large Vietnamese cities. However, Vietnamese students’ English competence continues to be a concern, as students are neither proficient nor able to communicate in English. This limitation in students’ English language competence does not meet the demands of employers and their work; thus, improvement in foreign language teaching and learning in general, and in English in particular, is an urgent issue.

Over the past decades, the Vietnamese government has approved policies to improve Vietnamese students’ competence in the English language. New curriculums have been deployed with language teaching methods focusing on communicative competence and language use rather than translation and linguistic knowledge. For example, task-based language teaching has been officially required at secondary levels since 2006 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006); while the age for starting to learn English in school was lowered in 2003 when the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) allowed English to be taught as an optional subject in primary schools. In 2010, the MOET approved a new curriculum for teaching English as a compulsory subject for children in primary schools. The present study was conducted at the time when the 2010 curriculum was being implemented around the country.

This study investigates the implementation of the new curriculum of English teaching for students at primary schools as set out by the MOET in 2010. In the next section (Section 1.2), the background of the study, with general information on the MOET programme, is presented. Section 1.3 addresses the problem and the purpose of the study. Section 1.4 introduces the main research question and its three sub-questions; followed by Section 1.5 which provides the theoretical framework upon which the study is based to answer
these research questions. The significance of the study is presented in Section 1.6; and the final section (Section 1.7) outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Background of the Study

1.2.1. Curriculum Reform and the Programme of Teaching English for Students of Primary School

In 2008, Decision Number 1400/QD-TTg on approving the 10-year National Plan, “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Educational System in the period of 2008-2020”, was issued by the Prime Minister of Vietnam. According to this Decision, a foreign language would be one of the compulsory subjects in the formal educational system. It would begin to be introduced at primary school and be continued up to tertiary and higher education level. The plan was developed and deployed while Vietnam was ‘opening the door’ to the rest of the world and on the way to stronger integration into the global economy. The aims of this plan were the learning of foreign languages in order to be more engaged in the multicultural world, and to strengthen the competitive competence of the Vietnamese workforce in order to develop the country’s economy. In this situation, English was chosen to be the first foreign language taught in the national education system of Vietnam, due to its global expansion and status.

Two years later in 2010, as a part of this plan, the Minister of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) signed Decision Number 3321/QD-BGDDT to undertake a pilot programme of English teaching in primary schools, in which English was to be taught as a compulsory subject from grade 3 to grade 5. The objectives of this programme were to provide students with a new means of communication while preparing them to become global citizens, and to create positive attitudes to and motivation for English learning for primary students while laying the foundation for their learning at the next levels.

In general, after finishing the programme, students were expected to achieve a level of English equivalent to Level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), outlined as follows:

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where
he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

(British Council, 2017)

The MOET has provided support for this programme that has included finance for teaching and learning equipment, teaching and learning materials, curriculum design, and language teacher professional development.

The curriculum and textbooks to support the implementation of this programme were prepared under the direction of the MOET, and the curriculum was designed with themes and topics familiar to primary school children’s lives. It is developed based on ‘the needs of Vietnamese society and psychophysical characteristics of children at primary level’ (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b, p. 4). Therefore, teaching English for primary school children must be linked to their real lives and interests. Children should have opportunities to participate actively in communicative activities, as they are placed at the centre of language teaching and learning, while teachers organise, guide and manage language teaching and learning activities (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b). The teaching methodology suggested in this curriculum is that of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); and teachers are given more autonomy to implement the curriculum depending upon the conditions in their schools and the language levels of their students. Even though the MOET has published a series of textbooks for this programme, local authorities, whose representatives are the Educational Departments, are free to choose textbooks for their own teaching so long as the textbooks are approved by the MOET. According to the guidelines of the curriculum, the four skills of language ability, comprising listening, speaking, reading and writing, are all practiced to enhance communicative competence, with priority given to listening and speaking skills.

In order to prepare for the new teaching curriculum and innovation in English teaching, and to ensure the effectiveness of the programme, the quality of teachers is of paramount importance. The MOET has organized workshops and training courses for teachers’ professional development, with the aim to promote teachers’ English language competence as well as their skills in teaching, especially the skills and techniques required to teach English for communicative competence.
The next section will address the problem that this study focuses upon and the reason this study was conducted, in relation to the implementation of programme for the English teaching curriculum for primary school students.

1.3. The Research Problem and Purpose of the Research

This research began when the new curriculum for the English language teaching programme for primary schools came into use in a pilot phase at selected primary schools in some towns and provinces around Vietnam. However, since its inception, the programme has reported facing issues in its implementation. A study by Nguyen (2011a) found that, in spite of the MOET’s support, insufficient facilities and equipment supply, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a mismatch between teachers’ needs and short-term courses on teacher professional development, were some of the factors impacting upon the effectiveness of this programme.

Before this programme began, English was taught in a number of primary schools in some major cities of Vietnam as an additional subject. This programme was the first time English had been officially introduced in the curriculum at the primary education level as a compulsory subject. Therefore, the effectiveness of the program needs evaluating. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the proposed English program for beginning primary school students in terms of implementation of the recommended teaching methodology, CLT.

Findings from previous studies indicate that, although most recent curriculums of English education in East and South-East Asian countries require CLT as the primary teaching methodology, the reality of teachers’ practices is not what is expected (Butler, 2011; Carless, 2009; Li, 2010; Nguyen, 2011a; Nishino, 2009). Findings of these studies show a number of hindrances to the implementation of CLT, such as conflicts between practitioners’ culture and CLT characteristics (Hu, 2002), teachers’ limited beliefs about and understanding of CLT (Nishino, 2009; Wu, 2008), and struggles with new forms of classroom management (Littlewood, 2007).

This is also the reality in the context of Vietnam. In 2006, a new curriculum for English education for secondary school level was issued by the MOET, from grade 6 to grade 9, requiring task-based language teaching (TBLT), which is considered a branch of CLT. However, studies on the implementation of communicative and learner-centred
approaches in Vietnam indicate that teachers’ actual practices are not consistent with TBLT practices (Nguyen, 2011b; Tran, 2015). In fact, Tran (2015) concludes that ‘the task-based curriculum innovation was not implemented in concert with TBLT theories by the participant teachers in the local school context’ (p. 171). Grammar-focused, textbook-based, and teacher-centred approaches are the main practices in the Vietnamese context (Le, 2007). For example, a study by Nguyen (2011b) shows that teachers’ lesson plans and practices ‘reflected a forms-focused rather than a meaning-focused orientation advocated by CLT and TBLT proponents’ (p. 257).

These challenges in the implementation of TBLT at the secondary level raise concerns for the implementation of this approach at primary level, as young learners of a second or foreign language have characteristics that differ from those of adult learners. Although TBLT was required for the curriculum of secondary level, official documents of the MOET for the English teaching programme for primary level identifies CLT as the primary teaching approach. Therefore, the implementation of CLT will be the focus of research in the present study, which aims to gain insights into teachers’ perceptions of language teaching and learning with young learners: in particular, what teachers understand about teaching and learning for communicative competence, and their practice in CLT at a primary level within the Vietnamese socio-cultural context. These understandings of teachers’ beliefs and concerns are arguably important resources for seeking a resolution to possible challenges, and have potential to contribute to the improvement of language teaching and learning in this context.

1.4. Research Questions

The study seeks answers to the following central question about the English education programme for primary school students in Vietnam:

How is CLT implemented in the MOET programme of ELT (English language teaching) in Vietnamese primary schools?

This question is embodied in the following sub-questions:

Sub-questions

How is CLT understood by Vietnamese teachers in this context?
How is CLT practiced by Vietnamese teachers in this programme?
How can CLT be adapted in this context to improve MOET outcomes?

Answers to these questions are explored in this study through using perspectives from sociocultural theory as the theoretical framework, as presented in the following section.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT), which focuses on forming learners’ communicative competence, has been suggested by curriculum designers of the English education programmes for primary school children in many East Asian countries, including Vietnam. This priority partly reflects the pre-eminence of CLT in comparison with other, previous language teaching methodologies. The effective implementation of CLT, on the other hand, depends on the applicability of this methodology in different contexts under the influence of a variety of sociocultural factors. In this respect, Savignon (2002, p. 6) states: ‘the selection of a methodology suited to the attainment of communicative competence requires an understanding of sociocultural differences in styles of learning’. This is at the centre of sociocultural perspectives on second language teaching: language teaching and learning are set in a given sociocultural context and need social structuring (Lantolf, 2000b). This section will present aspects of sociocultural theory, which provides the framework for this study.

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and his successors, who argue that ‘the human mind is mediated’ (Lantolf, 2000b, p. 1). This theory holds that language learning is mediated through social interaction and in taking part in socially meaningful activities which develop human cognition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006a). McKay (2006, p. 28) claims:

> When children are learning how to use a new language, they are developing a complex array of knowledge and skills. They are developing much more than knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the new language… Language learning is seen as a primarily social process rather than an individual process.

The way that higher forms of human mental activities including learning are mediated or supported through social interaction using material objects or symbolic tools is called mediation. Language is the most extensive among such tools and ‘the tool for thought’ (Gibbons, 2006; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006b; Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). Language, therefore, is a means of mediation of a mental activity. Learning occurring in
particular sociocultural contexts is mediated, and language learning, including second language learning, is a mediated activity (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011). Thus, in second language learning, language is both a mediational means in addition to being the end of the process (Ellis, 2003). An understanding of how teachers and students use language, especially their first language, to support second language learning will arguably provide insights into how English is taught and learned in the context of the present study.

Vygotsky (1978) stated that learners may connect their prior experience and knowledge with what is taught in the classroom to build up new knowledge independently. However, he argued that interaction with the teacher or more capable fellow learners may help a learner to achieve a higher developmental level. Thus, he introduced the notion of the ‘Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is defined as follows:

The difference between the child’s development level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The ZPD refers to the gap between what a learner can do independently and what that learner can achieve with support or assistance from more capable individuals. It is a learning construction zone. This notion of the ZPD implies the role of the teacher as a participant in children’s language learning. The teacher can support the language learning of children effectively if s/he understands their ZPD. It is necessary for the teacher to recognize when to provide students with sufficient guidance and assistance so that they can be supported in their movement from social speech to inner speech, to increase their level of self-regulation of second language communication: that is, without needing support from others (Nguyen, 2011a).

The process of providing assistance from a more expert participant (i.e. the teacher or a more capable learner) to a less able learner for performance improvement is known as scaffolding. Scaffolding occurs as a necessity within the ZPD, and it is considered as assisted performance (Van Lier, 1996; Walqui, 2008). Scaffolding is argued to be ‘tutorial behaviour that is contingent, collaborative and interactive’ (Wood, 1988, p. 96). The scaffold is created when there is a need for assistance and a learner’s learning
improvement is dependent on the teacher or more capable learner, so it is contingent. The scaffold, however, is temporary, since it is no longer necessary if the end result is obtained. This is facilitated where the relationship between the participants is collaborative. Scaffolding is, therefore, an interactive strategy, as there is more than one person engaged in the learning activity.

While the relationship of expert-novice participants, in which the more capable or expert participant gives assistance and guidance to the less capable peer, maintains the central of learning progress, participants of equal level may also achieve development (Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 2002) as they work collaboratively. Van Lier (2004), furthermore, expands the contexts through which the ZPD works out, as he suggests that learners learn not only when they are assisted by more capable partners but also when they guide less capable peers.

In Vietnam, on one hand, traditionally, the role of the teacher is highlighted, as in a Vietnamese proverb: ‘Không thầy đồ may làm nên’ (‘Without a teacher, you will not be successful’). The teacher plays a crucial role in managing, guiding and facilitating learning, and is considered a strong influence on a learner’s success. On the other hand, learning from peers is also important, as is expressed in another proverb: ‘Học thầy không tay học bạn’ (‘Learning from peers is better than learning from the teacher’). Apparently, learning in this proverb does not mean passively receiving knowledge from others, from the teacher or peers, but actively interacting with others, to gain knowledge and experience from them. Learners should not only learn from more expert partners (commonly understood as the teacher) but also from partners of the same or even a lower level (peers), and peers are considered as a resource for learning. This view aligns with the SCT perspective, in which learning is a social process and learners’ development is generated by/within social and cultural interaction.

It can be seen that SCT is an adaptive theory that provides a way to justify the cultural values teachers and learners are sharing, with the use of cultural tools and resources available in the context for mediating learning. Through SCT perspectives, second language learning can be described within social interaction and participation, which are considered as important to language learning success.
Concerning English language learning in Vietnam, which is affected by Vietnamese sociocultural factors, it is thus mediated by its own cultural artefacts. Social interaction in institutional contexts and available means for English language learning mediation used by teachers and students are considered. The notions of SCT presented in this section will help to understand teachers’ perspectives and practices when they apply the MOET’s curriculum as well as adapt CLT within their teaching context, with available resources and conditions. Investigating and responding to teachers’ understandings and their practices within their context, with its own particular characteristics, as well as documenting how teachers change or adapt their teaching to the requirements of the MOET’s curriculum, are at the centre of the significance of this study.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to understandings concerning English teaching and learning in a Vietnamese sociocultural context at primary school level, an area where there is currently little research. It investigates the teachers’ practices in teaching young students in a context where English is not an everyday language outside the classroom, with a focus on the need to improve the communicative competence of these English learners.

It also contributes to an understanding of the applicability of CLT from a sociocultural perspective, and contributes findings for CLT adaption in this Vietnamese context. A number of studies indicate that CLT as a second language teaching approach is not appropriate for all contexts, especially as it originated and was developed in Western contexts and is based on Western values, while being applied to an Eastern culture (Hu & McKay, 2012; Xinmin & Adamson, 2003). In addition, since its development, there has been a need to revisit notions and principles of CLT due to social-cultural changes and globalisation. Thus, it is argued that CLT should be implemented flexibly in response to particular social, cultural and teaching contexts.

In addition, this study contributes to teachers’ professional development, by supporting changes and improvements in English teaching through conducting action research cycles in this study, which is encouraged by the MOET. As mentioned in the MOET’s guideline for the curriculum of English teaching for primary school students released in 2010, teachers should have opportunities to participate in professional development activities of their school or groups of schools. Sharing teaching experiences and working
collaboratively can help to improve the effectiveness of language teaching. Thus, the action research in this study not only helped the researcher to investigate the teacher participants’ understandings and perspectives on CLT and English learning and teaching, as well as changes they made during implementation of the language curriculum, but also introduced collaborative action research to the teachers as a tool for change and improvement in their language teaching profession.

Finally, the following section will present the organisation of the thesis.

1.7. Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters. After Chapter I - Introduction, Chapter II reviews the literature on CLT and issues of CLT implementation. This chapter provides the definition of CLT and its relevant concept, communicative competence. It discusses the principles of CLT through critically reviewing literature on Krashen’s distinction between language acquisition and language learning (Krashen, 1989), and arguments against his view that only input is sufficient for language acquisition. These arguments focus on principles of interaction, form or forms-focus instruction, error correction, and authenticity, as they apply to CLT and ELT. Other issues relevant to CLT implementation presented in this section are the use of L1 and the roles of teachers and students in CLT. This section also reviews research literature on the relationship of globalisation to CLT, and issues of CLT implementation in Asian countries and Vietnam in particular.

Chapter III presents a methodological framework to answer the research questions. This chapter provides description of the research design, settings, participants, data collection methods and techniques, and data analysis procedures. Procedures for validation and generalizability are described in the last sections of this chapter.

Chapter IV reports findings from the qualitative data collected through the interviews, lesson observations, and stimulated recall sessions, in relation to the teacher participants’ understandings of CLT and their practices of CLT before, during and after the action research.

Chapter V presents discussion of the findings and conclusion of the study. This chapter begins with a summary of the key points of the study. Then it presents theoretical, methodological and practical implications and recommendations of the study. The
chapter concludes by providing limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.
2.1. Introduction

In many Asian countries, English has been introduced as a major second language (2003, p. 105), and the governments of these countries have released important policies to enhance the teaching and learning of English in their formal educational systems. Since the late 1990s, East Asian countries have implemented the introduction of English at the primary school level. An important component of these foreign language teaching policies is that the goal of English teaching now is no longer to simply master the English language knowledge but to communicate in English and prepare its learners to be successfully engaged in a global world. As a result, a Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) instead of traditional language teaching methods is included in the policies of these countries. The introduction of CLT is expected to promote the effectiveness of English language teaching and learning in the English as a Foreign Language (Bogdan & Biklen) context. Similarly, when the Vietnamese MOET approved the curriculum for the Project of English Teaching for Primary Schools, which was deployed in the school year 2010-2011, a Communicative Language Teaching approach was given priority (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b).

Nevertheless, as Prabhu (1990) has previously argued, no single method is the best for all situations, since ‘it all depends on the teaching context’ (Prabhu, 1990, p. 162). A teaching method that is successful in a particular context is not necessarily effective if transferred to another context (Mitchell & Lee, 2003). Whereas CLT is a broad approach that can arguably be adopted in a variety of teaching contexts, Holliday argues that its principles should be adapted and extended in local contexts (Holliday, 1994). Questions concerning how CLT has been implemented, and its suitability as a means for achieving the goals of the English teaching program with Vietnamese primary children, form the focus of this study.

In this chapter, after the introduction (Section 2.1), Section 2.2 will provide a background of CLT in an era of globalization. Section 2.3 and Section 2.4 will present an overview of studies of CLT in Asian countries and Vietnam, respectively. Section 2.5 will firstly provide key underlying terms of CLT, and their definitions will be reviewed. Next, the principles of CLT will be critically introduced, to make clear what CLT is and how CLT
is ideally understood and practiced in the classroom. The last section (Section 2.6) will draw conclusions for the chapter.

2.2. Globalization and CLT

Globalization, ‘the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary life’ (Goldblatt, Held, McGrew, & Perraton, 1999, p. 2), is driven by cross-border flows of people (ethnoscapes), of technology (technoscapes), of money (financescapes), of information (mediascapes), and of ideas (ideoscapes) (Appadurai, 1996).

Globalization has triggered new theoretical and methodological approaches to education in general and to second language education in particular. During the history of second language education, there has been a shift from grammar-based methods such as Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual to CLT. This shift has taken place in most parts of the world (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001) to respond to the demand for changes to language teaching, which

... concerned views on education in general, in an era of cooperation across nation-state borders in post-World War II Europe; what constituted language as the goal of language teaching; what was to be the organizing principle of language teaching as regards its content; and, finally, the methodology to be employed in language teaching.

(Block, 2010, p. 288)

CLT has changed the goals of language teaching and the competencies learners have to develop, from an exclusive emphasis on grammar elements and lexis to one on communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Block (2010, p. 289) observes:

Language user competence was conceptualized not only in relation to grammar and lexis, but also in relation to the way a language is used by members of a speech community effectively and appropriately in that language (in terms of culturally shaped pragmatic knowledge).

Although CLT has been applied to the teaching of many languages, it is its application to English language teaching that is most mentioned. In addition, it attracts the majority of language educators and linguists, due to the global position of the language (Block, 2004; Block, 2010; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). As Crystal (1997, p. 2) claims: ‘A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is
recognized in every country.’ Obviously, English has achieved such a role, and there has been a significant increase in the number of speakers of English as a second language. The number of second language speakers of English currently is much greater than the mother-tongue users of English (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). It is also the dominant or official language in over 60 of the 185 nation-states recognized by the United Nations, and the number has continuously increased due to the political decisions of many countries (Crystal, 1997; Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Regarded as a global language, English is currently the language most often taught internationally (Crystal, 2003; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008) and it is accorded priority status in the national curricula of countries around the world (Block, 2010). CLT, with the spread of English and English language education, has been exported and become the heart of English language teaching curricula in many countries (Leung & Creese, 2010). In Vietnam, English has become popular and widespread since the Doi Moi reform (economic renovation) in 1986 for Vietnam to join a market economy. The government of Vietnam has approved policies to enhance English language teaching and learning in the national educational system. At the Central Party Committee on education in December 1996, English was officially regarded as the first foreign language to be taught in schools (Viet, 2008). According to Nguyen (2005), 99.1% of all the secondary schools across the country teach English as a foreign language.

The next section will review studies of CLT in East Asian countries, including Vietnam.

2.3. Studies of CLT in Asian Countries

Asian countries such as China, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan have implemented a national curriculum for teaching English as a foreign language in their school systems (Butler, 2005; Hu & McKay, 2012; Lee & Azman, 2004). For example, China’s government introduced CLT in 1992, with the adherence of the educational community (Liao, 2004). The respective Ministry of Education in each of these countries has proposed curriculum innovation for ‘a ‘shift away from long established grammar-translation curriculum content and classroom practices, towards teaching for communication and communicative competence’ (Lamie, 2001, p. xv).

Research and findings on the implementation of CLT in these contexts (Lee & Azman, 2004; Li, 1998; Sato, 2002; Xu, 2010; Yoon, 2004) suggest that the use of CLT, a
language teaching approach originating in Western settings, appears to achieve limited success when implemented in Eastern cultures (Butler, 2005; Lee & Azman, 2004; Rao, 2002; Wu, 2008). One of the most reported concerns about using CLT is classroom management, as large class sizes and noise caused by activities related to communicative tasks may challenge classroom teachers applying CLT in these contexts (Lee & Azman, 2004; Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2007). Studies of English language teaching at various levels in Asian countries (Lee & Azman, 2004) have also found that there is both avoidance and reluctance to use English in the classroom due to a lack of student motivation, and of English language proficiency among both teachers and students. Lack of appropriate professional training opportunities has also led to misconceptions about the nature of CLT among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers (Sato, 2002; Wu, 2008).

A mismatch between CLT and traditional education values is emphasized as another major topic of concern (Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2007; Wu, 2008). The role of the teacher in Asian cultures is traditionally that of ‘supreme’ leader and controller in the classroom, while that of students is as receivers of this knowledge conveyed by the teacher. These traditional roles are an obstacle to the required CLT shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered orientation. The focus on content in more traditional teaching methodologies that are familiar for Asian teachers, rather than on process in the CLT approach, is another issue in applying CLT in these Asian contexts. The constraint of assessment systems emphasizing learning products rather than communicative competence has also led to limitations in implementation of CLT in these contexts (Ellis, 1996; Littlewood, 2007).

Despite the above-mentioned concerns, CLT continues to be supported by many educators and language teachers. As it contributes to and develops students’ communicative competence, especially in the case of primary-aged children (Lee & Azman, 2004), it is considered more appropriate than a grammar-based methodology for English teaching.

2.4. Studies of CLT in Vietnam

CLT was promoted in Vietnam later than in other nations across the region. The first documented introduction of CLT into the national curriculum of English language teaching was in 2006 by the MOET, for all grades and school types nationwide from
grade 6 to grade 12 (Le & Barnard, 2009). However, prior to this official introduction of CLT into the curriculum, several articles were published supporting the adoption of CLT in Vietnam (Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Lewis & McCook, 2002). The findings of various studies showed, however, that there was reluctance among teachers who were not professionally ‘ready’ to adopt CLT.

A survey of Tomlinson and Dat (2004) described a mismatch between teachers’ beliefs and what L2 learners thought of their courses. The survey indicated that most of the learners wished for more social interaction and meaningful communication during lessons rather than mechanical practice of language structures; while many teachers did not want to change their teaching methods, with over half of the teachers interviewed being content with their performance and not willing to change.

The teachers in a study conducted by Lewis and McCook (2002), on the other hand, reported interest in applying the principles of CLT. They equally valued fluency and accuracy, contextualized language use, and enhanced pair work activities. At the same time, they maintained traditional aspects of language teaching such as grammar explanations, a focus on memorizing, and traditional exercises marked on the board.

Other studies demonstrate that the implementation of CLT in the Vietnamese context has encountered difficulties. Firstly, the CLT approach is still a ‘new methodology’ among many language teachers. Earlier language teaching methodologies such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual methodology are still dominant in many language classrooms (Nguyen, 2011a). Secondly, like other countries in East Asia, Vietnamese education has been long influenced by Confucian ideas, which give prominence to high educational achievement through direct, teacher-led instruction (Phelp, Ha, Graham and Greeve, 2012). Teaching and learning in this context strongly depends on theoretical and academic acquisition, memorization, and examination orientation, while learners’ autonomy and creativity are not encouraged. These characteristics of the Vietnamese education tradition seem incompatible with the type of CLT features discussed above. Other problems such as inadequate training for teachers, large class sizes, and a lack of teachers, also impact negatively on teachers’ understanding and practices of CLT.

The following section will provide definitions of CLT and a critical review of understandings and practices regarding several key related concepts.
2.5. Communicative Language Teaching

2.5.1. Definition(s) of CLT

Since it was introduced in the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has influenced language teaching throughout the world (Richards, 2006a); and the emergence of CLT is considered a response to the need to improve language learners’ communicative competence. In the decades since its inception, CLT has been continuously developed and modified. According to Littlewood (1981, p. x), a communicative approach is a combination of attention to both the structures of language and its communicative functions in language teaching, to achieve a more fully communicative perspective; and learners should be provided with opportunities to use the target language for communicative purposes. Widdowson (1990, p. 159) describes its aim as concentrating ‘on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds’. In the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, CLT is defined as ‘an APPROACH to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE and which seeks to make meaningful communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities’ (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 99, capitals in original). This definition will be explored in this research.

2.5.1.1. Communicative Competence

The term communicative competence was coined by Hymes (1972) in response to Noam Chomsky’s (1965) distinction between language competence and language performance. He raised four questions in reviewing the connection of linguistic and cultural aspects:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is done.

(Hymes, 1972, p. 281)
While Chomsky’s concept of ‘competence’ focused on ideal linguistic knowledge shared by a speech community, Hymes’s view of communicative competence suggested that it includes not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use this knowledge in various communicative situations. Hymes’s proposal for communicative competence is believed to be wider and more realistic, and has been clarified by other advocates of the communicative view. ‘Communicative competence’ has become one of the key notions embedded in communicative language teaching.

Unlike traditional grammar-based approaches, which concentrate on building learners’ knowledge of language structure and learners’ ability to construct sentences based on that knowledge, CLT aims to emphasize learners’ ability to use language appropriately and successfully in real social contexts to achieve communication goals. Communicative competence, as a result, is identified as the goal of CLT. Through the work of Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence came to consist not only of a learner’s knowledge of the language itself but also knowledge of the social and cultural rules of the language, and knowledge of strategies to develop effective communication (Canale & Swain, 1980, Savignon, 2002). From this perspective, communicative competence is seen as the combination of four components:

1. Grammatical competence: learners know how to use linguistic elements such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.
2. Discourse competence: learners know to connect sentences to convey the meaning within larger contexts.
3. Sociocultural competence: learners know how to understand and respond to language appropriately in a given social context, depending on topic and functions of communication and the relationship of the participants.
4. Strategic competence: learners know how to avoid and compensate for communication failures.

(Savignon, 2002, Benati, 2009)

These components are closely related and frame the overall concept of communicative competence as developed by CLT theorists (Bachman, 1994; Savignon, 1983b; Widdowson, 1983). Each component cannot be examined and developed separately but needs equivalent and simultaneous attention to build up learner communicative
competence, as each plays a crucial and related role. It is argued that improvement of any one of the components depends upon and leads to the interaction of that component with the others and an improvement in overall communicative competence (Savignon, 2002).

However, as Leung (2005) argues regarding English language learning and teaching, these four communicative competencies are idealized for pedagogical purposes rather than considered for practical implementation in specific social and cultural contexts. He points out that Canale and Swain’s definition of communicative competence is fundamentally built upon native speakers’ perspectives on language knowledge and language use. Leung (2005) states that, while ‘native-speakerliness’ is regarded as ‘more preferable and more valuable’ (p. 129) than other sources of language expertise, and while ‘there are clearly native speakers of English’, ‘there isn’t a universal model of native speakers’ use of language’ (p. 130). It is hard to confirm what is standard and appropriate, as there are many varieties of ‘native English’: is something that is standard and appropriate in British English also standard and appropriate in Australia or America? Furthermore, native speakers of English are now a minority among English users around the world; and the learners of English learn the language possibly not to communicate only with English native speakers but also with other non-native speakers. Thus, there may be other standards and kinds of appropriateness due to different socio-cultural backgrounds in which the language is used. In his critique, Leung suggests:

There are structural, semantic and discourse innovations in the ways English is understood and used [...] In a world where students of English are not necessarily learning it to interact with native speakers of English, [...] there are sound pedagogic and practical reasons to pay attention to the existence of different varieties of English as a key curriculum and classroom teaching consideration.

(Leung, 2005, p. 134)

Communicative competence, therefore, should be considered in relation to the communication practices of a particular community of users in particular contexts, rather than being limited to that of an ideal version of a native-speaker community.

Defined as an approach and without any specific embedded theory, CLT can be understood and described as a set of principles (Brandl, 2008; Doughty & Long, 2003; Richards, 2006a). The following section will present key principles of CLT.
2.5.2. Principles of CLT

As introduced above, CLT does not merely emphasize linguistic but also, ideally, sociocultural competence. In CLT, meaning is argued to be paramount: learners develop communicative competence through ‘meaningful’ activities. Since CLT can be considered not as a method but as an approach with a set of principles, it is also understood and practiced in variety of ways. However, it has been commonly agreed that CLT is characterized by the following five features:

1. An emphasis on interaction in the target language in learning to communicate;
2. The use of authentic texts in the learning process;
3. A focus not only on the target language but also on the learning process;
4. The connection of the students’ personal experience with the language learning;
5. The linkage of language learning with the language outside the classroom.

(Nunan, 1991, p. 279)

A focus on meaning has been recognised as the principal focus of CLT, where the role of interaction is emphasized to maximize the use of the target language meaningfully in the classroom. Authentic texts, the learner experience, and the connection of language inside and outside the classroom, are important features to stimulate ‘genuine classroom communication’ (Nunan, 1987, p. 142)

A focus on meaning alone, however, was found not to be sufficient in language teaching and learning. As a result, ‘form focused instruction’ was introduced as one of the principles of CLT (Doughty & Long, 2003). At the same time, while fluency was identified as ‘an important dimension of communication’ and errors were tolerated (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 172), error correction, although initially rejected as a behaviourist strategy, was later identified as a required component of CLT (Doughty & Long, 2003).

CLT, as a set of principles, (Long & Doughty, 2005), can arguably facilitate second language acquisition. The following principles, adapted from Doughty and Long (2003) and Richards and Richards (2002), serve as guidelines for CLT implementation:

1. Learners learn a language through using it to communicate
2. Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities
3. Fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning
4. Cooperative and collaborative learning are promoted
5. Learners are made aware of language features through communicative activities
6. Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error

The purpose of the present research is to gain insight into the implementation of CLT by native Vietnamese teachers, in the MOET’s program. Therefore, the following key areas related to CLT principles and second language teaching are identified for investigation in this study based on their prominence in the literature: language acquisition versus language learning; the role of interaction in CLT and negotiation for meaning (NfM); Form-Focused and Forms-Focused instruction; error correction; and authenticity.

2.5.2.1. Language Acquisition versus Language Learning

Krashen (1982) described learning and acquisition as two separate processes. Language acquisition refers to a subconscious process similar to the process children use to develop their first language. The language is mastered without formal instruction, through meaningful interaction within ‘natural communication’ (Krashen, 1988, p. 1). Error correction and linguistic knowledge are not developed through conscious awareness but through a grammatical ‘feel’ (Krashen, 1988, p. 2), and language is acquired in an anxiety-free atmosphere.

Language learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process which occurs through formal instruction in the second language. The learners learn the language rules and are made aware of errors through the learning process. Krashen (1988) claims that learning cannot be transferred into acquisition: that it is just a monitor for learners’ self-correction when they use the target language. The learning/acquisition distinction has been challenged by other researchers, who argue that the terms ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’ can often be used interchangeably, and that information learned can be later acquired and stored in long-term memory (Ellis, 1985; Ellis, 2008b; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Towell & Hawkins, 1994).
In the field of second language acquisition, the concept of ‘input’ is ‘perhaps the most important concept’, as ‘no individual can learn a second language without input of some sort’ (Gass, 1997, p. 1). According to Krashen’s model, it is sufficient for a learner to be exposed to a ‘great deal of’ input naturally, and then ‘progress in language acquisition will result’ (Krashen, 1981, p. 104). This has been challenged by other second language acquisition (SLA) theorists and researchers, who stress that input alone is not adequate for acquisition to take place (Ellis, 2015).

Krashen’s model has been refined by SLA theorists and scholars who suggest that interaction and output increase comprehensible input and contribute to acquisition. These Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) models consider acquisition to be an ‘information process’ (Gass & Mackey, 2012). In his argument about the acquisition-learning distinction, Block (2003) claims that acquisition is not just ‘information processing’ (p. 113), because each learner is not a ‘machine’ but a ‘historically and sociologically situated active agent’ (p. 113). He suggests that learning is a process influenced by contextual factors and needs an investigation from a more context-sensitive and socially active perspective. This is in line with SCT perspectives that the present study is based on.

In the following sections, more critiques of Krashen’s view that input is sufficient for language acquisition will be presented.

2.5.2.2. The Role of Interaction

According to Brown (2007, p. 212), ‘…in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about’. He defines interaction as ‘the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other’. Although this may true, the nature of interaction and communication is not detailed in CLT, nor its relationship to the language learning process or the kinds of language to be used. This is often left to teachers and textbook writers to define.

While Krashen (1982) emphasizes that it is comprehensible input that stimulates learners’ acquisition and develops their language accuracy, a number of studies have demonstrated that exposure to the target language alone is insufficient (Long, 1996; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Swain, 1985). It has been argued that language development depends not only on input but also on interaction and output. Rivers (1987, p. 4-5) states:
Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language - all they have learned or absorbed in real life exchanges ... Even at an elementary stage, they learn in this way to exploit the elasticity of language.

Based on her study of an immersion program in Canada in 1985, Swain claimed that passive input did not guarantee full acquisition. The data revealed that the students in the immersion program did not obtain native-like competence in spite of the rich sources of comprehensible input they received. Swain argued that it was a lack of ‘comprehensible output’, which referred to the students’ language use and practice, that led to a failure of acquisition (Cummins & Swain, 1986). It was argued that the learner would likely ‘pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning’ if he or she was provided with opportunity to produce the target language (Cummins & Swain, 1986, p. 133).

The role of output is associated with the role of interaction in the way that they both emphasize the importance of negotiation for meaning, where language is negotiated and feedback is provided through interaction (e.g. Gass, 1997; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996; Long, 1983; Swain, 2006). According to Long (1983b), modified interaction simplifies linguistic input as well as providing learners with an opportunity to interact with others and make input comprehensible. Within conversations with peers, learners negotiate the meaning of a message; and when the message is understood, they pay attention to form, thus ‘paving the way’ for future exchanges (Swain 1985, p. 249). Interaction, therefore, is not just the ‘forum’ for language practice but a source of language learning (Gass & McKey 2006, p.104).

From a CLT perspective, interaction is assumed to be enhanced through small group work and pair work, and arguably increases the quantity of individual practice with the target language (Brown, 2007). It is argued that pair and group work maximizes the opportunities to speak among students; with Long and Porter (1985) estimating that the time for individual practice can be five-fold if half of class time is spent on group work compared to that in a whole-class methodology. It is also argued that pair and group work improves the quality of the language students produce (Brown, 2007; Long & Porter, 1985), since ‘genuine’ conversations could take place within pair group work. From this perspective, students are more responsible for their learning and play a more active role,
as they can initiate and improve communication, which is normally initiated and controlled by the teacher in teacher-directed methodologies.

Some researchers, on the other hand, argue that pair and group work may not guarantee student involvement in communication (Webb, 2009). In fact, Webb (2009) points out negative impacts of group work such as noncooperation among group members, inequality in turn taking, and negative socio-emotional behaviours. He suggests:

…the extent to which students benefit from working with other students depends on the nature of students’ participation in group work. In particular, such benefits derive from the quality and depth of students’ discussion, such as the extent to which students give and receive help, share knowledge, build on each others’ ideas and justify their own, and the extent to which students recognize and resolve contradictions between their own and other students’ perspectives.

(Webb, 2009, p. 2)

Furthermore, from a sociocultural theory viewpoint, Sullivan (2000) has claimed that, in some cultures, such as those with Confucian roots, pair and group work may conflict with cultural values, and teacher-directed activities may still generate learner interaction.

### 2.5.2.3. Form-focused and Forms-focused Instruction

With a primary role within the notion of communicative competence by Canale and Swain (1980), knowledge of language structures has been considered a core competence. According to the early views on second language acquisition represented by Krashen, grammar could only be acquired unconsciously (Krashen, 1982). In Krashen’s view (1982), learning is conscious knowledge and is the result of formal instruction. Formal instruction in most second language classrooms, however, does not result in acquisition, regardless of the age of the learners. In addition, Krashen (1982) argues that young children cannot learn grammatical rules due to their stage of cognitive development, so formal instruction will not benefit them. He further states that learners of intermediate proficiency or beyond, regardless of age, do not profit from provision of complex grammatical structures to achieve a higher level of language proficiency. The only function of formal instruction, in this view, is to serve beginners with comprehensible input that they cannot access outside the classroom.
Others have argued that, while young learners of L2 might acquire L2 in the same way they acquire their L1, adolescents and adults might not. Savignon (1983a) examined this view in her studies of primary immersion programs in 1970s, where some evidence from the studies suggest that, with young children, there was some, albeit minimal, improvement related to grammatical accuracy in the oral mode. This improvement was gained when the learners’ grammatical accuracy level reached the stage where their communicative needs were matched with personal experiences. This level, however, was not adequate for learners to communicate fluently with native speakers of the target language. Therefore, it could be argued that, ultimately, students cannot reach high levels of accuracy without attention to form instruction.

Long’s (1983) review of studies suggests that form-focused instruction accelerates learners’ learning processes, compared to those taking place naturalistically without formal instruction. His findings indicate that instruction does benefit:

1) not only children but also adults;
2) beginning as well as intermediate, and advanced students;
3) performance on both integrative and discrete-point tests;
4) not only acquisition-rich but also acquisition-poor environments.

(Long, 1983, p. 359)

Long argues from a cognitivist perspective that ‘learning must involve something more than conscious knowledge of “easy” grammar rules’ (p. 377, italics and quotations in original); and that, although young ‘children may not be able to develop such rules until the onset of formal operations, they clearly develop other kinds of metalinguistic awareness’ (p. 377). He assumes that adult learners also have the same ability. Moreover, through instruction, learners may attain the experience of ‘treating language as an object’. This experience is accompanied with abilities not only ‘to monitor with “easy” rules when conditions permit’, but also ‘to improve SL performance in language-like behavior in general’ (p. 378, quotations in original).

Long (1991, p.45-46) makes a distinction between ‘focus on forms’ and ‘focus on form’ in second language instruction. ‘Focus on forms’ indicates traditional grammar-based instruction the content and syllabus of which are based on linguistic elements. ‘Focus on
form’, however, draws learners’ attention to linguistic features while they are focusing on the ‘meaning, or communication’ in the target language.

Unlike the traditional language teaching method of focusing on grammar rules, the central focus of CLT is meaning. Nevertheless, CLT, more recently, does not reject metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of grammar rules. Ellis (2009, p. 233) states:

Nor is it correct to claim that ‘focus on form’ is restricted to occasions where there is ‘problem in communication’. Attention to form can arise didactically as well as communicatively during a performance of a task.

For the development of communicative competence, there has been considerable evidence from research findings to support the integration of form-focused exercises and meaning-focused experience (Savignon, 2002). Grammar is important; and it is argued that learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences (Canale & Swain, 1980; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993). Savignon (2002, p. 22) shares this perspective:

Focus on form can be a familiar and welcome component in a learning environment that provides rich opportunity for focus on meaning; but focus on form cannot replace practice in communication.

Under the view of SCT where learning is a mediated process, collaborative interaction with more capable people (teachers or peers) provides learners with opportunities to learn new forms (Celce-Murcia, 2015). In contexts where learners receive instructional support and scaffolding within their ZPD, they can accomplish tasks that they cannot do alone. In other words, thanks to support from a teacher or peers, learners are able to produce new forms accurately.

The most effective method is an issue of teaching forms in a communicative classroom. There are two ways that can be applied to teach forms in an ESL classroom: deductive and inductive reasonings. Deductive reasoning refers to a top-down approach in which general rules are presented, then applied to examples and practiced through exercises. Inductive reasoning, on the other hand, refers to a bottom-up approach in which learners observe specific examples of forms before generalising and personalising the rules.

Theorists and practitioners question which approach, deductive or inductive, is more beneficial to learners. The inductive approach seems to get more support as it linked with the nature of language acquisition where learners acquire rules unconsciously (Brown,
It fosters the learners’ engagement, involves them in discovering the new language, and generates their autonomy in learning (Haight et al., 2007). However, it is suggested that in instances, depending on particular types of learning, particular contexts, and particular forms, deductive reasoning or a combination of the two provide greater effectiveness (Brown, 2007). Findings from research show that the deductive approach is preferable in some contexts as it is time- and effort-saving (Farrell & Lim, 2005). It also benefits the learners as it raises their confidence and then encourages them to use the new language (Widodo, 2006).

Along with teaching forms, error correction is also a debated practice in second language teaching. The following section provides a review of error correction in CLT.

**2.5.2.4. Error Correction/ Corrective Feedback**

In grammar-based approaches such as Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods, accuracy is the primary goal of language learning and teaching. ‘Language is habits’, and errors are bad habits and should be avoided at all costs (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, p. 92). The primary goal of CLT, in contrast, is fluency rather than accuracy, especially at the beginning of the learning process (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Errors are tolerated and regarded as part of learning process (Brandl, 2008).

CLT in the early days reflected Krashen’s view that positive evidence, that is models that are acceptable in the target language, was sufficient for learners’ acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Schwartz, 1993), while negative evidence, that is the information of what is unacceptable in the target language, should only be provided on limited occasions:

> We should focus our students on form, and correct their errors, only when they have time and when such diversion of attention does not interfere with communication. This implies no error correction in free conversation, but allows for error correction on written work and grammar exercises.

(Krashen, 1982, p. 117)

Other researchers have rejected error correction, as they claim that it is unnecessary, ineffective or even harmful to language learning (Long, 1977; Truscott, 1996; Truscott, 1999). They suggest that it may cause learner anxiety and interfere with communication flow (Truscott, 1996). In essence, Truscott (1999) argues that there is no evidence for the usefulness of error correction, and that teachers treat it as a tradition and routine rather
than for any effectiveness it may bring. Krashen (1982) considers that language is acquired unconsciously, and that conscious learning including error correction has little influence on learners’ use of language in real life.

Researchers who support error correction, however, argue that it plays a facilitative and even crucial role in acquisition (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Schmidt, 1995; Schmidt, 1990; Sheen, 2004). Schmidt’s studies (1995; 1990) state that error correction leads to learners’ awareness of form, as it triggers their notice of the gap between their current stages of L2 and the target forms, and this ‘noticing the gap’ assists L2 learning (Sheen, 2004). In Long’s updated interaction hypothesis, he suggests that ‘negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS (native speaker) or more competent interlocutor’, facilitates the language learning process, as it ‘connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways’ (Long, 1996, pp. 451-452). A study by Ellis and his colleagues (Ellis et al., 2006) indicates that both implicit and explicit types of corrective feedback benefit learners. Numerous research results show that corrective feedback is effective for a variety of linguistic targets (e.g. Lyster et al., 2013; Nahrkhalaji, 2013; Kartchava, 2012; Elgort, 2011; Nipaspong & Chinokul, 2010; Yang & Lyster, 2010; Stæhr, 2009; Ellis, 2007; Vandergrift, 2007).

Error correction is also called corrective feedback by some researchers and applied linguists. The six types of feedback a teacher may give learners are identified as: recast, elicitation, clarification request, repetition, explicit clarification, and metalinguistic feedback; indicating that these types of feedback may range from explicit to implicit techniques (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Russell & Spada, 2006; Lyster et al., 2013). Carroll and Swain (1993, p.361) define explicit feedback as ‘any feedback that overtly states that a learner’s output was not part of the language-to-be-learned’, and implicit feedback as including ‘... such things as confirmation checks, failures to understand, and requests for clarification (because learners must infer that the form of their utterance is responsible for the interlocutor’s comprehension problems)’.

While a growing number of studies on corrective feedback have been conducted, the findings are varied across descriptive and experimental designs. This inconsistency may be related to the explicit or implicit nature of the corrective feedback type, the context
(laboratories versus classroom settings), and the intensive or extensive nature of the corrective feedback (Russell & Spada, 2006; Lyster et al., 2013).

From a SCT perspective, corrective feedback is a supportive tool for scaffolding. Unlike other SLA perspectives on corrective feedback, SCT focuses on providing not only correct forms and drawing learners’ attention to form but also appropriate regulation depending on their ZPD. Aljaafred and Lantolf (1994, p. 480) state:

> Effective error correction and language learning depend crucially on mediation provided by other individuals, who in consort with the learner dialogically co-construct a zone of proximal development in which feedback as regulation becomes relevant and can therefore be appropriated by learners to modify their interlanguage systems.

In addition to error correction, another feature of CLT that has raised debate among applied linguists and L2 researchers is the notion of ‘authenticity’.

### 2.5.2.5. Authenticity

As CLT focuses on meaning, ‘authenticity’ is viewed as a crucial aspect of the teaching and learning process. Authenticity has been viewed and defined diversely by scholars. Most define authenticity in terms of authentic texts, which are described as spoken or written texts taken from non-pedagogic sources for real communication purposes (Nunan, 1989; Sreehari, 2012; Whong, 2013). Harmer (2007) also identifies authentic texts as the materials produced for native speakers and not primarily for language learning. Authentic texts may be in the form of audio, audiovisual or printed materials, such as TV news and programs, newspapers, photographs, letters, and web-based programmes.

Authentic texts, it is argued, are used to create an authentic context in which learners can develop their communicative competence, as the activities created with authentic resources engage learners in ‘real’ communications. When they are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition are used. Learners are provided with an opportunity to react to real communicative needs so that they develop strategies for understanding language as actually used by native speakers (Canale & Swain, 1980).
Authentic texts, however, are not the only constituent element of authenticity in the language teaching and learning process. Breen (1985, p. 61) introduced a classification of authenticity:

1. Authenticity of the texts which we may use as input data for our learners;
2. Authenticity of the learners’ own interpretation of such texts;
3. Authenticity of tasks conductive to language teaching;
4. Authenticity of the actual social situation of the language classroom.

According to Breen, the texts themselves do not guarantee authenticity within language teaching and learning; rather, it is the learners’ contributions when they interpret the meaning within the texts, sharing their own experience and knowledge ‘in ways which are likely to be shared with fluent users of the language’ (p. 68), the classroom activities that engage the learners in real communication, and the classroom situations that socially motivate the learners’ activities, that are more important to evaluate authenticity.

Widdowson (1998) distinguished the concept of ‘genuineness’ from ‘authenticity’. He suggested that the text or the material itself can be actually ‘genuine’, but it may not be ‘authentic’ without social interaction between the language users, situation and the text. Taylor (1994) likewise considered that authenticity does not reside in the texts themselves but in the particular users in a particular situation. Velazquez (2007) concludes that it is not the authentic materials but the use of those materials that is more important and should be focused upon.

Magnan (2008) is concerned with authenticity in terms of authentic culture. She argues that communicative competence very much relies on ‘the social before the linguistic – whether portrayed through speech, documents, or other language products – because language is bounded by the society that creates it’ (p. 352). Nevertheless, the tasks used in CLT tend not to provide students with sufficient instruction for acquiring social competence of the target language community. She claims (2008, p. 255):

The reality of the foreign language learning experience is that instruction does not provide learners an entrance into communities of practice in the target language society. This reality contrasts sharply with the explicit goals of language education: helping learners become sensitive, understanding interactants in other languages and societies.
This problem relates to the monoculture in a language classroom where students share the same culture and language. As classroom interactions are grounded in the students’ sociocultural backgrounds and contexts, the authenticity in the classroom, which has ‘its own unit (of) discourse and its own interaction norms’, is ‘grounded in the students’ worldview’ (p. 358). This may result in activities that do not reflect the culture of the target language but instead the students’ culture.

Contributing to views on authenticity, van Compernolle and McGregor (2016), MacDonald et al. (2006) and Cooper (1983) categorize authenticity into two broad types: authenticity of correspondence, and authenticity of genesis. Authenticity of correspondence refers to types of language that correspond with the norms and conventions shared by native users, the type of language outside the classroom and in everyday use. This kind of authenticity includes text authenticity (e.g. Nunan, 1989), competence authenticity (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980), and learner authenticity (e.g. Widdowson, 1998). Authenticity of genesis refers to the language that develops in the classroom, within the context of language learning and teaching (e.g. Breen, 1985).

In addition to these perspectives on authenticity, MacDonald (2006) suggests that text authenticity should consider the shift of the ownership of English language from the ‘centre to the periphery’, that is, from native-speaker domains to non-native speaker domains. This shift of the ownership of English texts means that ‘competence authenticity’ should include the performance of non-native speakers rather than the enactment of solely ideal native speaker models of language. Learner authenticity needs to foster the learners’ interpretation within intercultural meanings; and classroom authenticity should consider recontextualization of texts for pedagogic purposes. He argues that authenticity of correspondence and authenticity of genesis should be treated as a whole instead of in isolation.

As suggested by van Compernolle and McGregor (2016), ‘authenticity is not a state of being that is achieved once and for all time; rather, it is a non-telic process – authentication’ (p. 4). Authentication is an ongoing process, and ‘is achieved between people from moment to moment’ (van Compernolle & McGregor, 2016, p. 4). According to van Compernolle and McGregor (2016, p. 4), people can ‘authenticate themselves, and (be) authenticated by others, in communication’; thus, in second language learning, learners can be authentic speakers of the language through the authentication process.
from moment to moment. They also suggest that learners of second language need opportunities to access the authentication process from pedagogy. In EFL contexts where it is not easy for learners to access the ‘everyday English’ of English native speakers and local teachers and textbooks are the primary sources of English, this suggestion opens a new understanding and a different view of authenticity to explore how teachers actually practice their teaching.

It is argued that, in an EFL context where teachers and learners share L1, a complete omission of L1 in the L2 classroom is inappropriate and unachievable. Thus, understandings of how L1 is used in L2 classrooms may contribute to insights into CLT implementation in EFL contexts. The next section will provide a review of perspectives on the role of L1 in second language teaching.

2.5.3. Use of Learners’ First Language (L1)

The use of L1 is a controversial issue in second language teaching. Aside from the Grammar-Translation method, other traditional language teaching methods such as the Direct Method and Audiolingual Method prohibit the use of L1. Howatt (1984, p. 289) states:

> The monolingual principle, the unique contribution of the twentieth century to classroom language teaching, remains the bedrock notion from which the others ultimately derive.

There is little work to show the relationship of CLT and L1 use in the language classroom (Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001). The main approaches of CLT and task-based language teaching do not have any discussion about the use of learners’ mother language (Brumfit, 1984; Nunan, 1989; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1998). Swain (1985, p. 86) argues:

> If ...the mother tongue is a central element in the process of learning a foreign language, why is it so conspicuously absent from the theory and methodology of CLT? Why is so little attention paid, in this and other respects, to what learners already know?

While emphasis is on exposure to the target language (L2), most mentions of L1 are for how to minimize its use (Brandl, 2008; Cook, 2001). An ideal classroom is described as having as little L1 as possible in order to maximize the use of L2 (Brandl, 2008; Brown, 2007; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). A typical view of the communicative teaching
approach is that L2 rather than L1 should be the language of real and meaningful communication; however, Littlewood (1981, P. 45) argues:

Many learners are likely to remain unconvinced by our attempts to make them accept the foreign language as an effective means of satisfying their communicative needs, if we abandoned it ourselves as soon as such needs arise in the immediate classroom situation.

The cause of avoidance of L1 use in second language classrooms may lie in the view that assimilates second language acquisition with the way children acquire their first language (Butzkamm, 2003; De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). However, as Cook (2001, p. 406) has argued: ‘By definition, the L1 monolingual child does not have another language; it is the one element that teaching does not duplicate’. Other reasons for resistance to L1 use in second language classrooms are concerns related to the decrease of L2 use, and L1 interference (Cook, 2001; Ellis, 2005; Polio, 2009; Turnbull, 2001; Hall & Cook, 2012). Evidence from Chavez’s research (2016) indicates that there is no support for these concerns.

More importantly, research and findings show that the complete omission of L1 in L2 teaching is not appropriate, and that limited and judicious use of L1 may benefit learners’ L2 learning (Atkinson, 1987; Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Nation, 2003; Hall & Cook, 2012). Auerbach (1993, p. 19) argues that ‘…starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves’, and that learners are then ‘willing to experiment and take risks with English’. She listed possible uses of L1 in L2 classroom, including negotiation of the syllabus and the lessons, record keeping, classroom management, scene setting, language analysis, presentation of grammatical rules, discussion of cross-cultural issues, instructions or prompts, giving feedback for errors, and assessment of comprehension. More recently, Lee and Maraco (2013) indicate that the use of L1 significantly supports L2 learning, in particular vocabulary learning and retention for young learners.

Cook (2001) considers that rejecting the use of L1 delimits the possibilities for language teaching. He claims: ‘Whatever the advantages of demonstrating ‘real’ classroom communication through the L2, there is no logical necessity why communicative tasks should avoid the L1’ (p. 405); and ‘the maximal provision of L2 input does not deny the L1 a role in learning and teaching’ (p. 410). In a review of research and perspectives on L1 use in the L2 classroom, Hall and Cook (2012) show that the use of students’ L1 is
inevitable and natural, and that it can be used purposefully to create and trigger communication in L2.

From a sociocultural viewpoint, second language learning is a mediated process in which learners participate in collaborative interactions; and L1 is an important mediational means (DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Lantolf, 2000a). Lantolf (2000a) states that ‘it does make sense to recognise that the L1 plays a key role in helping learners to mediate each other, and … in the appropriation of another language’ (p. 87). He also indicates that the use of L1 does not depend on learners’ proficiency in L2, as their native language is ‘strongly implicated in (their) identity as thinking beings’ (p. 87). Similarly, DiCamilla and Antón (2012) conclude that L2 learners benefit from using L1 regardless of their mastery of L2, and that ‘language instructors should not fear the occurrence of a student’s first language in the language classroom. Rather, one should endeavour to take advantage of a judicious use of L1’ (p. 185).

In language teaching and learning, teachers and students play crucial roles. Thus, the next section will present a review of teachers’ and students’ roles from the view of CLT and its critics.

2.5.4. The Role of Teachers and Students

A CLT approach is seen as learner-centred instruction; so, ideally, learners play an active role in the learning process and are expected to be more responsible for their own learning (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Richards, 2006a). They are not passive knowledge receivers who simply wait for language models from the teacher, but actively take part in learning activities. Through interactive and collaborative activities in small groups, learners do not depend on the teacher but find their own ways to learn. They are ‘co-constructor(s) of knowledge’ with their teacher (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003, p. 22). As Jacobs and Farrell (2003) observe: ‘CLT focuses more on the process rather than the product and encourages students to develop their own purposes for learning and to see learning as a lifelong process’ (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003, p. 11). It is therefore proposed that learner autonomy will be developed using this approach.

The role of teachers also changes, as in the CLT approach they are no longer simply knowledge providers but can be a facilitator, a monitor, and a co-communicator (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006a). Rather than
being an instructor to learners, the teacher in a learner-based classroom monitors learning by providing students with opportunities to use language meaningfully and creatively. In addition, the role of a communication participant for the teacher ideally allows them to develop insights into the learners’ problems and to provide them with important support when necessary (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003).

While the CLT approach shifts focus from the teacher to the learners, the relationship between the learners and their interlocutors in the classroom also changes as they seek equality among conversational contributors. The reality, however, is that CLT classrooms have failed to create the environments necessary for L2 learning that is relevant to the learner speech community. As Sullivan (2000), from a sociocultural perspective, has argued, the association of CLT with Western values of choice, independence, freedom and equality might not fit with non-Western cultures. More recently, Gibbons (2006) discusses a study by Wong-Fillmore (1985) in which teacher-centered classes more successfully improved learners’ learning outcomes than did those that were student-centered. Therefore, from a sociocultural perspective, ‘the instructional focus should not be on either the teacher or the learner. It should be on the activity of teaching-learning itself’ (Magnan, 2008, p. 354).

In summary, despite the dominance of CLT in promoting learners’ communicative competence in theory, and its worldwide implementation in second language teaching, there have been theoretical and practical critiques of CLT due to variations in understanding and practice. Generally, while CLT is presented and implemented worldwide, it has raised controversies among educators and applied linguists concerning its features. The features reviewed above reflect major issues directly related to the present study.

Holliday (1994, p. 165), however, has claimed that the ‘communicative approach already contains potential for cultural sensitivity which can be enhanced and developed to suit any social situation surrounding any TESEP (tertiary, secondary, primary) classroom’. In some contexts where group work and pair work may not work well, it is argued that CLT still enables teachers to implement meaningful communicative activities. Li (1998, p. 696) has also suggested that EFL countries ‘adapt rather than adopt CLT into their English teaching’.
2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on CLT, its implementation in Asian contexts, and the official instruction in the new curriculum for primary schools in Vietnam. The program of English education for primary school children is a preparation for a longer-term plan of the Vietnamese government for foreign language teaching (Thủ Tướng Chính Phú, 2008). Attached with this longer-term program, a CLT approach is seen as an essential teaching innovation to respond to learners’ need for communicative competence. Thus, it is possible that the effectiveness of the program also depends on the effectiveness of the CLT implementation. However, the way in which CLT is successfully practiced may depend on the way that teachers adapt this approach to the Vietnamese sociocultural context. Littlewood (2013, p. 644) argues that any top-down approaches that policy makers and experts impose may not be implemented effectively. He suggests that CLT should be implemented with consideration of sensitivity to local contexts.

The next chapter will outline the research methodology constructed for this research to investigate teachers’ perspectives on CLT and how they implement the curriculum and adapt CLT in their actual teaching practices.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, concepts related to CLT and second language learning and teaching from other perspectives were detailed in order to examine the innovation under study. In this chapter, the research paradigm and methodology that the study adopted to answer the research questions will be presented. Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 describe the choice of research paradigm, qualitative research, and case study. These sections are then followed by a detailed description of gaining access to the field and approaching participants, the participants themselves, ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis. Section 3.5 presents the methods used to conform to issues concerning trustworthiness. Section 3.6 suggests the possibility of generalization of the study. The last section (Section 4.7) provides a summary of the chapter.

3.2. Research Paradigm

The objective of this research study is to explore how the MOET program and CLT have been implemented in the context of Vietnam, and to answer the key research question:

*How is CLT implemented in the MOET program of ELT in Vietnamese primary schools?*

This key question will be answered based on an inquiry of the following sub-questions:

- How is CLT understood by Vietnamese teachers in this context?
- How is CLT practiced by Vietnamese teachers in this program?
- How can CLT be adapted in this context to improve MOET outcomes?

English teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context in general and in the MOET project in particular is constructed by various factors to which teachers’ perspectives and practices make a crucial contribution. Therefore, to answer the research questions above, a paradigm that draws upon social constructivism was chosen, as social constructivists view reality as socially constructed where ‘knowledge and truth are created rather than discovered and that reality is pluralistic’ (Richards, 2003, p. 39). Social constructivism seeks an understanding of the studied objects through exploring ‘subjective meanings’, which are ‘varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views
rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas’ (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). These subjective meanings are not just focused on individuals but are built up through interaction of individuals with others in their historical and cultural settings (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Potter, 1996; Schwandt, 2000). English language teaching in this study is explored through teachers’ interactions with students and other teachers, informed by their institutional, social and historical contexts.

Specifically, this research is designed to understand the construction of teaching practices informed by CLT principles, through the practices and multiple perspectives that Vietnamese EFL teachers bring to the process (Richards, 2003). This approach aims to gain insight into how CLT has been used and adapted by the teacher participants in the study, within their own settings, and at particular times during which the research took place (Schwandt, 1994). The research processes were conducted in the natural context of teaching and learning, and the data collection methods were designed ‘to capture realities holistically, to discern meaning implicit in human activity, and to be congenial to the human-as-instrument.’ (Guba, 1990, p. 78). The methods used, therefore, were qualitative.

3.3. Qualitative Methods

The present study examines the teaching of English in a particular primary education setting in Vietnam, with particular focus on the implementation of CLT as a curriculum innovation. The purpose of this study is also to gain insights into English teaching and learning in the Vietnamese sociocultural context. Since language teaching and learning are set in a continuously developing setting, the study required a research approach that provided a holistic view of study issues through examining multiple factors constructing such issues (p. p. 11; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Thus, a qualitative approach which aims to find various interpretations for complex and multiple realities of a situation was the choice for this study.

As Berg and Lune (2012, p. 8) define qualitative research:

Qualitative research properly seeks answers by examining various social settings and the groups or individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings
and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.

Qualitative research relies on the collection of non-numerical data, and is sometimes criticized by quantitative proponents as lacking reliability and validity (Burns, 2000; Silverman, 2011). In this respect, qualitative research does not meet the criteria that quantitative research requires. However, Burns (2000, p. 11) states:

> What is often not understood is that the criteria that one considers appropriate for quantitative scientific work in education and social science are not those that are necessarily appropriate for work that rests on different assumptions, that uses different methods, and that appeals to different forms of understanding.

Qualitative researchers often view human behaviour as ‘being fluid, dynamic, and changing over time and place, and they usually are *not interested in generalizing* beyond the people who are studied’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 35, italics in original). Behaviour is expected to be ‘highly situational and context bound, rather than predictable and general’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 35).

Burns (2000) also suggests that, unlike quantitative research which is based on experiment and statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses on multiple components and holistic analysis for validity. In a qualitative approach, the researcher develops a broad picture of the issue under study. The study may be viewed from multiple perspectives, and identifies various factors emerging from the research focus. Qualitative research does not just investigate the cause-and-effect relationship of the factors influencing the issue but also the interaction of these factors (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In regard to the present study, various factors related to English education in a Vietnamese context are examined, including: teachers’ behaviour and understanding; the MOET support for the program; school management; and other practice variables that might affect teaching and program effectiveness. The study was conducted in a natural setting where the researcher could observe the participants in the field.

As goal of this research is to examine how the MOET’s English language program is implemented; and to explore teachers’ practices, explanations and understandings of the MOET curriculum innovation in relation to CLT, a multi-case study was set up to maximize the richness of data as well as to improve validity and reliability of the findings.
and provide a basis for comparing the implementation of CLT practices (Yin, 2009). The next section will clarify the selection of case study as a key methodology of the research.

3.4. Case Study

Case study research is defined as a type of qualitative research in which the researcher investigates a bounded system (a case) or several bounded systems (multiple cases) in detail using various data collection methods to obtain insightful understandings about an issue (Creswell, 2013). A case study approach is a useful methodology for understanding phenomenon being studied deeply and thoroughly, as the researcher can observe and interact with participants in their natural context (Yin, 2009). This view is also shared by Stake (2006, p. 3), when he points out that a case study approach is developed to ‘study the experience of real cases operating in real situations’.

A multiple case study combines different ‘stories’ about a common phenomenon from single cases. The aim of the present study is to explore the implementation of a program of English language teaching for primary school children in which the teaching practices of several teachers (including communicative language teaching strategies) play an important role. Each teacher and the elements related to her teaching, such as the classroom setting in each school, consist of a combination of multiple aspects such as the teacher herself, the students, the English teaching curriculum, teaching and learning materials, and individual pedagogy, all of which impact on the effectiveness of the program. Each teacher is studied as an individual case, with the following characteristics:

1. The boundaries of the case are defined as: the English language teachers; one of the classes each teacher teaches; and the students who take part in the program. Although the wider community, such as the teachers of the selected classes and administrative staff, may affect the way that the classes operate, and students’ parents possibly influence their motivation, only teachers’ and students’ academic classroom activities are investigated in this study.

2. Each case is about the implementation of the English language teaching program proposed by the MOET. Key factors that influence and reflect this implementation are examined, such as: the application of CLT in the classroom; teachers’ professional preparation and development; and the level of MOET support.
3. The data collected from each particular school are analyzed and kept separately for the unity of each case. Multiple methods of data collection are used to gain a broad perspective on the MOET program implementation in each classroom, including interviewing the teacher, document collection, and classroom observation.

4. The cases will contribute to an overall understanding and evaluation of the implementation of the English language program.

In order to develop in-depth understandings of how teachers approached and applied CLT in their own teaching practice in the real context of the classroom, and to investigate the study from multiple perspectives, two action research cycles were conducted for each case, in which the teachers become co-researchers of their practice, with input from the researcher.

3.4.1. Gaining access and approaching participants

Four teachers were selected and invited to participate in this study. The four research participants were teachers of English teaching in three primary schools in Ba Ria City, Ba Ria – Vung Tau Province, Vietnam. The researcher met them informally around six months before conducting this study. When the researcher introduced them to the plan for the research, they expressed concerns about their teaching of the new curriculum and an interest in the research. An appointment with each principal of the three schools was made, to introduce the research and ask for their permission to conduct fieldwork at their schools. An information sheet was provided to each principal, and all principals were helpful and agreed to support the present research. (See principal information sheet in Appendix A)

The research at the schools began after formally obtaining permission from the provincial Department of Education and Training by document and the approval of information sheets by the principals. Information sheets and consent forms for the teacher-participants were sent immediately upon receipt of the approval letters from the school principals. All information sheets and consent forms were composed in English and translated into Vietnamese. (See information sheet for teachers in Appendix B and consent form for teachers in Appendix C).
With the support of the principals, the researcher met the classroom teachers of the classes that would be observed, and was permitted to attend meetings with the students’ parents at the beginning of the academic year. At the meeting, the research purpose and its details were presented, and parent information sheets and consent forms were provided to the parents. These information sheets and consent forms were also in English and translated into Vietnamese so that the parents could understand. Both verbal and written consent from the parents were obtained after this meeting. A brief meeting between the study researcher and the student participants at the beginning of an English lesson was arranged. (See Appendix D for information sheet for parents and Appendix E for consent form for parents).

During the time of the fieldwork, the lessons of all four teachers were observed, and the teachers were interviewed and participated in meetings to evaluate the action research cycle effectiveness. Nevertheless, during the class observations, it was found that one of the teachers taught some of the lessons in advance and repeated them in class observation sessions; as a result, she was excluded from this study in order to focus only on unrehearsed teaching and lessons.

3.4.2. Participants

The three participants in this study were female and teaching English grade 3, which was the focal area for this study. School year 2013-2014 was the first year in which the MOET’s program of teaching English for students at primary schools was officially implemented, after two years of piloting; and grade 3 is the beginning level of this program. For the sake of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for each of the teacher participants as well as the schools. The teachers were given the pseudonyms of Anh, Binh and Chau, and the schools, City Primary School and District Primary School. Each of the teachers were under thirty years of age and had less than five years of teaching experience, a common teacher profile across the primary schools in the province. These teacher-participants graduated from the Teacher’s Training College of the province with qualifications in English teaching.
Table 3.1: Teacher participants of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Anh</th>
<th>Binh</th>
<th>Chau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Service (Years)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>three-year college graduate (TEFL)</td>
<td>three-year college graduate (TEFL)</td>
<td>three-year college graduate (TEFL)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3. Ethical issues

This study abided by the regulations of the University of Wollongong Human Research Committee. It adhered to the regulation of ethics in terms of gaining access and approaching the participants as well as obtaining their informed consent (see Appendices A, B, and D). The participants in this research were three teachers of English and their students in selected classes. Because these students were aged under 12, this study was conducted with the consent of the students’ parents/caretakers. Throughout the project, potential risks that the study might cause to the participants were managed to minimize such risks. The aims of the research were explained to teachers and the students’ caretakers/parents, and the activities and the time involved in the research were discussed. All participants were guaranteed that their identity would be kept confidential. Thus, not only the teachers but also students in the present study were given pseudonyms. The teachers were made aware that any information from their class observations and other sources of data would be used for the research only. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from participating at any time during the research. During the data collection process, every attempt was made to minimize the intervention and interruption to the participants’ daily work.

The data in this thesis were protected during the process of data collection, data analysis and writing up of the thesis. For example, data were kept in secured places and not distributed to other parties except the researcher’s supervisors. The data were transcribed and translated by the researcher.

Every action has been taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants and schools. Any negative effects that might occur in the study were minimized, and teachers’ and students’ participation was fully voluntary and explicit.
3.4.4. Methods of data collection

As indicated, this research study adopts a qualitative case study approach to address the research questions presented in Section 3.2. As qualitative research, the purpose of this study is to seek meaning in natural settings (i.e. classrooms), exploring and developing understanding of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in a Vietnamese socio-cultural context.

The data collection process of this multiple case study started with initial interviews on the teachers’ initial understanding of CLT. These interviews were followed by two action research cycles as the principal method of collecting data. Data was collected in three main ways:

- Class observations;
- Stimulated recall; and
- Group meetings.

In this study, although the teacher participants were teachers of English language and could speak both Vietnamese (L1) and English (L2), they preferred to use Vietnamese to communicate in all meetings and interviews, as they felt more able to express complex ideas in their native language. This meant that it would potentially produce more detailed and specific data.

Table 3.2 outlines the data collection methods and techniques that were used during the study to answer the research questions.
Table 3.2: Data collection methods and techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data collection methods</th>
<th>Data collection techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is CLT implemented in the MOET program of ELT in Vietnamese primary schools?</td>
<td>Initial interviews</td>
<td>Audio-recorded Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How is CLT understood by Vietnamese teachers in this context?</td>
<td>Stimulated recalls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How is CLT practiced by Vietnamese teachers in this program?</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Video-recorded Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulated Recalls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How can CLT be adapted in this context to improve MOET outcomes?</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Audio-recorded Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the sections that follow, the data collection methods and procedures used will be discussed.

3.4.4.1. Initial Interviews

Interviewing is a method to develop insights into research participants’ experiences, beliefs and understandings, since they can use their own words to interpret and represent situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003; Silverman, 2011). Moreover, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), qualitative interviews may offer the researcher a considerable amount of rich data for a range of topics, and offer the respondents opportunities to form and clarify interview content.

The teachers’ perceptions and understandings of the MOET’s program about the teaching of English and any other issues related to the implementation of the program in their schools were an important part of this study, since they influenced the teachers’ practices. Therefore, an interview with each teacher participant was conducted at the beginning of the study, before the action research cycles began. Both field notes and voice recording were used during the interviews. The teachers’ answers, and the interviewer’s interpretations and observations, were noted. Note-taking was helpful, as the notes were used in the interviews when the researcher wanted to elicit more information related to
the answers and the topic being discussed, and for later analysis. It was impossible to both listen to the interviewees and write down all details, so voice recording was an efficient method to retrieve the conversations and avoid missing important details.

The initial interviews were not structured inquiries but guided conversations (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009) that allowed the researcher to conduct the interviews in a flexible manner. The questions were grouped into topics such as the teachers’ personal information, their teaching experience, the MOET’s program, and their understanding of CLT. These questions were asked in different ways, and modified and clarified where necessary in order to elicit more detailed information (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The teachers’ perspectives were elicited in a situation in which they were allowed freedom to talk and share their viewpoints in open-ended responses (Silverman, 2011). The interviews took place outside of school hours as informal conversations. The teacher participants were reminded that all information of the interviews was just for the study and that the data would be confidential and de-identified. Mutual trust is an important goal researchers must gain (Silverman, 2011). Stake (2010) claims that, by showing respect and trust to participants, the researcher can minimise their anxiety. In an environment of mutual trust and respect between the researcher and the teachers, the teachers were not hesitant to express their opinions and respond to the researcher with detailed and comprehensive answers. (See Appendix F for the proposed questions for the initial interviews)

The time for the interviews was also flexible, so they could be extended rather than limited to a single sitting. This flexibility was important for further inquiry to get additional insights on the situations occurring in the study. In order to explore the teacher participants’ teaching experiences, their understandings and perspectives of language teaching and CLT, their opinions about the MOET’s English teaching program, and problems they were dealing with when implementing the program, each teacher participant was invited to attend a personal interview at the beginning of Action Research Cycle One.

3.4.4.2. Action Research

According to the curriculum designed by the MOET, teachers were encouraged to evaluate their own implementation and share their experiences in the process of applying
the program in their classrooms. Therefore, action research was an appropriate approach as a sub-methodology for both the program teachers and the researcher, as it is not only collaborative and participatory (Burns, 1999; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), but also within the scope of the MOET requirements for teacher evaluation of the English program. Each teacher participant was a researcher of her own action and a co-researcher of the study.

Action research is the combination of action and research in which the gap between theories and practice is filled (Cohen et al., 2007; Mertler & Charles, 2011). It is a significant method for change and improvement. As Mills (2011, p. 5) defines it:

> Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. This information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, reflecting positive changes in the school environment (and educational practices in general), and improving outcomes, and the lives of those involved.

Accordingly, the teacher participants of this study played an active role in conducting their own research by investigating their own teaching in order to better understand teaching practices, and to resolve teaching problems. They were not only researchers but also the participants of their research (Mertler, 2012). They participated in collaborative action research in which they jointly identified the focuses of the research cycles, planned for the action, implemented the plans, and jointly reflected on CLT. They were not only practitioners but also planners and evaluators of the process.

While the present study evaluates the implementation of a CLT-oriented curriculum for English language teaching and learning, the teacher participants’ teaching methods were not always embedded in CLT pedagogy. Therefore, the researcher of the present study played the role of a supporter who provided theoretical knowledge of CLT. This was important as it helped the teacher participants to gain necessary understandings of CLT and guide them to group activities. The researcher of the present study also observed the lessons during the Action Research cycles, and supported the teachers with comments and advice relating to pedagogical problems when required by the teacher participants during their practices.
There is no single method of action research; instead, it has been described in various ways. Stringer (2007), for example, presents action research as a routine of three phases: look, think, and act. The present study, however, followed the four-stage process of action research offered by Zuber-Skerrit (2001), of planning, acting, developing, and reflecting. This model was adapted for this study to include four stages: Plan, Act, Observe, and Evaluate, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.
Figure 3.1: Action Research Cycles – Adapted from Zuber-Skerrit (2001, p. 15)
The aim of action research in this study was to investigate the implementation of two key CLT principles, of authenticity and interaction, in the teaching of English language in the MOET program for primary schools. In the scope of this study, two cycles of the action research were carried out, with each cycle focusing on a feature of CLT.

The following sections will describe the data collection techniques used in the action research.

3.4.4.2.1. Cycle 1

**Stage 1 – Plan 1**

Each planning meeting was organized with the participation of the study researcher and all teacher-participants. In this meeting, all teachers contributed to the planning. The teacher-participants made a plan for implementing the focus of each cycle, in terms of CLT principles and adapting CLT to their contexts, to reach the learning outcomes that the MOET required.

The initial interviews revealed that CLT was a new teaching methodology to the teachers. Therefore, the meeting began with an introduction to CLT so that the teachers could be provided with a definition of CLT, communicative competence as its goal, and key characteristics of this language teaching approach.

In this stage, the teacher-participants identified and limited the topic focus of their research so that they could investigate it (Mertler, 2012, p. 39). The teachers were concerned about students’ difficulty in remembering vocabulary, and suggested that real objects and activities related to students’ own lives would help students to remember and use the English vocabulary after the lessons. Therefore, the focus identified in the first cycle was ‘authenticity’, in terms of using realia and situations connected to students’ real-life experience.

Plan 1 was conducted in the first group meeting. The development of this meeting is illustrated in Figure 3.2.
Stage 2 – Act 1

This stage was the action stage involving the implementation of the planning. The teachers of this study implemented the plans they made in the planning stage to explore how they could be applied in their classes to resolve problems, and experimentally to improve the teaching. Here the focus was on authenticity through the use of materials and resources primarily not produced for language teaching: the teachers used realia and...
created situations and activities to engage the students in language practice and communicative language use.

**Stage 3 – Observation 1**

Observation is a major data collection method in qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Silverman, 2011; Yin, 2009), and it was one of the primary stages of each action research cycle. Observation 1 involved visits to each of the three classrooms. By undertaking observations, the researcher sought to capture the ‘reality’ of classroom practices.

The procedure of class observations is illustrated in Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3: Action Research – Observation 1.](image)

As illustrated above, ‘observation’ in the context of this research refers to both participant observation and non-participant observation. In this stage of an action research cycle, the teacher participants of the study were also co-researchers, and undertook participant observation. They observed their own class activities while participating in these activities, with their role as a participant more prominent than their role as a researcher (Creswell, 2013). Non-participant observation was made by the researcher of the present study (Berge & Lune 2012). The researcher of this study did not have direct involvement with the class activities (Creswell, 2013).
The first cycle was conducted over six weeks, during which there were twenty lessons conducted for each class. This resulted in twenty participant observations, and in addition there were five non-participant observations of each focus class.

The teacher-participants observed their own activities (e.g. their teaching steps, the students’ response, teacher-student interactions, and student-student interaction), and after the lesson took notes for later analysis and sharing with the other teacher-researchers. They observed how CLT-based activities might work with their students and what they might do to improve the activities in their teaching context.

The study researcher visited the selected classes according to the timetables the teachers provided, and made observations, took notes, and video-recorded the lessons.

A potential disadvantage of this method is that it could potentially influence the class action due to the appearance of an ‘outside member’ in the class (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Thus, in order to reduce this disadvantage, the researcher chose a seat at the back of the class and silently made notes and took photographs, and made a video recording. However, sometimes, in order to gain closer pictures and information on the students’ activities, the researcher moved around the class.

Techniques used for observation included field notes, and audio and video recording of the class lessons. Field notes were taken during the class observations, and the notes were supplementary resources when technologies were not available or could not be used. The researcher also used field notes for additional details that technologies could not capture such as during a discussion about a lesson or part of a lesson in an informal conversation outside the classroom. The researcher noted the details of the observations, ideas, and evaluation, for later use. Audio-video recording required more technical skills, but was a powerful means to collect and save the data (Flick et al., 2007; Mills, 2011), as they could be replayed at any time. These recordings were used as a source of data as well as a source for peer analysis and discussions later on. Some selected video recordings of the class observations were replayed to recall the lessons in the group meetings and in personal stimulated recall sessions.

There were 20 lesson observations in Action Research Cycle One for each class conducted by each teacher. While a cycle included 20 lesson observations of each class, the study researcher only observed one lesson a week, as agreed at the beginning of the
fieldwork, accomplishing a total of 15 observations in three classes, at the same time that the teacher participants were teaching and observing their own teaching. Therefore, there were 5 non-participant observations and 20 participant observations for each class.

Each observation conducted by either the study researcher and/or the teacher-participants included one lesson of each class per week, with each lesson taking 35 minutes. The class lessons and activities were recorded on video. The data collected from these class observations were sources for the discussions among the researcher and the teachers at the recall interviews and the group meetings.

**Stage 4 – Evaluation 1**

This stage consisted of stimulated recall interviews with the teacher-participants, and a group meeting for the first cycle evaluation and for planning for the second cycle. The procedure for this stage is demonstrated in Figure 3.4.

![Figure 3.4: Action Research – Evaluation 1.]

**Stimulated Recall Session 1**

Stimulated recall in this research refers to the replay of video recordings of a teacher’s lesson with the teacher present, in order to stimulate a commentary upon the teacher’s
thought processes at the time (Calderhead, 1981). This technique gave the teachers a chance to trigger their memories and review themselves in action (Dempsey, 2010). During these stimulated recall sessions, selected episodes of lessons were shown to the teachers. The teachers’ perspectives on CLT were elicited through their interpretation and commentary on their own teaching practices.

In the first stage of the cycle, the teacher-participants were asked about their practices in terms of the focus on authenticity. Selected lesson episodes were those related to the use of realia and communicative activities.

Due to time limitations and the teachers’ workloads, the lessons were not recalled immediately after the class observations but were selected and shown after each action research cycle. Therefore, stimulated recall sessions were also considered in the reflection stage in the action research cycle, as the teachers evaluated the effectiveness of their own teaching practices. However, right after each lesson, whenever the teacher participants had time, they and the study researcher had quick and informal discussions about the lessons.

Calderhead (1981) points out three main categories of factors that may influence fuller recall commentaries. These factors are, anxiety and stress of the participants, tacit knowledge to be verbalized (Polanyi, 1967), and the participants’ preparation for the recall process. In order to minimize these negative influences, a rapport between the researcher and the teacher participants was formed, so that the teachers were aware that their opinions were respected and useful for the research and their own teaching, and they felt safe and confident to tell what they really thought rather than what they assumed the researcher wanted to hear from them.

The recalls were carried out personally and in an informal atmosphere, so that the teachers were not hesitant to share their ideas when specific information about their thoughts on the lessons was elicited. Each meeting for the recalls was completed within two hours.

**Group Meeting 1:**

In this first stage, the teacher-participants and study researcher reflected on, commented on, and evaluated classroom practices. This was a crucial stage of action research, for the teacher-participants to ‘review what had been done, determine its effectiveness, and make
decisions about possible revision for future implementations of the project’ (Mertler, 2012, p. 45).

The teacher-participants of this study examined the outcomes of their students and the effectiveness of their practice of CLT through the students’ performance. The collected data such as audio/video recordings of students’ class assignments were analyzed and shared among the participants. Achievements and shortcomings of the CLT practices were discussed, to draw upon each other’s experiences for the next cycle of action research. Identification and planning for the next cycle also took place in this step.

While the stimulated recall sessions emphasized individual teachers’ viewpoints, the group meeting created interaction and cooperation among the teachers as group members (Berg & Lune, 2012). The teachers contributed to the plans and evaluated their own work as well as the work of others. Several episodes of class observations were shown during the meetings, and the teachers provided their commentaries on these lessons in terms of CLT features and shared experiences.

A limitation of group meetings was that the more experienced teachers sometimes dominated while the others hesitated to share their perspectives. In such cases, the researcher asked questions and provided encouragement so that all teachers could share their views.

3.4.4.2.2. Cycle 2

Stage 1 – Plan 2

Plan 2 was carried out in the second group meeting, after the first cycle of action research reflection. This stage process is demonstrated in Figure 3.5
The teachers identified that some students could not follow the lessons and teachers did not have enough time to practice or check all students’ work. Pair and group work was suggested, to increase opportunities for language practice, language use and language monitoring. Thus, interaction became the focus of Action Research Cycle Two. The teachers suggested that students might assist each other to fulfil the tasks assigned. They could also learn from each other while they were working in groups and pairs. Activities for pair work and group work would relate to the topics of the lessons in the curriculum, and authenticity would continue to be improved.

Stage 2 – Act 2

The teacher-participants implemented the plan made in the previous meeting to improve their teaching practice. As the focus of Cycle Two was interaction, they organized activities in which students collaborated with their peers in pairs or groups.

Due to the seating arrangement in the classrooms, the teachers sometimes had to make changes in students’ seating to make the classroom environment more appropriate for the activities.
Stage 3 – Observation 2

During the stage of Act 2, the study researcher and the teacher-participants observed and collected data. The procedure of class observations is illustrated in Figure 3.6.

![Figure 3.6: Action Research – Observe 2.](image)

As in Cycle One, this stage also consisted of both participant observation and non-participant observation. During this stage, the teacher-participants observed their implementation of the stage focus – interaction – and took notes on their observations. The study researcher observed the teachers’ lessons without direct involvement. The students’ engagement, their interaction in the activities, and the effectiveness of the activities, were the focus of the observation. The observations were video-recorded, audio-recorded and field noted.

It was planned that each of the teacher-participants observed her own practices within twenty lessons of this cycle, and five of these lessons were observed by the study researcher according to the timetables the teacher provided. Nevertheless, due to an unexpected natural disaster in the province, aside from two classes, one lesson of participation observation and non-participation observation was cancelled.
Stage 4 – Evaluation 2

This stage consisted of stimulated recall interviews with the teacher-participants and a group meeting for the second cycle reflection. The procedure of this stage is demonstrated in Figure 3.7.

**Stimulated Recall Sessions 2**

In this session, the study researcher replayed the video recording of each teacher’s selected lesson episode, in order to stimulate a commentary upon the teacher’s thought processes during the lesson. The teachers’ perspectives on CLT, focusing on students’ interaction, were elicited through their interpretation and commentary on the class activities. The teachers were asked about the effectiveness of pair work and group work, and of the activities of the whole class, in terms of creating and enhancing interaction among students and between students and the teachers.

Like Stimulated Recall Session for Cycle One, the stimulated recall interviews of this cycle were not conducted immediately after the class observations. The lesson episodes were selected and shown at the end of the action research cycle, and they were the reflection stage of the individual teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching practices.
Stress and anxiety were not strong factors influencing the recall commentaries, due to the rapport established since the first cycle. The teachers were more familiar with the process and felt comfortable to give their commentaries. The teachers were encouraged to share their own opinions about their practices, and about the students’ activities, in the recalled lesson episodes.

*Group Meeting 2*

In this second stage, selected video recordings of the teachers’ lessons were shown, and the teachers commented on these lessons. All teacher-participants and the study researcher reflected, commented, and evaluated classroom practices related to the focus of Cycle Two. The teacher-participants examined the effectiveness of interactive activities. They evaluated how students interacted and collaborated with each other in the activities to fulfil the tasks, and how they created authentic communication during their work. They not only provided commentaries about their colleagues’ practices but also gave suggestion for the lessons.

Although the more experienced teachers were more dominant in some instances of the meeting, the less experienced had opportunities to learn from the more experienced. To encourage the teachers who hesitated to share their perspectives, the study researcher asked questions and created a discussion context that invited all participants to contribute.

**3.4.5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis of this study was an iterative process in which the data were repeatedly researched, revised, categorized, coded, and compared. This process is described in Figure 3.8, adapted from Creswell (2014, p. 261)
3.4.5.1. **Preparing Data for Analysis**

3.4.5.1.1. **Organizing Data**

Organizing data is identified the first step of data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2006; Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006). It helps the researchers to understand the data that will support data analysis and data interpretation (Creswell, 2013; Kervin et al., 2006). Folders and computer databases are suggested as being effective ways to save and
organize collected data (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2006). The data of this study were initially organized into file folders for individual cases. Then, each case had sub-file folders labelled by types of data collection techniques: audio recordings, video recordings, and text documents. These materials were then divided into folders: interviews, observations, and text documents. Aside from written documents, all documents collected using digital equipment were stored in the study researcher’s computers. All forms of data had duplicated copies.

3.4.5.1.2. Transcribing Data

Transcribing data, which refers to the process of transferring audio-video recordings or field notes into texts, is an essential step in the research activities (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Silverman, 2011). Transcribing every word provides the details of audio-visual data in an accessible format (Creswell, 2014; Flick et al., 2007; Silverman, 2011). Because both Vietnamese and English were used in the data collected, the interviews, observations and group meetings in this study were transcribed in the languages used. Since Vietnamese was used, these data were translated into English after being transcribed.

3.4.5.2. Reading through data

This step helped the researcher to capture a fuller meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2005). The data were read and reviewed several times so that the researcher could develop a deeper understanding. The transcripts were read entirely several times to get a sense of the data as a whole, before breaking them into parts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Kervin et al., 2006). Each time the database was read, a deeper understanding about the information provided by the participants was developed. After this step, the different segments of the data were then categorized.

While the transcripts were being read, important statements and incidents were highlighted. Notes on ideas coming to mind were made in the margins of the transcripts at the same time, and kept as a record for later possible categories and interpretations. It was noticed that, during the transcript readings, some topics reappeared. These repeated topics were identified as potential sources for coding the transcripts.
3.4.5.3. Coding Data

Coding process was conducted simultaneously with preparing and reading through data. While the data were being organized, transcribing and translating, and read repeatedly, they were noted and labelled with codes. This process was cycled, and the codes were revised and refined during analysis.

Two procedures of coding were conducted in this study: a procedure for initial interviews and stimulated recall sessions; and a procedure for lesson observations.

3.4.5.3.1. Coding initial interviews and stimulated recall sessions

For the initial interviews and stimulated recall sessions, the data coding process adapted the practical steps suggested by Strauss and Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss, 1987; 1998) and Charmaz (2006). This procedure comprises three steps: open coding, focused coding, and theme identification.

The data coding process is shown in Figure 3.9.

![Figure 3.9: Process of theme identification for initial interviews and stimulated recall sessions](image)

The first step is described as the initial coding process, or open coding process (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss, 1987). In this step, the researcher remains open to creating new themes and to changing the initial codes (Charmaz, 2006; Neuman, 2014; Strauss, 1987). While the data were being organizing and read through, the open codes relevant to the teachers’
perspectives and teaching practices were identified. Important words or phrases were coloured in red. Statements related to CLT characteristics and concepts were afforded particular consideration and attention. There were initially a large number of open codes; however, these decreased in number as codes were telescoped into broader coding categories, and finally themes were identified, as the coding process proceeded.

Table 3.3 presents an example of the initial coding process applied to the first case, Anh (A).

Table 3.3: Example of initial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extracts</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| T2: Em thấy là hoạt động văy nó hay. Minh dăy 1 mẫu câu. 1 câu thực hành với học sinh từng đủa một thi rất mất thời gian. Nhưng mình dăy xong rói làm màu giữa cố với trò, rồi giữa trò với trò, xong rói đưa cái đó xuống cho tự nó tự làm với nhau, được tiếp nối nhiều hơn và hoạt động nhiều hơn. (Trans: I think these activities are good. I teach a structure. It’ll be very time-consuming if I practice with every student. But if I model it, then call some students to model it, then let students to do the activity (in pair or group), they’ll have more opportunities to speak) | 22. Group and pairs are good  
23. Insufficient time to work with every student  
24. Modelling after form instructions  
25. Students practice in pairs or groups |

(See Appendix G for a longer example of initial coding)

The second step of data coding was focused coding, in which the initial codes were selected and sifted (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The most significant and frequent codes were used for the subsequent step. Redundant codes and codes that referred to similar topics were grouped and relabeled. Large amounts of data were sifted and reduced into a smaller number. Other codes that did not specifically give evidence for answering the research questions were disregarded. CLT concepts were still attended to for coding.

Table 3.4 presents the second coding process applied to the first case, Anh (A). This is an example from coding for initial interviews. In this example, the codes were made based
on the teacher’s perspectives on CLT as well as her views on second language learning and teaching.

**Table 3.4: Example of the second coding process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Focused codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Lesson plans vs actual class activities</td>
<td>FA1. Using flexible teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Lesson plans strictly follow a format</td>
<td>• A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Actual activities are flexible</td>
<td>• A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Example of changing order of activities in class</td>
<td>• A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Teaching grammar first</td>
<td>• A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Understanding grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7. Video recording at language centre</td>
<td>FA2. Teaching forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8. Managers’ observations &amp; suggestions</td>
<td>• A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9. Benefiting from the recordings</td>
<td>• A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10. New vice-principal</td>
<td>• A15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11. Encouraging group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13. Activities causing noise</td>
<td>• A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14. Preferring pair &amp; group work</td>
<td>• A13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15. Pair &amp; group work for every grammar structure</td>
<td>• A18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16. Changing students’ seating for activities</td>
<td>• A20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A17. Same partner causing students to be bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18. Activities causing noise</td>
<td>FA7. Perspectives on pair and group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A19. Different perspectives of two vice-principals</td>
<td>• A13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A20. Closing the doors to prevent noise going out</td>
<td>• A14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendix H for a longer example of second coding process)

The last phase of coding was to reduce the list of codes to arrive at themes. When all data were already coded, these codes were compared, organized and categorized to identify broader categories and themes (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Neuman, 2014; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These themes were identified based on the concepts of CLT and other components regarding the teachers’ perceptions of language learning and teaching.
The example of theme identification in table 3.5 is based on a teacher’s initial understandings related to CLT.

**Table 3.5: Example of theme identification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Focused codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A64. Popularity of English</td>
<td>FA26. Reasons for CLT required by the MOET</td>
<td>TA1. Understanding of CLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A65. Advantages of CLT</td>
<td>• A64</td>
<td>➢ TA1.1. Unsure about CLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A66. Using real-life-like situations in CLT</td>
<td>• A65</td>
<td>• FA26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A67. Familiarizing SS with using English in real life</td>
<td>• A66</td>
<td>• FA27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A68. Textbook ‘Family and Friends’ is good</td>
<td>• A67</td>
<td>• FA47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not remembering language teaching methods taught in the college</td>
<td>FA27. Using real-life-like situations in CLT</td>
<td>• FA55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td>• A66</td>
<td>➢ TA1.2. Lack of training at the college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FA28. Not remembering language teaching methods</td>
<td>• FA28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>taught before graduating</td>
<td>• TA1.3. Learning teaching techniques from different sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A69</td>
<td>• FA4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…</td>
<td>• FA54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendix I for a longer example of theme identification coding process)

### 3.4.5.3.2. Coding lesson observations

As CLT was required by the MOET as the primary teaching methodology in this program, it was the focus of two action research cycles conducted in this study to see how the teachers implemented CLT in their classes. Therefore, CLT concepts were particularly attended to when coding these data.

The procedure for coding lesson observations is demonstrated in Figure 3.10.
As each teacher participant was identified as a single case, the initial data analysis began with the observation data collected from individual teachers. This was followed by comparison and contrast of the themes across the teachers. Figure 3.11 is adapted from Creswell (2013, p. 209), and demonstrates this process.
3.4.5.4. Within-Case Theme Analysis

Coding procedures follow the steps suggested by Charmaz (2006). Each case’s data were initially organized and identified with the use of open codes. Ensuring that these initial codes remain close to the data was crucial, as it could stimulate the researchers’ thinking and new ideas.

Line-by-line and incident-to-incident coding were chosen for this study’s analysis. While comparisons were made between lines in line-by-line coding, in incident-to-incident coding comparisons were made between incidents taking place during the observations.

Line-by-line coding was implemented with the initial interviews and stimulated recall sessions. It helped the researcher to remain open to the data as well as to gain in-depth understanding of what the participants provided in the data (Charmaz, 2006), as not only implicit concerns but also explicit statements could be identified. It also helped to reduce the possibility of missing important categories. The interview and stimulated recall session transcripts were read line-by-line and coded based on the meaning emerging from the lines. Important words or phrases were highlighted.

The following excerpt in Table 3.6 illustrates this process.

Table 3.6: Example of line-by-line coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Em thầy giáo án là một bên còn việc hoạt động trên lớp lại là việc khác. Giáo án thì phải soạn theo chu trình của nó, nhưng lên lớp thì tùy theo nội dung bài mà mình thay đổi nó. (Trans: I found lesson plans are one matter while class activities are another matter. Lesson plans must follow a format, but implementing them could be different as we can change it depending on each lesson) | 1. Lesson plans vs actual class activities  
2. Lesson plans strictly follow a format  
3. Actual activities are flexible |

Constant comparisons of incident to incident helped make sense of the observation data and generated categories (Charmaz, 2006; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Incident-to-incident coding was applied to class observations and group meetings so that the researcher could have a sense of the data in their contexts and in the interactions with the participants.
The class observation transcripts were read through and coded based on the particular incidents taking place. The incidents were compared to find similarities and differences between each individual teachers’ practices.

Table 3.7 presents an example of the coding of a class observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Now class, this is Emma. This is Emma. And she has some school things. Đây là bạn Emma và bạn Emma có một số đồ dùng học tập. (Trans: This is Emma and Emma has some school things) Now look at the picture. What school things can you see? Các con xem các con nhìn thấy school thing nào? You please. (Trans: What school things can you see? You please) S: Thưa cô, em thấy là pencil, rubber (Trans: Teacher, I see pencil, rubber) T: Rubber. S: Pencil case. T: pencil case. S: And a bag. T: And a bag.</td>
<td>T shows the picture of Emma and the girl’s school things in the textbook to the class. SS open their textbook at the same page and look at the same picture.</td>
<td>- L2-L1 transfer in instruction - Narrowing her gap in relationship with SS by using ‘con’ to call SS - IRF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendix J for an example of a class observation transcript)

In the next step, these codes were run through and revised again and again. They were put together, compared, renamed, and reorganized for broader themes. Each theme was developed through aggregating the similar codes related to CLT concepts investigated in this study.

Figure 3.12 shows the outline of the first teacher’s code.
The same process of data analysis was applied for the other two teachers.

3.4.5.5. Cross-Case Themes Analysis

Cross-case analysis, or ‘cross-case synthesis’, was developed by Yin (2009) as an analytic technique for when two or more cases are studied. After the data for individual teachers were initially analyzed and an overview of their understanding of CLT and teaching practices was gained, the themes across the teachers were compared and contrasted. In this process, the researcher looked for similarities and the differences among the cases. While comparing and contrasting between the teachers’ data, some new themes emerged. In this stage, opposites and contradictions in the findings in previous processes were sought for validation, in order not to miss ‘irrelevant’ data (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 2004, p. 244).

Table 3.8 presents an example of codes and themes comparison between the cases.
Table 3.8: Example of cross-case coding comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anh</th>
<th>Binh</th>
<th>Chau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ T-S1A-2. Perspectives on authenticity/communicative activity</td>
<td>➢ T-S1B-2. Perspectives on authenticity/language learning &amp; teaching</td>
<td>➢ T-S1C-1. Perspectives on authenticity/communicative activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA19. Depending on topic to understand “authenticity”</td>
<td>➢ SSB10. Rarely let SS to talk freely</td>
<td>➢ SSC12. Possible to create authentic communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA20. Using real things to demonstrate meaning</td>
<td>➢ F-SSB-4. Using real things in teaching language</td>
<td>➢ SSC13. Communications between T &amp; SS, between SS &amp; SS are authentic communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA21. Using technology to explain &amp; demonstrate meaning</td>
<td>➢ SSB38. Using real things familiar with SS to connect with the lessons</td>
<td>➢ SSC14. “Communicate in English” means “use English”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA39. Creating activities to engage SS to the lesson</td>
<td>➢ SSB39. SS are interested in activities related to real things they can find around them</td>
<td>➢ SSC15. Authenticity occurs when there are situations in which people use English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA40. SS guess things their peer have</td>
<td>➢ SSB43. SS are eager to show off their belongings and show that they understand what is said</td>
<td>F-SSC-4. Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA41. More communicative SS are more interested in this activity</td>
<td>➢ SSB47. Sometimes the activities can’t be authentic because of the limitation of the conditions</td>
<td>➢ SS21. Authenticity is not only real things but also the context, the situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ SSA42. More communicative because SS speak out what they really think, their prediction</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>➢ SSC 22. Authenticity in English use may occur when SS are curious about something and want to share their information with others, when they have the need to communicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lists of themes, categories and codes were constantly compared and contrasted with the principles of CLT, reviewed in Chapter 2. At this stage, the teachers’ perspectives and practices were described and interpreted regarding the research questions. During this stage, the concepts of SCT were incorporated to seek the relevance of the teachers’ understandings of CLT and their perspectives on English learning and teaching, with their actual practices in the classroom while implementing the MOET’s curriculum within the sociocultural context of this study. Following the thick descriptions to gain insights on the teachers’ perspectives and practices, the data were tracked down again when the themes and codes were presented.

Within the process of tracking, comparing and contrasting the data, word tables were created to display the data from the individual cases according to the teacher participants’ perspectives and practices, incorporating features of CLT and SCT. Table 3.9 presents an example of a word table for the first teacher related to ‘authenticity’, an important concept of CLT and one of the focuses of the Action Research.

Table 3.9: Example of word table for cross-case theme analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Codes-SCT</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Depending on topics. For example, in the topic ‘Parts of the body’, I point to my body, then ask a student to model. After that I ask some other students to model pointing their body parts in front of the class. When teaching the topic ‘Fruits and vegetables’, I can’t bring them to the classroom, I show them on TV. Or when students play the roles in the stories, they can bring real objects to demonstrate the stories.</td>
<td>SSA19. Depending on topic, to understand “authenticity” SSA20. Using real things to demonstrate meaning. SSA21. Using technology to explain &amp; demonstrate meaning.</td>
<td>A-SCT1. Real objects and technology used as meditational tools. T-A-SCT1 Authentication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The themes emerging from the teacher’s data analysis indicate their perspectives on CLT and second language learning and teaching, as well as their actual practices in the classroom; and they are presented in Chapter 4.

Carefully and constantly revising, comparing and contrasting the data for thick descriptions of the teachers’ understandings and practices are validation strategies that this study adopts. The next section will provide more details on these strategies.

3.5. Validation of the Study

There are many perspectives regarding validation in qualitative research (Angen, 2000; Creswell, 2013; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2011; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Creswell views validation as ‘an attempt to assess the “accuracy” of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants’ (2013, p. 249). Furthermore, in case studies, it is required of the researcher to (be) ‘give(ing) a detailed account of how they carried out the study’ (Burns, 2000, p. 476). Therefore, validation in qualitative research depends on participants’ trust in the researcher, the truthfulness of their answers, the researcher’s understanding of the context and culture, and the use of time and methods to triangulate the data (Angen, 2000; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2003; Silverman, 2013). Validation in qualitative research can be achieved in various ways; and in this study, validation was enhanced by applying the techniques suggested by Davis (1992) and Creswell (2013), including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer reviewing, external audit, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, and rich, thick description.

3.5.1. Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

Fetterman (2010, p. 39) states that ‘participant observation requires close, long-term contact with the people under study’. During data collection for this study, the researcher worked in the classrooms of the participants across a four-month period, following the timetables of English lessons of the selected classes. Such a prolonged period of engagement provided sufficient opportunity for the researcher to get to know more about the teachers and the students, build trust with them, and understand their teaching practices and cultures (Creswell, 2013; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This level of engagement, together with the researcher’s experience of the context as a
member of their teaching and cultural community, helped the researcher to judge truthfulness in participants’ statements.

### 3.5.2. Triangulation

Triangulation is another strategy to gain validation (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Davis, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) that was applied in this study. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple and various data sources, investigators, methods of data collection, and theories of data interpretation (Creswell, 2013; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2003). It helps to widen and deepen understanding and to confirm and improve the validation of the findings.

Multiple and different sources and methods of data collection were used to allow the researcher to look at the study from different perspectives. Various forms of triangulation were used, comprising:

- **Time**: prolonged engagement (see above)
- **Space**: two primary schools participating in the MOET’s programme
- **Person**: three teachers as three single cases in a multiple case study
- **Data collection methods**: lesson observations, initial interviews before conducting action research, group meetings, and stimulated recall sessions in action research.

### 3.5.3. Member Checking

In member checking, participants are asked to check the credibility of the data collected (Creswell, 2013; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ritchie et al., 2003), as this is ‘the most critical technique for establishing credibility’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Stake (1995) also states that it is necessary for participants to ‘play a major role directing as well as acting in case study’ (p. 115). They should be provided with opportunities to judge and reflect their views on the researcher’s initial drafts. In this study, the teacher participants were asked to examine the transcripts and interpretation for accuracy of the transcription and researcher’s understandings. The transcribed drafts of the teacher-participants’ interviews, lesson recall sessions and class observations were sent to them so that they could check and ensure that they agreed with the transcriptions and interpretation. This technique was also employed after the interviews, the class observations and the reflections.
3.5.4. Peer Reviewing

Peer reviewing refers to an external check of the research process for validation (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer reviewing in this study included working closely and regularly with the supervisors during the research processes, involving proposal preparation, data collection, and data analysis. This technique enhanced validation, as it resulted in critical evaluation and reflection upon the research methods, the data, and the interpretations.

3.5.5. External Audit

An external audit is suggested by many researchers (Creswell, 2013; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as a technique that allows an external consultant to examine the accuracy of the research process and results. External audit in this study was applied through exchanging the data extracts with a colleague from the university of the researcher of this study, to make sure that the interpretation was supported by the data.

3.6. Generalization

Qualitative research, especially case study method, has been questioned as to the possibility of generalization to other contexts and subjects (Burns, 2000; Davis, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, as Burns (2000) argues, case studies are ‘generalizable to theoretical propositions, not to statistical populations, and the investigator’s goal is to expand theories and not to undertake statistical generalisation’ (p. 474). He also claims that

Case study aims at enabling the use of the reported material to increase understanding through the naturalistic generalization that the readers do themselves, thus emphasizing autonomy and responsibility on the part of the practitioner. The case study investigator is trying to facilitate the reader’s own analysis more than deliver statements of generalization.

(Burns, 2000, p. 474)

Thus, a qualitative case study would be generalizable depending on the reader of the study. The reader decides the extent to which the findings of the particular case are appropriate and can be applied to their own research and professional reality. The researcher has responsibility to provide thick descriptions of the researched context, with
sufficient detail so that this enables readers to compare the situations in the study with their own situations and to transfer implications to their contexts (Ritchie et al., 2003). Although the present research was supported with detailed descriptions about English learning and teaching in selected primary schools, in relation to implementation of CLT in the programme of the MOET for English teaching at primary schools in Vietnam, the readers of this study could be different teachers, coming from different schools and from different provinces across the country. They may share similarities such as experience, perspectives, textbooks, and working conditions. The findings of this study, as a result, are possibly generalizable to other contexts.

3.7. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the research approach, methods, and analytical techniques employed to investigate the teacher participants’ perspectives on and practices of CLT as well as their views on English teaching and learning. Multiple methods of data collection, including interviews, observations and stimulated recall sessions, were used to obtain in-depth understanding of the cases. Two cycles of action research were deployed as a supportive sub-study, to collect important data on how the teacher participants could change their perspectives and practices during and following the study.

The next chapter provides the findings on the teacher participants’ perspectives on and practices in adapting CLT within their actual classrooms, when they implement the curriculum required by the MOET.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the collected and analysed data, in order to answer the research questions supporting this study:

*How is CLT implemented in the MOET program of ELT in Vietnamese primary schools?*

In particular, this question is answered through the investigation through responding these three sub-questions:

- *How is CLT understood by Vietnamese teachers in this context?*
- *How is CLT practised by Vietnamese teachers in this program?*
- *How can CLT adapted in this context to improve MOET outcomes?*

This chapter presents the findings of each case study as a case report that explores how each of the teacher respondents moved through the process of teaching during this study under review. Each case report is representational of the use of case studies to discuss individual aspects of a ‘bounded system’ (Creswell, 2014, p. 493; Stake, 2000, p. 436) by presenting a series of ‘collective’ (Stake, 2000, p. 437) case reports. In order to provide the reader with a ‘thick description’ (Stake, 2000, p. 439), and to ensure as comprehensive a picture as is possible, each case study is contextualised within an overview of each teachers educational life. This information is drawn from multiple forms of data (Stake, 2000), a feature indicative of case study research.

Firstly, this chapter presents the MOET curriculum that teachers of the project teaching English for primary schools are required to implement. Details of the curriculum guidelines and the textbook will be presented, to provide an overview of the MOET’s program.

Secondly, the information (provided from interviews, field notes and audio data) includes a brief sketch of the teachers’ educational background and various teaching experiences that they felt impacted upon their teaching practice at the time of this inquiry. Some information regarding students is also provided, although this is limited to student numbers at the time data were collected. Overall, this serves to provide a broader picture of the classroom environment within which individual teachers were working.

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Finally, this chapter reports the findings of the Action Research conducted in this study. Findings from this data (including audio-video data and field notes of class observations, group meetings and stimulated recall for two cycles of the Action Research) reflect the teacher participants’ perspectives and teaching practices in terms of implementing CLT, which is the suggested approach outlined in the MOET curriculum.

4.2. Curriculum and English Book

4.2.1. MOET’s guideline for curriculum

In August 2010, when the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) released the curriculum guidelines for the program of teaching English at primary schools, they suggested Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as ‘the leading approach’ of the program’s curriculum (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b). Since the students of this program are young children aged 8-11, listening and speaking are the priority skills, although reading and writing are also required to be developed.

The required teaching content is to be based on themes and topics that are ‘interesting and familiar to students’ daily life’ (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a, p. 4). These themes and topics are to be introduced, repeated and developed throughout the program. The program focuses on the following four themes:

- Me and my friends
- Me and my school
- Me and my family
- Me and the world around

Each theme contains topics related to the themes, and is designed to be familiar to students’ lives.

Both ‘communicative competence’ and ‘linguistic knowledge’ are also stated to be focuses of the program. ‘Communicative competence’ is defined in the curriculum guidelines as:

… the ability to use language knowledge in order to participate in communication process appropriately in a specific communicative situation.

(Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a, p. 11)
The learners’ communicative competences, according to the MOET’s curriculum guidelines, would be the mastery of language functions that learners should be able to carry out in English, such as greetings, introducing someone, and describing school objects. Although the curriculum of the MOET is designed with a requirement to focus on meaning, it does not reject form-focused instruction. While the MOET emphasizes that communicative competences are the aim of the program, the MOET also determines that this must include learners having a basic knowledge of English language including pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, after they complete the program. This linguistic knowledge, it is suggested, would function as a means to ‘help the learners to build up and develop communicative competences’ (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a, p. 12). Specific prescriptions for communicative competence and linguistic knowledge introduced in the program are left open, to ‘help textbook writers and teachers to be flexible to decide suitable language functions and linguistic features for each topic’ (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a, p. 16).

Although CLT is strongly required in the MOET’s curriculum guidelines, it is not made clear exactly what CLT is and how it should be implemented in the program. Teaching methodology is mentioned on only one page, in which:

- CLT is ‘the leading method’.
- Students are the centre of the teaching process.
- The teacher is the organizer, the guider, and the facilitator.
- Teaching and learning should be organized through various interactive activities such as games, songs, role plays.
- The activities can be individual work, pair work and group work.
- Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all practised, but listening and speaking are more focused upon.
- Linguistic knowledge is the means to forming linguistic skills.

(Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a)

In order to implement the MOET’s program, each town or city in Vietnam can select their own textbook from those approved by the MOET, and the teachers follow the MOET’s guidelines to use it. The schools selected for this research chose the series of books, ‘Family and Friends’, as the major material for English teaching and learning from grade
three to grade five. The content of the books is structured around the themes the MOET proposed, containing school life, family life, and the world around. This textbook also claims to provide ‘a clear grammar-based curriculum alongside parallel syllabi in skills and phonics’ (Simmons, 2009, p. 6). Each lesson is organized as a ‘unit’ and has six parts:

- Lesson one: Words. Students learn new vocabulary related to the topic of the unit separately and in a dialogue.
- Lesson two: Grammar. Students learn new grammar items with the key words in the unit story.
- Lesson three: Song. Students practice new language and vocabulary in the song, as it is stated that ‘melody and rhythm are an essential aid to memory’ (Simmons, 2009, p. 7).
- Lesson four: Phonics. Students learn how letters and sounds can be combined.
- Lesson five: Reading.
- Lesson six: Listening, speaking and writing.

While ‘Family and Friends’ was approved by both the MOET and the Provincial Department of Education and Training as an appropriate textbook for the English program at primary schools, there appear to be some mismatches between the MOET requirement for CLT, the textbook, and the teachers’ teaching practice, which will be discussed further Section 4.2.2.

4.2.2. Family and Friends and CLT

The goal of CLT in second language learning theory is communicative competence. Communicative competence is defined as the combination of four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence (Savignon, 2002). Meanwhile, ‘Family and Friends’, as stated in the teacher’s handbook, is a ‘grammar-based textbook’ (Simmons, 2009, p. 6). While grammar is demonstrated through examples instead of rule explanation, vocabulary is introduced in relation to each theme and topic; and phonics or pronunciation is taught in the form of chants to interest the young students.

However, it is noticeable that, while grammar is the core of the content design, other elements such as vocabulary and activities are mainly provided to support grammar introduction. Four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are built
through practicing grammar items. Unit stories, songs and chants are designed with the main aim to present and practise the new language as well as vocabulary, but do not focus explicitly on the other components of communicative competence. The teaching of sociocultural competence, for example, is an arguable point. As Savignon (1983a, p.144) claimed, ‘language taken out of context in another time or place is an easy target for ridicule’: it is not difficult to find irrelevance between the items presented in the textbook and real contexts in some lessons where situations seemed to be forced into texts. For example, in Unit 4 of Family and Friends Grade 3, ‘He’s a Hero’, a child asks whether his grandmother, who is cooking in the kitchen, is a teacher. The story starts as Billy, aged two, is playing a game with his cousin, Tim. In the game, Billy plays a teacher, while Tim plays a pupil; then Billy runs to the kitchen and sees his grandmother cooking a meal, and asks his elder sister, Rosy, ‘Is grandmother a teacher?’. Since the purpose of the lesson is to present a grammar structure to ask after somebody’s job using ‘Is he/she a...?’, the created situation seems imposed on the lesson content and is not indicative of what normally happens in a Vietnamese home.

It is assumed that the textbook is based on a local context, and that the characters as well as the situations in this book suit the context of Vietnamese social and cultural practices that the students are familiar with. However, Vietnamese students who do not bring their lunch to school but eat lunch at home or eat lunch at school prepared by school cooks, for instance, may not understand why the students in Unit 9 of the book, ‘Family and Friends’, have to bring food to their class.

Lastly, strategic competence appears to be completely ignored in the textbook and left to social and cultural practices that teachers and students are familiar with. For example, students are not provided with strategies to avoid communication breakdowns in English, such as how to ask for something to be repeated or confirmed.

In a thematic or topic syllabus, ‘the context is expanded to give a continuity of topics or situations from one unit to the next’ (Savignon, 1983a, p. 142). While the book is stated to be designed in relation to themes and topics, it is possible to see only a loose relationship between topics of the units in the book.

Although ‘Family and Friends’ is the main material used by the schools and the teachers, it is clear that a gap exists between the curriculum design and CLT aims, as the book does
not provide sufficient support, features or elements to build or support students’ communicative competence.

A teacher who only follows the textbook, therefore, is likely to fail to reach the CLT target. However, how teachers use the curriculum and adapt it to a communicative approach is also part of this research. The chapter will now focus on the understanding of CLT as held by the teacher-participants.

The teacher-participants selected for this study came from two primary schools. To gain increased understanding concerning the teaching contexts in which these teachers are working, the next part of this chapter will first introduce the background of the focus schools and focus classes.

4.3. School Sites and Background

4.3.1. School Background

The teachers participating in this research come from two public primary schools, City Primary School and District Primary School, in Ba Ria – Vung Tau, an important town in the Southeast region of Viet Nam. The town is one of the eight localities of Viet Nam’s Southern Key Economic Zone. One of these schools is located in Ba Ria City, the administrative centre of the town; and the other is in Phu My District, an industrial district, 20 km away from Ba Ria’s centre. They are both managed by respective local Education and Training Departments.

4.3.1.1. City Primary School

City Primary School is a major primary school in Ba Ria city, in the administrative centre of the town, located in the centre of the city. The school enrols students from grade one to grade five, with ages ranging from six to ten years old. In the academic year 2013-2014, the school had 30 classes from grade one to grade five, with a total of around 1120 students; each class having from 36 to 39 students. It is one of the schools selected to participate in the project of teaching English to students at primary schools of the MOET. While English has been taught in this school since 2008, the school only began to participate in the MOET project in 2011. From that date to the present time, there have been two curriculums in place for English teaching: one of two periods per week; and the
other of four periods per week. Since 2013, all of the grade-three classes have followed the MOET project, also called the ‘four-period English program’ because each class has four periods of English a week. This means that, by academic year 2017, all grade-five classes will be following the MOET project.

The school currently has six-grade three classes, which study four periods of English a week; and students study in the morning from 7:00 am to 10:30 am and again in the afternoon from 2:00 pm to 3:25 pm. Between 10:30 am and 2:00 pm most of the students have lunch and take a rest at the school. Some of these students eat food cooked at the school and are cared for by the school’s nurses; however, this is an optional service and parents have to pay for it. Other students are taken home for lunch and returned to class by 2:00pm.

Students learn their major subjects with a classroom teacher, and other subjects such as physical education, music, art, computer and English with the specialist teachers of those subjects. This school has three specialist English teachers, who teach all English classes from grade three to grade five. The students meet their classroom teacher everyday, while they only meet their specialist English teacher and other subject specialist teachers once or twice a week depending on the curriculum. However, these specialist teachers usually have several responsibilities concurrently, as they may be responsible for managing a class if a classroom teacher is absent. They may also have to surrender their class time to the classroom teachers due to a range of reasons. The subjects the classroom teachers are in charge of, such as Vietnamese language and mathematics, are considered to be more important and are therefore afforded priority. Thus, the subject specialist teachers might have to yield their classes to these classroom teachers, for example when the classroom teachers require more revision hours for these important subjects before an examination.

The three specialist English teachers at this school have exclusive access to one English equipped classroom which has a TV and two speakers, and is decorated with pictures of flowers, fruit, animals and numbers with words in English; and between them schedule their use of this room. However, as this is the only English-equipped classroom for all classes, and as the timetable can overlap, many of the English lessons take place in the everyday classroom. The specialist teachers usually teach their lessons in the equipped classroom when they want to use the TV for pictures, lesson content and video clips.
**Focus Classes**

Two grade-three classes were selected from this school for this research, each having 35 students aged eight, who come from middle-class families in the city. These students are learning English as a foreign language, and this is their first year of study. This is considered to be an extra subject and not evaluated as a condition for going onto an upper class. The majority of students began learning English this year, although several were introduced to English earlier due to attending an English language centre one or two years ago. A few, however, have studied English at kindergarten level due to the curriculum of some kindergartens in the city. This was a reason for a range of English levels of competence among the students.

In the classroom, students are typically organised into three rows of desks, with two students sharing a desk. In the first cycle of the research, students shared a long bench; but in the second cycle, the school had replaced all the desks and chairs in all classes, so subsequently two students shared a desk but with separate chairs. The students leave their books in the space under their desks instead of taking them home after school.

**4.3.1.2. District Primary School**

District Primary School is located in an industrial district that is around 15km from Ba Ria city. In the academic year 2013-2014, there were 34 classes from grade one to grade five, with a total of around 1,180 students aged from six to ten enrolled in this school. The number of students in each class currently ranges from 36 to 39. The school was selected for and began to participate in the MOET project of teaching English for students at primary schools in 2011. From that date to the present time, as with City Primary School, there have been two curriculums in place for English teaching: one of two periods per week; and the other of four periods per week. Since 2013, all of the grade-three classes have followed the MOET’s ‘four-period English program’, so that by 2017 all grade-five classes will be following the MOET project.

The school has seven grade-three classes, which follow four periods of English a week and students study in the morning from 7:00 am to 10:30 am and in the afternoon from 2:00 pm to 3:25 pm. As with the previous school, between 10:30 am and 2:00 pm the students go home to have lunch and take a rest, and return to class by 2:00 pm.
Like those in City Primary School, students of this school learn their major subjects with a classroom teacher, and other subjects such as physical education, music, art, computer and English with the specialist teachers of those subjects. This school has only two specialist English teachers, who teach all English classes from grade three to grade five. The students meet their classroom teacher every day, while they only meet their specialist English teacher and other subject specialist teachers once or twice a week depending on the curriculum. These specialist teachers also have several responsibilities concurrently such as managing a class if a classroom teacher is absent.

Unlike City Primary School, District Primary School does not have a room for English teaching only, so the students study in their everyday classroom for all subjects. These classrooms are simply equipped, with desks, chairs, two big chalkboards and a cabinet. Aside from a portrait of President Ho Chi Minh hung above the board in front of the class, there are not any pictures in the classrooms of this school.

**Focus Classes**

A grade-three class of 36 students was selected from this school for this research. Most of the students are aged eight and come from middle-class families in the district. These students are learning English as a foreign language, and this is the first year they have studied the language at school. English is not considered to be as important as mathematics and Vietnamese language, as it is not evaluated as a condition for going on to an upper class. In the classroom, students are typically organised into three rows of desks with two students sharing a desk.

Due to their participation in the MOET’s English program, these two primary schools and focus classes were invited to take part in two cycles of action research across ten weeks. The purpose of these cycles was to investigate the teachers’ teaching practice and their adaptation of CLT into their classrooms. The study provided an opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively to solve teaching problems associated with the introduction of CLT, and also to provide the researcher with insight into the management of related problems and issues. Furthermore, data indicating differences in perspectives and practices between the teachers contributed to more understanding in relation to these teachers’ implementation of the MOET’s curriculum.
4.4. Teachers’ Initial Perspectives and Understandings of CLT

4.4.1. Case One – Anh: Interview before Action Research

4.4.1.1. Background

Anh graduated from the local teacher training college and had been teaching for three years at the time the research was conducted. This was her first year at City Primary School to deploy the MOET program of teaching English for elementary students, though she had been also taking part since the start of the program.

As a new teacher, there are several factors that influence Anh’s perspectives and practices in teaching. The first factor relates to her limited language teaching knowledge. The course of pedagogy she studied as part of her college degree reportedly did not help her much: ‘I can’t remember the methods taught at the college’, said Anh. The MOET’s support was also limited, since the professional workshop she participated in aimed to develop teachers’ language proficiency but not language teaching methodology. While only key teachers were chosen to take part in the workshops for professional development, afterwards there were limited opportunities for those teachers to share their professional learning experiences with others.

The second factor facing Anh was related to implementing her language teaching practice in the classroom, as it had only been a short time since she had graduated from the college. To assist her, Anh learned teaching techniques from a number of sources. Aside from teaching at her school during the day, she also taught at a private English language centre, and was able to modify and apply techniques learned from colleagues at this centre to her classes at school. Receiving permission to observe colleagues at other schools was another way for Anh to learn teaching techniques and share teaching experiences:

I like to observe other teachers. I find that some lessons are taught very well. There can be group work activities or games, some activities I’ve never known I can learn and use.

(Anh – Initial interview)

In addition, she revealed that observations of techniques that instructors used in the workshops for language proficiency development were useful:
It was supportive for my teaching as I could learn the teaching techniques while they were teaching us [...]. The way they taught us, the way they organized a game or an activity so that we could remember vocabulary longer, or how to introduce vocabulary or a lesson better and more effective. The way they introduced a lesson was also good. We can be flexible and change the methods a little bit to make it suitable for our students.

(Anh – Initial interview)

The initial interview served to gain information about each teacher’s background but also explore the teacher’s initial understanding of CLT. In this interview, Anh revealed her understanding of CLT, and her perspectives on language teaching and language learning and the role of teacher and students in language teaching and learning. This data will be explored and explained in what follows.

4.4.1.2. Unsure about CLT

Anh appeared to be unsure of her teaching methods as well as her understanding with respect to CLT: ‘I’m not sure what my teaching method should be called and whether it suits the MOET’s requirement’ (Anh – Initial interview). When asked what she understood about CLT, she indicated that she had no idea about the specifics of the approach even though she had heard about it. Instead, she said, ‘I try to choose a method that makes the lessons most comprehensible to my students, as long as later the kids can use the language they’ve learned’ (Anh – Initial interview). Anh revealed that she simply taught in a way she thought appropriate for her students in their current situation and condition. She reflected: ‘I can’t remember what it (CLT) is. I borrow the more senior teachers’ lesson plans and modify them to make them appropriate to my classes. I just go with the flow’ (Anh – Initial interview).

4.4.1.3. Perspectives on Language Teaching and Learning

4.4.1.3.1. Connecting language taught in the classroom with real life

It is interesting that, in spite of her apparent confusion over CLT, to some extent Anh’s perception of teaching was communicatively directed. She explained that she believed her students would learn better when they could connect what they learned with their real life. She revealed:
The situations created for activities should be more about reality and similar to those taking place in real life. They are familiar to the kids. When the kids have the same situations, they may apply what they have learned in class to communicate.

(Anh – Initial interview).

Anh explained that students should have an opportunity to use the language learned in class, and encouraged her students to use the new language in real situations. She said, ‘I told my students that they might have a big amount of English vocabulary, but they had to use it or they would not really learn it’ (Anh – Initial interview). ‘After I taught the lessons “Jobs” and “Family”, for example, I asked the kids to find a photo or draw a picture of their family, and they brought it to the class. They showed their photos and introduced the family members and their jobs. The students liked that activity very much and they did it really well’ (Anh – Initial interview), she added.

It appeared that, for Anh, meaning is the focus when she suggested to her students how to use English. She reported:

You should create a habit to think and speak in English, so that you can answer all questions in English. You can say everything, point and say anything you want... make it your habit.

(Anh – Initial interview).

This appears to indicate that Anh wanted her students to use the language they had learned in real situations, and this application aimed to make their language use more meaningful.

In addition, Anh’s students were strongly encouraged to use English not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom, so that the language could be used in real life. Anh, who also taught in an English language centre, discussed her teaching there:

There’s a way that not many teachers want to do. Sometimes I take my students to the supermarket. The students point to the goods and say what the items are, practise saying prices and practise using structures and vocabulary they have learned. They use English and remember what they’ve learned better. I may also take them to a bookshop to do the same. Or I take my students to the beach, play some games in English. We sit in a circle, inviting a foreigner to take part in our activities and speak to the kids in English.

(Anh – Initial interview)
4.4.1.3.2. Using Pair and Group Work

Anh also recognized the importance of encouraging interaction among her students to support their language learning. She said that pair and group work were potential choices to enhance students’ opportunities to practise new language and use it freely. She explained: ‘I like to organize activities so that my students can work in pairs and in group. I do it whenever I teach a new structure.’ (Anh – Initial interview); ‘I find it a good way. The kids have more chance to speak, listen and work together’ (Anh – Initial interview).

According to Anh, one of the main advantages of pair work and group work was that the students could practise the new structures and new language after they understood and remembered them: ‘I let my students to do role-play for all stories. The students listen to the stories several times and they remember so that later they can play the roles in those stories’ (Anh – Initial interview).

Pair work and group work activities, however, were not based on memorization alone, as Anh revealed that the students also linked the stories they learned with their imagination: ‘The students may want to change the names of the characters into their own names and they create new sentences in the same situation. They ask me first for assistance and then they play their roles in their own way’ (Anh – Initial interview).

Another benefit of pair work and group work this teacher mentioned is that students could support each other to accomplish the tasks or call for assistance from the teacher if they found a peer needed more help. Anh clarified:

> In a big class, it is possible that some students can’t understand and follow the teacher’s instructions. So when the students work in pairs and in groups, the more competent students may help the less ones or they call me so that I will come in a timely way and assist their peer. They help me know which student needs more assistance.

(Anh – Initial interview)

Besides the CLT-directed aspects mentioned above, in this initial interview Anh revealed other perspectives on language teaching and learning, including forms teaching, mistake correction, language transfer, and textbook dependence.
4.4.1.3.3. Teaching Forms

According to Anh, grammar is necessary in language teaching, and grammar-based method was one she often implemented. She reported that understanding a structure made it easier for students to better learn the lessons:

Some teachers like to teach the story first then the grammar. But I like to teach the grammar first because students understand that structure, they translate and they understand better’.

(Anh – Initial interview)

However, in contrast to the way grammar was taught in the past, which mostly concentrated upon grammar exercises, the pair and group work chosen by Anh as effective ways to practise new language forms featured activities to encourage student interaction.

4.4.1.3.4. Correcting Mistakes

Regarding mistake correction, Anh indicated that mistakes should be corrected as soon as they were made. She gave an example of a situation when mistakes were made:

For example, when I pronounce “s” in a long sentence, only those who really pay attention may hear it. I have to correct the others who can’t hear me clearly. It takes time to correct every group or every student.

(Anh – Initial interview)

A way that Anh normally used to make her students notice their peers’ mistakes was that she required them to observe and give comments on their peers’ performances:

When students finish their group work, role playing, some groups in turn perform at the board and other groups are required to keep silent. The purpose is that they can recognize mistakes of the groups performing so that they wouldn’t repeat those mistakes. I like to do that.

(Anh – Initial interview)

4.4.1.3.5. Using L1 and L2 in the Classroom

Another non-CLT aspect Anh used and discussed was language translation. In her opinion, language translation is an effective and meaningful way to transfer new
structures and language, especially when the students did not know enough vocabulary to make a whole sentence in English:

I ask my students to say in English whenever possible so that they have a quick reaction. If they don’t know a word in English, they can use Vietnamese; for example, they can say ‘Can you turn on the máy lạnh?’. I’ll transfer ‘máy lạnh’ into ‘air-conditioning’ and ask them to say it again. They can make the request correctly the following day, ‘Turn on the air-conditioning’ and ‘Turn off the air-conditioning’.

(Anh – Initial interview)

However, using as much English as possible in the classroom was always Anh’s goal. She stated that students should be exposed to English. She wanted to create a ‘habit’ in her students to listen and speak in English:

It becomes a habit. Students will like to listen to Vietnamese. When I speak English to them, they won’t listen, they’ll wait until I speak Vietnamese. It’s the teacher’s responsibility to form that habit for students. The teacher makes them dependant on Vietnamese.

(Anh – Initial interview)

She elicited students’ use of English when they used Vietnamese in the classroom:

When I teach my students, I pretend not to hear if they speak Vietnamese. I wait until they speak English to respond. For example, ‘I want to go out’ or ‘Teacher, can I borrow (something)’ ‘Teacher, can I borrow the pen’. ‘What did you say? Again’. ‘That’s “Borrow, borrow your pen”’. I say ‘Again’. He says it again, ‘Can I borrow your pen?’. Force them to say like that so that it becomes their habit. I think it’s good. Funny, pretending not to hear or understand anything when they speak Vietnamese. At first, when they speak English, they have to think how to arrange the order of the words. Then I say, ‘Again’ once more, they speak faster when I say it the third time. Or with things they’ve already learned, I don’t accept if they speak Vietnamese. I do that many times so that it becomes their habit.

(Anh – Initial interview)

The amount of English increased gradually depending on her students’ level of English:

I used a lot of English in my classes last year and sometimes I used actions to demonstrate. I did it both at school and the language centre. I taught a class the first course, then when I continued teaching them the second course, at first I didn’t speak Vietnamese within 30 minutes, then 60 minutes, then 90 minutes. In some classes I spoke English all the time. I did the same at school. I used English for those I’ve introduced previously.
4.4.1.3.6. Textbook Dependence

In this interview, Anh identified a dependence upon the textbook, indicating that her lessons mostly followed the syllabus assigned to the book, with the activities created mainly based on the textbook contents. The students practised forms and vocabulary introduced in the textbooks through activities such as completing the exercises, singing the song, and performing a role play with the stories in the book.

4.4.1.4. Perspectives on the Roles of Teacher and Students

4.4.1.4.1. The Role of Teacher

Anh shared an interesting perspective on the role of teachers that differed from that of a common Vietnamese view. The traditional relationship between teacher and students, which Anh referred to as, ‘students were students and teacher was teacher’ (Anh – Initial interview), creates a big gap between the teacher and students. This gap meant that students ‘didn’t dare to ask’, or ‘hesitated to ask, to share’ their inquiries and understanding of the lessons (Anh – Initial interview). In challenging this view, Anh stated that she wanted her students to see her ‘as a friend’, someone that

... they (students) ask whenever they don’t understand. They ask about everything, from trivial to important things, and all the time. They care so they ask. They like to ask [...]. They find I’m friendly, as a friend, a person who just has a bit more knowledge than them, but also equal to them.

(Anh – Initial interview).

According to Anh, being friendly with her students motivated them, and she referred to one of her vice-principal’s statements:

But the vice-principal was reasonable to say: ‘We teachers must be friendly with students so that they like our subjects, otherwise if we are so serious, just read-copy, read-copy in English subject like others, student won’t like it. They won’t be active, and just stay still’.

(Anh – Initial interview)

In addition, Anh also identified her teacher role as that of a family member, so that she could be closer to her students and encourage them:
Because I tell them: “We study here, I’m like your sister or your friend. Ask me if you don’t know and want to share. Don’t think too much and hesitate to ask, you’ll be disadvantaged”. When they trust me and I’m close to them, so they’ll ask.

(Anh – Initial interview)

In this interview, Anh also described her role in the classroom as a ‘facilitator’ who provided assistance when students were doing activities and asking for help to accomplish their tasks. In addition, she revealed that she usually observed the students in order to assist them when necessary:

I sometimes observe students and find which of them doesn’t understand. For example, if I look at their faces and their actions in activities, their behaviours, and find that they don’t understand, I’ll come and ask: ‘You don’t understand this sentence, do you?’, ‘Do you need help?’. I talk to them and they’ll feel easier to talk to me. If I blame that kid in front of the class, their classmates will look down him, ‘It’s too easy but he doesn’t understand’, and he’ll be embarrassed. It’s better to talk to him personally.

(Anh – Initial interview)

Assistance was given not only personally but also to a group of students when they worked together:

There’s teacher’s assistance. They may not know what to do if they just look at the pictures. I give instructions such as, ‘You stand there, and you stand at that corner’, and they follow, play as if they are in a real situation.

(Anh – Initial interview)

In this case, Anh showed that she did not facilitate students’ learning by creating an environment for them to use English, as promoted by CLT, but by giving them assistance to identify the aim of the tasks and construct a performance.

This ‘friendliness’, as Anh called it, however, was sometimes criticized by other colleagues:

I was blamed to be ‘too friendly with students’. I don’t merely give exercises as other class teachers do. I have to move around the classroom and assist those who can’t read and so on. Thus becoming closer to students is understandable.

(Anh – Initial interview)
Modelling was another role of the teacher in the classroom, according to Anh. It seemed to be an important step before every activity, to make sure that students could understand what to do and how to do it. When talking about pair and group work, for example, Anh explained why she created and modelled the activities:

I think these activities (pair and group work) are good. I teach a structure. It’ll be very time-consuming if I practice with every student. But if I model it, then call some students to model it, then let students to do the activity, they’ll have more opportunities to speak.

(Anh – Initial interview)

This revealed that Anh used a classic audio-lingual model in her teaching, which involved presentation of a linguistic structure, and practicing and producing language with that structure, rather than less structured communication as in a communicative approach.

Besides the perspectives on her teaching role, Anh provided her perspectives on students’ roles.

4.4.1.4.2. The Role of Students

Anh shared her view that students should be active in their learning. She stated, ‘I give instructions, and students have to work harder’ (Anh – Initial interview). According to Anh, students should not just listen and copy the teacher. They should not hesitate to ask questions if they do not understand or in case they want assistance. Students not only followed exactly what the textbook provided but also applied and created additional language while learning:

They (students) ask me, ‘I want to say this, how can I say this?’, ‘I want to do this, how can I describe it?’ They ask me first then they role-play their way.

(Anh – Initial interview)

Using the language learned in the classroom in real life was another way of students’ active learning:

Learners are more active, more confident. So it’s fun to go to school. ‘Hi, Anna. How are you?’: They greet naturally, as if they greet in Vietnamese.

(Anh – Initial interview)
The students, in this case, were actually using English, but in Vietnamese cultural mode. They greeted in English, but in the mode of Vietnamese students greeting their teacher.

In addition to studying with the teacher, studying with peers was encouraged in Anh’s classroom, so that students were assistants of each other, as in her statement to students:

I tell them, ‘Ask your classmates if you can’t ask me or if you don’t feel comfortable to ask me. If your classmates can’t answer, ask me’.

(Anh – Initial interview)

4.4.1.5. Summary

The initial interview of Anh can be summarized as follows:

- Anh was not clear about CLT and its characteristics. Her teaching methods were primarily learned from colleagues and accumulated from her experience as an English learner at school, the college and English workshops.
- Textbooks provided the primary material for Anh’s lessons.
- She believed that language taught in the classroom should be connected to real life and students should have opportunities to use it in real situations.
- She identified pair and group work as potential choices to enhance students’ practice and use of English in the classroom. English use as much as possible was the goal in Anh’s opinion. However, it should be implemented according to students’ proficiency levels.
- L1 (Vietnamese) could be used as a medium for L2 (McCloskey, Orr, Dolitsky, & Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) instruction.
- She held the belief that L2 grammar was necessary for students and mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible.
- The teacher in Anh’s perspective was not only the manager in the classroom who organized and controlled classroom activities but also the facilitator who provided students with assistance. In addition, the teacher was the primary source of L2 language, as the students in this study were at a very early stage of learning in which they could not learn the language independently.
- Students, in Anh’s opinion, should play an active role, as they were both learners and facilitators of each other in the L2 learning process.
- A friendly atmosphere in the classroom was important for students to be more confident to participate in L2 learning activities.

4.4.2. Case Two – Binh: Interview before Action Research

4.4.2.1. Background

Binh graduated from the local teacher training college two years ago. However, she had just slightly more than one year’s teaching experience gained from her previous teaching experience in a language centre. Binh was Anh’s colleague at City Primary School, and was still a novice teacher. She had been working in this school for approximately one month at the time of this interview. She had also participated in the MOET’s program, ‘Teaching English at Primary Schools’, for the same amount of time as Anh, so had as yet no opportunity to take part in any of the workshops for language proficiency improvement and the professional development courses conducted by the MOET. Binh also indicated that she had not accessed any of the MOET’s information provided via official documents related to the MOET program since its completion.

Binh’s knowledge of teaching methodology gained while a student at college reportedly did not help her much in her teaching practice. Binh shared that she could not remember the teaching methods that she was taught there. In addition, the time that she had practiced teaching as a student teacher was not long enough for her to gain experience to deal with real teaching problems. ‘Can’t remember’, ‘just some theory’, and ‘didn’t know what to do’ (Binh – Initial interview), were what she reported about the course of pedagogy she took at college. Her teaching techniques, therefore, were gained mainly during the period after she graduated. Meanwhile, due to the workload and overlap of the class time among the teachers at her current school, the process of sharing teaching experience and engaging in collaboration among teachers in City Primary school was limited compared to her previous experience:

I’ve never visited other teachers’ classes in this school. But when I teach in a language centre, I have chance to visit other teachers’ classes and other senior teachers also visit my class. They give me advice and suggestions for my lessons. I’ve been gradually more confident and keep going.

(Binh – Initial interview)
Binh gained teaching experience from her colleagues at the language centre, and modified their activities so that they would be more appropriate for her students at the school. Binh called the activities she used in her classes ‘games’:

I adapt the games I’ve used in the language centre to my classes in this school. When the games are conducted in the language centre, students can move around the classroom freely because they have enough space. But in this school, I have to modify the games so that students can stay at their seats or don’t have to move so much to play. They can still improve their speaking skills and review their previous lessons through speaking English while they are playing.

(Binh – Initial interview)

In addition to expressing a lack of knowledge regarding both teaching methodology and teaching experience, Binh also demonstrated her lack of understanding of CLT in this interview.

4.4.2.2. Unsure about CLT

When asked about her understanding of CLT, Binh showed her uncertainty about CLT, indicating: ‘I’ve never heard about it’ and ‘I can’t imagine what it is like’ (Binh – Initial interview). Instead, she expressed her perspectives on language teaching and learning, as presented in the following section.

4.4.2.3. Perspectives on Language Teaching and Learning

4.4.2.3.1. Learning is Playing

Binh’s lack of knowledge and information about CLT and her inexperience in teaching resulted in difficulties for her in meeting the requirements of the MOET program of teaching English for primary school students. However, she recognized that diversity of teaching materials and classroom activities should be applied to promote students’ interest and teaching effectiveness. Binh usually created activities that she called ‘games’, by which students could practise their speaking: ‘Students play games and compete with each other, and also practise speaking’ (Binh – Initial interview).

According to Binh, fun and a comfortable atmosphere encouraged her students to enjoy learning, so she usually conducted activities in the form of games and also used games both to check students’ understanding and to recycle previous lessons. She organised activities as games to attract students’ attention to the lessons:
When the class is noisy or when the students are not eager to work, I organized games in which two groups emulate each other. The games make them excited.

(Binh – Initial interview)

Moreover, she shared her opinion that games and the competition promoted by the games motivated students in learning:

Some students haven’t learned English before, but they still like to play. They pay attention to the lessons so that they can win in the games after the lesson, or they can win the games on the following day.

(Binh – Initial interview)

4.4.2.3.2. Correcting Mistakes

In addition to her view of teaching activities, Binh indicated that explicit error correction was really necessary, and claimed that mistakes should be corrected immediately to attract other students’ attention to correct forms. Competition in games also resulted in students’ positive reaction to error correction:

Some students who haven’t learned English previously are also interested in these games. They observe first and try to remember when I correct their friends so that they can win the games.

(Binh – Initial interview)

In Binh’s perspective, mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible. Binh checked students’ mistakes and corrected them through games:

Students play games and compete with each other, and also practise speaking. [...] I asked students to speak aloud. Check whether they speak correctly or not, which student speaks more correctly. Then I correct them immediately, so other students notice the mistakes.

(Binh – Initial interview)

4.4.2.3.3. Using L1 and L2 in the Classroom

In spite of her lack of teaching experience, Binh was able to express her opinions of English teaching, indicating that students should be provided with different kinds of materials in order to better remember what was taught in the class rather than using translation as the only way to give instruction and explain. The teacher could teach new vocabulary, for example, demonstrated by pictures and technology, rather than just
writing the meaning in Vietnamese on the board. She added that students should not only learn how to fulfil the language exercises in their textbooks but also learn how to listen and speak English:

Pictures were not used in the past. Teachers just gave Vietnamese equivalent vocabulary. Now we should use pictures and technology as much as possible. Vietnamese should be limited so that students can remember English in class.

(Binh – Initial interview)

4.4.2.3.4. Textbook Dependence

Aside from activities Binh used to adapt the curriculum such as songs and games, the interview revealed the extent of Binh’s dependence on textbook in her teaching, with the activities following closely the lessons in the textbook. She reported that, when she planned for the lessons, she memorized the lesson content and noted the activities she wanted to organize:

I read the lessons before teaching. I remember the content of the lessons in this textbook. I just consider the condition of the class and the students’ characteristics so that I can find appropriate games for revision, or for grammar practice.

(Binh – Initial interview)

Binh also provided her opinions concerning the role of teacher and students in language teaching, which was rather different to those she had witnessed in the past.

4.4.2.4. Perspectives on the Roles of Teacher and Students

The role of teacher and students were stated as follows:

The teacher is not a knowledge giver anymore... Students are allowed to work more actively in the classroom. The teacher is the guide and students should have chance to work together.

(Binh – Initial interview)

When comparing the role of the teacher in the past and the present, Binh stated that the teacher used to be the centre of all class activities, providing knowledge, and that modelling was not suitable in the present teaching environment. She said that the teacher should provide more opportunities for students to participate in the lessons in a more active way, rather than students just listening to the teacher and copying what the teacher
said. However, she hesitated to provide more details about what a teacher should do to encourage and enhance students’ autonomy in learning.

4.4.2.5. Summary

From the initial interview, Binh’s understandings of CLT and her perspectives on language learning and teaching are summarized as follows:

- As a novice teacher, Binh lacked both theoretical knowledge and practical experience of L2 learning and teaching. Her teaching methods were mainly influenced by colleagues in the language centre where she had worked as a part-time teacher and her experience as an English language learner at school and college. Therefore, Binh had no explicit understandings of CLT and its characteristics.

- She identified the potential of play for language learning and teaching, especially for young learners in order to motivate them and provide them with opportunities to practise and learn the language.

- Correcting mistakes was considered important to L2 learning, so Binh believed that mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible.

- In her opinion, Binh expressed the need to use English in instruction with Vietnamese instruction to be gradually decreased, by using various materials such as flash-cards, pictures and technology.

- She indicated that her lessons depended on the textbook, and that finishing the textbook content was a primary goal of teaching.

- Comparing with teachers’ roles in the past, Binh believed that teachers should give more opportunities to students to be actively involved in activities that helped them practise and use the target language.

4.4.3. Case Three – Chau: Interview before Action Research

4.4.3.1. Background

Like Anh and Binh, Chau graduated from the local teacher training college and was also a novice teacher. She had only one year of English teaching experience, and this was the
first year that her school had deployed the MOET’s program of teaching English for elementary students.

According to Chau, she did not have many opportunities to share teaching experiences with other teachers of English, since there were only two English teachers in District Primary School. The other teacher was also a new teacher and did not have much more experience than Chau:

She started teaching only one year before me. So she said, ‘Try it yourself. You may ask me if you have difficulty’. But she can’t help me much because she doesn’t have much more teaching experience than me.

(Chau – Initial interview)

Chau revealed that, besides having few opportunities to share language teaching experiences within her school, there was no chance for her to share teaching experiences with teachers of English in other schools.

Chau explained that the course of teaching methodology at her college was also not very helpful or supportive for her. She indicated that there had been insufficient time allocated to the introduction of teaching methods, insufficient time for teaching practice, and a lack of supervision. These issues resulted in the course being ineffective for her, and it did not assist her much after graduation or in her current situation:

We had only several hours for teaching methodology [...]. The time for teaching practice was too little [...]. We observed only one lesson at a primary school and two lessons at a secondary school [...]. I’m not supervised by any other experienced teachers. It’s been very hard for me since I started teaching.

(Chau – Initial interview)

The MOET’s support was also very limited, as there was nothing but textbooks and sets of flashcards, posters and CDs related to the textbooks. Chau explained that she had to copy listening lessons onto her own mobile phone and use a mini loudspeaker for her classes. She had not attended any professional development courses since she began teaching, and had not received any official documents related to the MOET’s program.

In addition to sharing the conditions of the teaching context she was working in, Chau shared her understanding of CLT, her perspectives on language teaching and learning, and her viewpoint on the roles of language teachers and students.
4.4.3.2. Unsure about CLT

In terms of the MOET’s requirement for English teaching methods, Chau reported that she had not heard about CLT and did not know how to implement this method into her classroom practice. She revealed that, when she studied at teacher training college, the language teaching methods were introduced, but due to limited time, they were introduced very briefly and she could not remember much about them:

Everything I studied was only some kind of theory and it is so short. My teacher also admitted that there was not enough time for him to share more about the teaching methods and his experience.

(Chau – Initial interview)

However, when being asked what she thought about CLT due to its name, she said that it might focus on communication, listening and speaking instead of just vocabulary and grammar. Chau expressed concern about her current teaching methods and the current textbook, when she shared her opinion:

I usually think of my teaching method. I want to change my method to improve students’ ability to communicate in English. I want them to have more practice. I think this textbook is not enough and I am not really content with it. For example, the answer for, ‘How are you?’ is always ‘I’m fine. Thank you’. My students asked me, ‘What can we say if we’re not fine?’.

(Chau – Initial interview)

Chau reported that she wanted to change her teaching method to a more communicative approach but she did not know how to go about this. She shared that she had almost no opportunities to learn and share teaching experiences with other teachers. The textbook and some relevant materials were the major materials for teaching and learning, while ‘it (the textbook) did not reflect the real-life communication’. In her opinion, the language taught should connect to reality.

While admitting to lacking understanding of CLT and being concerned with her teaching methods, and expressing her desire to develop her teaching skills and improve students’ communicative ability in English, Chau shared her perspectives on language learning and teaching, as presented in the following section.
4.4.3.3. Perspectives on Language Teaching and Learning

4.4.3.3.1. Contextualization

Chau shared that setting a context was an effective way to raise the students’ awareness and assist their learning, and gave an example:

In order to introduce the question, ‘What’s your name?’, in the first lesson, it is difficult for students to understand and remember if I follow exactly the textbook. Instead, before asking students to open the book, I ask them, ‘What do you say when you meet somebody at the first time?’. I guide students until they give me that question. I practise the question with them first; then I let them open the book and read the story. They will think, ‘Oh, that question is here’, and understand what it is for. I find it is more effective and helps students remember what they learn better.

(Chau – Initial interview)

4.4.3.3.2. Using Pair and Group Work

Chau expressed her support for pair and group work, and shared that her students were interested in these activities. However, it was found that pair and group work was mainly conducted to practise the forms after they were introduced and explained:

The students are very excited. They like the activities very much [...]. I follow all necessary steps. For example, in an activity where students have to ask each other names and age, I write the sample on the board; then I instruct how to say it; after that, I invite some students to practise with me as models; later I let students to work in pairs or in groups; after practicing I invite some pairs to perform while the whole class is observing them.

(Chau – Initial interview)

Moreover, the purpose of pair and group work, according to Chau, was to encourage students to help each other in learning:

I often arrange a more capable and a less competent one to work in a pair so that the better may help the other.

(Chau – Initial interview)
4.4.3.3. Teaching Forms

Chau provided a limited opinion regarding forms instruction; however, she did reveal a view that grammar should not be explained as it used to be in the past. Instead, it might be implicitly introduced and students ‘imitate’ its use:

I think students of this age are too young to understand grammar. They are just able to follow the examples and imitate. Grammar exercises may not work for them, but they might be able to read and speak.

(Chau – Initial interview)

4.4.3.3.4. Correcting mistakes

Correcting mistakes was necessary and should be done immediately, as Chau reported:

I usually correct mistakes as soon as possible, especially mistakes made by less competent students. I ask them to stand up and speak louder than other students in the class. The aim is to make others to notice the mistakes and avoid them.

(Chau – Initial interview)

4.4.3.3.5. Textbook dependence

In the interview, Chau explained that her lessons completely depended upon the textbook and the supporting syllabus designed for this book. The activities were created to practise the forms and to review the vocabulary introduced in the lessons in the textbook: as previously mentioned, the textbook was the only material available that the teacher and students had access to.

As a new teacher with little teaching experience, Chau could not share much in this interview. However, her responses suggest a developing response to many issues of classroom practice and the use of CLT methods and principles, as revealed in the follow-up interviews.

4.4.3.4. Perspectives on the Roles of Teacher and Students

Chau revealed that she wanted her students to be more active and have more autonomy in their learning. She stated that, in her opinion, students should be encouraged to make inquiries instead of sitting quietly and just following the teacher’ instructions:
I want students to be active in learning. It’s not good for students if they just listen to the teacher, sit at their desks and answer what the teacher asks them [...]. The lesson is not really successful when students were silent and never have any questions.

(Chau – Initial interview)

When asked what she could do to stimulate students’ autonomy, she revealed that she was still confused and unsure of the methods. She gave an example about the way she encouraged and supported students’ activeness:

When teaching a reading passage or a song, I read it first. I say, ‘Listen to me and ask me if you find a new word’. It means I read it aloud first, students listen. It is possible that they say the word incorrectly, but at least they know it’s a new word. Then I explain, not giving Vietnamese meaning, but try to find a way to explain so that they can guess its meaning. I think it’s a way, but not a good way.

(Chau – Initial interview)

While sharing her concerns about teaching methods, the extract above also indicates that using only English was not really effective in Chau’s instruction.

As with Anh and Binh, Chau had very limited knowledge and information with respect to CLT, and this influenced her implementation of this approach and the MOET’s program. Nevertheless, this teacher’s opinions of language teaching are rather different to traditional teaching methods, due to her desire to improve students’ communicative proficiency in the target language.

4.4.3.5. Summary

Chau’s initial interview about her understandings of CLT and perspectives on language learning and teaching included the following primary points:

- Lacking pedagogical theoretical and practical experience due to being a novice teacher, Chau revealed a lack of understanding of CLT. Unlike Anh and Binh, she had no opportunities to learn from her colleagues, so her teaching methods were primarily learned and modified from her experience as an English learner at school and college.

- The textbook was the primary teaching and learning material, and completing the textbook was her main goal, as it was also the goal of the school curriculum.
- Chau supported pair and group work, as they motivated students and provided them with opportunities to learn from and assist each other.

- She believed that forms should be taught but in the ways that could help students to use them rather than merely doing grammar exercises in the textbook. Like Anh and Binh, Chau claimed that mistakes should be corrected immediately and explicitly.

- Chau thought that students should have more freedom to contribute to lessons rather than quietly listening to the teacher.

- English was used as much as possible in Chau’s classroom, but it was not as effective as expected in Chau’s classroom.

4.4.4. Conclusion

In general, although the use of CLT is a requirement of the MOET to appropriately implement this program, from the teachers’ initial perspectives it was in fact still a new concept. Their teaching practices were based upon their ongoing teaching experience, their experience of language learning, and the experiences of language teaching they were able to obtain and share with their colleagues. As the teachers revealed, insufficient training concerning CLT during their teacher education course, a lack of professional development support from the MOET, big classes, and lack of teaching equipment, were some of the issues that they were dealing with while implementing the new curriculum. In the current situation, the teaching practice that they reported mainly consisted of a combination of various techniques and methods they thought were suitable for their students.

4.5. Action Research

According to the curriculum designed by the MOET, teachers are encouraged to evaluate their own curriculum implementation and share their experiences in the process of applying CLT in their classrooms. In this study, the principles of Action Research were introduced to support lesson investigation, and as a sub-methodology for both the participant teachers and the researcher, as they were not only collaborative and participatory (Burns, 1999; Cohen et al., 2007) principles but also fell within the scope of the MOET requirements for evaluation and improvement of the English program. Each
teacher participant took on the role of researcher with respect to their teaching, and became in effect a co-researcher of the study.

As indicated in Figure 4.1, two cycles of Action Research were carried out to investigate teachers’ understandings, implementations and adaptations of CLT and the MOET’s program within their teaching context. Three research meetings were organized, including one at the beginning of the Action Research, the second meeting after Action Research Cycle One, and the last meeting at the end of Action Research Cycle Two, to make plans for the cycles and evaluate the effectiveness of each cycle.
Figure 4.1: Action Research Cycles
4.5.1. Action Research: Cycle One

4.5.1.1. Group Meeting One – Introduction of CLT, Issue Identification and Planning

The first meeting was conducted in the first week of Action Research Cycle One, in which the researcher provided the three teacher participants with an introduction to and overview of CLT, and provided an opportunity for them to explore and discuss the principles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting/evaluating that underpin Action Research.

Cycle One was conducted by the three teacher participants and is summarized as follows in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Summary of Group Meeting One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Discussion Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Three teacher-participants: Anh, Binh, and Chau | Overview of CLT
- The study researcher | - CLT definition
- Communicative competence
- CLT features
| Action Research principles and practices; Cycle One Planning | Teacher nominated CLT focus: Using authentic materials to assist students’ vocabulary learning.
Plan: Using ‘real’ materials in teaching vocabulary. |

4.5.1.1.1. Introduction of CLT

In order to open discussion with teachers about CLT, an orientation session was conducted, and the following definition of CLT was used: ‘CLT is an APPROACH to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE and seeks to make meaningful communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities’ (capitals in original) (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 99). According to this definition, communicative competence is at the core of CLT, and a short introduction about communicative competence, including grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence (Benati 2009; Savignon 2002), was provided.
In addition to the definition and concept of communicative competence, the teachers were also provided with the following CLT features, summarized by Nunan (1991).

These five discussed features of CLT consisted of:

a. The emphasis on interaction in the target language in learning to communicate.
b. The use of authentic texts in the learning process.
c. The focusing on language and the learning management process.
d. The value given to the students’ own experience in the learning process.
e. The association of language learning in the classroom with language activities outside the classroom.

The teachers agreed that using ‘real materials’, and to ‘let students see, touch, and feel things’ (Researcher’s Field notes), might help their students to remember and learn better. Two of the three teachers also reported that they usually enhanced interaction in the target language by developing activities to be conducted with pairs and groups. Anh and Binh, who were also teaching for a local English language centre, reported that they had created activities such as pair work and group work to increase the interaction between students, but that these activities were limited, due to noise issues, the large number of students, and class arrangements. The teacher participants expressed an agreement to focus upon using real materials in their teaching procedures to assist students’ learning. However, they were less enthusiastic with respect to incorporating the other three features, involving learning management processes, connecting to students’ experience, and linkage of language learning with language use in real life activities. They stated that these components might be difficult to implement in their classroom teaching as they did not know what they could do to practise these features in their class.

The discussion of CLT was important for both the teachers and also the researcher in order to build an environment of shared understanding and to better prepare for the Action Research cycles. The Action Research included four stages: identifying issues and planning; acting; observation; and reflection and evaluation. In the planning stage, the teachers as a group identified the problem they wanted to repair and developed a plan together to solve that problem. The second and third stages, acting and observation, were conducted with the three teachers in each of their three focus classes. After the completion of Cycle One of the Action Research, the teachers and researcher met again to discuss the
fourth stage, reflection and evaluation, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Research activities.

4.5.1.1.2. Issue Identification and Planning

As a group, the teachers discussed the types of problems they were collectively experiencing regarding language teaching, and raised a number of possible strategies to solve these problems. In this first meeting, the teachers agreed upon the focal area of using authentic material in teaching vocabulary, and used this to plan for their teaching. The teachers revealed that it was hard for students to remember and use new English vocabulary:

Students of grade 3 are the beginners of English learning, so their English vocabulary is very limited. Some students cannot remember new words after learning them in class. Some others can speak out the new words well but they cannot write them correctly. Students will have difficulties to make sentences if they cannot remember words.

(Field notes)

All teacher participants identified that learning the target vocabulary was important, as it was an indispensable component of the language. The students, however, had few opportunities to gain vocabulary input and to use their English vocabulary beyond taking part in English classes, as Vietnamese was the language of instruction in all other subjects. Another aspect that affected the students’ attention and ‘investment’ in English, mentioned in the discussion, was that English was not considered to be as important as other ‘major subjects’ such as Vietnamese and mathematics, in the main because it did not influence the overall evaluation of students at the end of the semester. Therefore, teaching and providing assistance to students in the learning of new English vocabulary became the focus of this cycle for the teacher participants.

Traditionally, vocabulary was taught with single words and directly translated into Vietnamese; however, all the teachers agreed that this method of teaching vocabulary was limited in its effectiveness. To increase the effectiveness and to implement CLT in their teaching practice, they decided to take advantage of conditions and facilities they already had in vocabulary teaching. The teachers decided that a variety of classroom activities would be designed to make English more interesting, using more authentic materials and classroom activities that connected to students’ real-life experience.
At each school selected for the study, the teachers were provided with materials supported by the MOET, consisting of:

- Classbook and workbook
- Teacher’s book
- Audio class CDs
- Words flashcards
- Story posters
- Phonics cards
- Photocopy masters book

As CLT principles indicate, rich input is important in teaching practice to maximize students’ exposure to the target language (Brandl, 2008); thus, all of these resources would be used to teach vocabulary.

At a school with better equipped facilities such as City Primary School, these materials could be used in combination with the CD players and television in the English classroom. Besides the equipment provided by the MOET and school, the teachers had their own laptops, mobile phones and mini loudspeakers, which they brought to class for teaching. In order to support students’ learning, the teachers developed an Action Plan, as follows:

- All exercises in workbooks and class books to be completed and checked in class. The students can improve their vocabulary writing by combining sounds with words when they do these exercises. Teachers will evaluate students’ work and provide feedback.
- Students’ progress will be observed and noted in the teachers’ notebooks, and any limitations and problems appearing in teaching and learning will be recorded.
- Authentic materials (real materials) will be used as much as possible, instead of just looking at the pictures in books and repeating listed words. Students might remember better if they can see, touch and feel things. Familiar materials will be brought into class by the teachers or by the students, for example, school items, toys, etc.
- Students will be encouraged to connect their lessons to their own experience. Words will not be taught and learned in isolation but in situations and sentences, so that students will be able to apply them in their real communication.
The following indicators were nominated to measure success:

- An increase in the number of students who could remember and use words they have learnt when asking and answering simple questions such as, ‘What’s your favourite animal?’.
- An increase in the number of students who can correctly complete related exercises in their workbooks.

The data that were needed to examine the results of the teachers’ work included:

- Students’ exercises in workbooks: to what extent students completed these correctly.
- Students’ performance in class activities: to what extent students responded in class activities and were involved in classroom communication.
- Teachers’ observations of students’ responses to communicative-based activities.
- The teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of CLT in their practices.

**4.5.1.2. Acting and Class Observations – Cycle One**

Acting and class observation were the stages of Action Research where teachers implemented their previously determined plans into action. In this stage, the three teachers carried out the required preparation to support the proposed vocabulary language teaching and learning. Fifteen lessons were observed across three classes within 5 weeks in this component of the cycle. This consisted of five observations of Anh’s lessons, five observations of Binh’s lessons, and five observations of Chau’s lessons; with each class observation lasting approximately 35 minutes. Summary of class observations of Cycle One is shown in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2: Summary of class observations of Cycle One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-participants</th>
<th>Class observations</th>
<th>Topic of the lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anh</td>
<td>5 lessons</td>
<td>School things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh</td>
<td>5 lessons</td>
<td>Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>My body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chau</td>
<td>5 lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although expressing interest in the principles of CLT, the teachers were either not fully aware of them or hesitated to apply all of these principles in their classes. The data
demonstrated that the teacher-participants practised their teaching using both CLT oriented and non-CLT oriented aspects. The entries in Table 4.3 describe related teaching practices that emerged from these lessons and are further described in the findings of this research:

**Table 4.3: Summary of the teachers’ practices through the Action Research cycles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CLT oriented aspects</th>
<th>Non-CLT oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Roles of teacher and students in lesson construction</td>
<td>Students were more active in contributing to lessons through some interactions with peers and with teacher.</td>
<td>Teacher-directed instruction was the primary style. Teacher was the model and expert who controlled most class activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Interaction in teaching and learning process</td>
<td>Students interacted collaboratively through pair and group work. Teacher created situations for the needs of communication to occur.</td>
<td>Teacher facilitated learning through providing assistance with the use of L1 and IRF patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Instruction provision</td>
<td>Giving comprehensible ‘input’ with familiar terms and real objects.</td>
<td>Direct instruction, in which lesson content was made understandable and accessible through use of L1 and discussion of language forms, was provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Form instruction</td>
<td>Focus on Form: Form was used in meaningful ways when students applied new structures to describe their real-life experience</td>
<td>Focus on Forms: - A specific linguistic form was introduced in every lesson and other lesson elements were dependent on it. - Repetitions and drilling were the main practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Error correction</td>
<td>Errors were ignored or correction was delayed if it affected communication flow.</td>
<td>There were instances where errors were corrected even though they did not influence meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Authenticity</td>
<td>Real familiar objects were used to raise situations in which communication could occur.</td>
<td>Textbook dependence and fulfilling / finishing a prescribed syllabus were the aim of teaching-learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) L1 Use</td>
<td>L2 use increased.</td>
<td>L1 was used as a facilitator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four cases of classroom observation

4.5.1.2.1. Case One – Anh: Class Observation Cycle One

Five lessons were observed in Anh’s class, and these lessons took place in a classroom that demonstrated a common school arrangement with desks organised in three rows. Each row had six desks, with two students sharing one desk. This seating arrangement was also the same in the especially equipped English classroom.

Sometimes the teacher changed the desk arrangement to make it more appropriate to the activities of her lessons and to create a new teaching and learning atmosphere for the students. This might involve developing a u-shaped or a banquet style seating arrangement. However, after those lessons, she needed to return the physical/seating arrangement to the previous position, since after the English lessons students would learn another subject with a different teacher in the same room.

A lesson usually began with revision of the previous lesson in the form of a game or a song, and students were excited and seemed to like lessons with these activities.

The teacher designed her lessons with various activities in which the students worked as a whole class, as individuals, and in pairs and groups. Her teaching methods included different techniques, in which both traditional methods focusing on grammar, and strategies such as creating situations for communication needs to emerge to improve students’ communicative competence, were practised. In many of the activities observed, the teacher followed a procedure in which she modelled the activities first, and then called upon some students to model the activity again in front of the class. The modelling components would be followed by the students’ completing the task in pairs or using group work. Anh later explained that the focus on modelling allowed the students to understand what they needed to do when they practised the activity themselves. It could be argued that, by doing this, Anh combined students’ form practice with communicative activity by letting her students talk more freely and connect the language they had just learned with their own life and experience, based on the topic they were learning.

After the practice in which students used the language learned, some students were called upon or volunteered to perform the activity in front of the whole class. The purpose of this performance, according to Anh, was to check whether students understood and implemented what was required. The ‘audience students’, who were observing those performing at the board (Anh – Field notes), also had opportunities to check their work.
and review the new elements they had learned while listening to their friends’ performances.

The last part of a lesson generally involved completing exercises in workbooks. These exercises were checked in class, or the teacher kept them to mark, gave feedback, and returned them in the next lesson.

It can be argued that Anh’s teaching practice followed the Presentation, Practice, Production (P-P-P) cycle, a three-phase sequence that draws upon audio-lingual practice (Richards, 2006a), rather than the communicative approach:

**Presentation:** The new linguistic structure is introduced.

**Practice:** Students practise the new structure through drilling exercises in a controlled context.

**Production:** Students produce their own content to practise the new structure in a different context.

The P-P-P pedagogical structure was sometimes modified to become more communicative. For example, in the Production phase, students could try out the new pattern in free communication, as in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4: A summary of a lesson in Anh’s class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s processes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Review of what has been learned in the previous lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity one</td>
<td>T asks SS what school things they have learned in the song, ‘Open the book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity two</td>
<td>SS sing ‘Open the book!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity three</td>
<td>SS play a vocabulary game (T spells, SS say the words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new lesson</td>
<td>T introduces Emma, a student in the reading, and asks SS to find what school things Emma has through the picture. T elicits for new vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and reading aloud the reading</td>
<td>SS look at their books, listen to the reading from CD and read aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the reading and meaning</td>
<td>T collects school things that are similar to Emma’s to demonstrate the reading. T repeats the sentences in the reading, shows school things she collects and SS repeat after T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T modelling</td>
<td>T plays the role of Emma to present her school things with real school things collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S modelling</td>
<td>Some SS play the role of Emma to present her school things with real school things collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching new grammar</td>
<td>T instructs how to describe school things with their colours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing grammar has been learned</td>
<td>SS talk about school things, combining with their colours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up new task</td>
<td>T gives instruction for pair work in which SS present their school things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying out task</td>
<td>SS work in pairs, presenting their school things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual reflection</td>
<td>Some individuals present their school things in front of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing exercises in workbook and marking</td>
<td>SS do the exercises in their workbook. T marks some students’ exercises, who finish first, and gives feedback to the class. The others’ work is marked after class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Anh – Observation 1)

This was a reading lesson, presenting a text in which a student, Emma, introduced her school things. After reading this text, students would do a comprehension exercise in which they ticked on the school things Emma had (See Appendix K for a copy of the lesson).
In this lesson, Presentation phase with an introduction of the text about Emma’s ‘school things’ was modified through the use of equivalent objects collected from students’ belongings. The text, in this situation, was translated into a lively ‘version’ (Pickford, 2017) in order to attract students’ attention and interest (Anh – Field notes). It is noted that the grammar structure presented in this lesson arose from the need to describe ‘school things’ with colours. This structure was not assigned to teach in this lesson as a part of the curriculum.

Similarly, Practice phase was taken when students played the role of Emma with the real objects collected; and Produce phase was conducted when they tried out the new grammar structure with their own belongings in pairs and group work. The instruction of the grammar structure and the use of real-life objects, instead of following closely activities designed in the textbook, indicated that activities in the textbooks might be modified to create more opportunities for students to communicate in English (Anh – Field notes).

The next section will demonstrate in more detail how Anh combined aspects of CLT and non-CLT in her teaching practice.

(1) The role of teacher and students in lesson construction

As can be seen in the lesson summary above, Anh acted as a model and controlled the class language practice. Before every activity, Anh modelled the language in order that students could understand their role in the activities. The students followed what had been modelled in order to replicate the prescribed pattern. The teacher was the authority in the class who gave instructions to the students.

The following extract is cited from the lesson mentioned in Table 4.4. In this extract, the teacher played the role of a model who illustrated what students should do in a task:

| Teacher orientates class and models language forms | Teacher: Bây giờ cô sẽ muốn một số đồ dùng của bạn Emma. Rubber nè. Cô có blue pen, cô có green pencil case. Rồi chica? Pencil and a bag. Chúng ta sẽ cùng thực hành nhe. (Trans: Now I’m going to borrow some school things from Emma. It’s rubber. I have blue pen. I have green pencil case. Are you ready? Pencil and a bag. Let’s practise!). Hello. My name’s Emma. This is my school bag. This is my pencil case. It’s green. And this is my pencil. This is my blue pen. And this is my pink pen. Look at this it’s a rubber. Can I see your bag? |

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Modelling was a routine in Anh’s teaching. In this lesson, she modelled first, and then asked several individual students to practise in front of the whole class. This was also a kind of model: as Anh reported later after the lesson, this activity had two purposes: a) checking whether students understood her instruction; b) providing more modelling to other students so that they knew what they should do (Anh – Field notes). Individual practice or student modelling is illustrated in the extract below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher invites some students to model language forms in front of class</th>
<th>Teacher: Bạn nào có thể làm thay bạn Emma nào? Mọi bạn Lisa. Con làm bạn Emma nha. (Trans: Who can play the role of Emma? Lisa, can you?) Lisa: Hello. My name’s Emma. It’s my bag. This is my pencil case. And this is my pencil. It’s my blue pen. And this is my pink pen. Look at this. It’s a rubber. Can I see bag?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Modelling was a way the teacher facilitated students’ learning, as they were learning in a context where English was not an everyday language, and the classroom was the only environment in which they could be exposed to the language.

In addition to the role of an authority, it is apparent that the teacher provided her students with a more active role when they work in pairs or groups. In the following extract, although students practised the language grammar point mentioned above after modelling, with the use of their own belongings they had more freedom to choose any items they wanted rather than just practicing with words or pictures in the textbook in other cases. They could create sentences to describe real ‘school things’ with their real colours, rather than just limited items and colours assigned by the teacher or the textbook:

| Teacher asks students to work in pairs and present their own school things. | Teacher: Bây giờ cô Anh yêu cầu các bạn sẽ đề những đồ dùng học tập của mình lên bàn, sau đó quay qua kể cho bạn mình nghe mình có những đồ dùng học tập gì. Sau đó sẽ hỏi ‘Can I see your bag?’ ‘Cho mình xem cặp của bạn được không?’. Bạn kia sẽ giới thiệu những đồ dùng học tập của bạn đó cho mình xem. (Trans: Now I want you to put your school things on your desks, then turn to your friend and tell your friend which school things you have. After that, you will request ‘Can I see your bag?’ ‘Can I |
The teacher also provided her students with more autonomy, and moved to engage them in the construction of the lessons. In the instances below, the students not only passively received the knowledge from the teacher but they actively contributed to the lessons. In the following example, instead of merely being satisfied with the vocabulary provided by the teacher from previous lessons, the students added other words they had learned from sources outside of the classroom:

| T asks SS to list animals they have learned and writes the words on the board; then she encourages SS to add more words they know and writes the words on the board. | T: Ngoài những con vật trên bảng ra bạn nào còn biết những con vật nào nữa nào? (Trans: Beside the animals on the board, who can tell me other animals?)  
S1: Elephant.  
T: Elephant.  
S2: Kangaroo.  
T: Kangaroo.  
SS: Tiger.  
T: Tiger.  
SS: Lion. |

Not only supporting students’ learning through teaching techniques, the teacher provided support through creating a low-anxiety environment. As in the examples above, she called students ‘con’ as an Aunty would name her nephews or nieces, or ‘bạn/các bạn’ as if she was their friend. When students worked individually, in pairs or in groups, she went around the classroom to assist them to finish their work. A low-anxiety atmosphere was also constructed when the teacher made fun with her actions or jokes, while she was teaching vocabulary or forms. Students liked these moments and were engaged in activities happily. This made drilling more interesting, and students were eager to learn (Anh – Fieldwork 2013):
T makes fun when she teaches vocabulary about body parts. She raises her arm as if she is a bodybuilder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: Nose.</th>
<th>SS: Nose.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: An arm.</td>
<td>SS: An arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T (Smile and points to a student): An arm mà sao giao hai tay? (Trans: An arm but why are two arms raised)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.1.2-5, Anh – Observation 4)

(2) Interaction in the language teaching-learning process

Activities including pair work and group work were a part of most of Anh’s lessons, as they were reported to enhance students’ interaction. The students were given opportunities to work in collaboration and corporation (Anh, Recall of Action Research Cycle 1). They worked in pairs and groups to practise the new language after the teacher and student modelling. In addition to this, they shared information and assisted each other to fulfil the teacher’s requirements. Students corrected each other and learned new language from their peers when they practised. The students themselves, therefore, played the role of tutors and were a source of ‘input’ for each other.

In Extract 4.5.1.2-6 and Extract 4.5.1.2-7 (Class observation 1), for example, the students introduced their school things to each other. They learned new words from each other and corrected each other’s mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students work in pairs to introduce their school things after teacher’s and students’ modelling.</th>
<th>S1: Hello. My name Rio. It’s my school bag. This is my pencil. This is my pen blue. S2: Blue pen chu. (Trans: It must be blue pen) S1: This is my blue pen. This is my pencil case. This is my rubber. Can I see your bag? (Extract 4.5.1.2-6, Anh – Observation 1)</th>
<th>S2 corrects his peer when S1 makes a mistake with ‘pen blue’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S3: Hello. My name’s Lina. This is my school bag. This is my pencil case. This is my pencil. It’s red. Look! This is a rubber. And this is correction pen. S4: Cái gì vậy? (Trans: What is it?)</td>
<td>S3 introduces a new word to S4: ‘correction pen’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While interactive activities in Anh’s classes maximized her students’ use of English, she still maintained customary teaching practices: a teacher-directed model which focused on individual work, in which the students responded to the teacher’s questions and instructions, as in the following example:


It can be seen that the exchange between the teacher and students was initiated by the teacher, responded to by students, and closed by a feedback of the teacher. This Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern (IRF) was practised as a routine in this teacher’s lessons.

Not relying solely on the traditional pattern of IRF, Anh expanded the discourse as scaffolding so that students had more opportunities to participate in the interaction and contribute to the lesson, as in the extract below:

In the illustration above, instead of giving a direct feedback that students’ responses were correct or not, the teacher modified the questions by providing more explanation and examples of a poem, making it more comprehensible to students. The IRF pattern was expanded when she invited a student to read a poem.

L1 was used to discuss the meaning of the word ‘poem’. The meaning of the word was not simply an equivalent word in L1 but drawn out from a discussion between teacher and students about what it was like. The meaning of the word was made clear when Anh attracted students’ interest and engagement in the conversation by asking them to read a poem they knew, even in L1.

In addition, in the lessons of this cycle, students’ interaction in pairs and groups was mediated by the use of L1. Students negotiated the meaning of L2 through using L1. In Extract 4.5.1.2-7, for example, the students used L1 to make clear the meaning of ‘correction pen’ as they worked in a pair.

Instruction provision in Anh’s class, which included CLT and traditional aspects, is demonstrated in the following section.

(3) Instruction Provision

In Anh’s instructions, forms were introduced directly and through the use of L1 to make them understandable. Students were provided with direct instruction and explanation of language forms or vocabulary, as in the following instance:
In addition to this direct instruction, in most of her lessons Anh related her instruction of the new knowledge to terms, objects and information familiar to the students, and/or used actions to demonstrate meanings and use, as in the following class observation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T asks SS the meaning of the expression ‘sun cream’ which is included in the reading.</th>
<th>T: Now, look at here. ‘Sun cream’. SS: Sun cream. T: Sun cream; when we go out, so hot, we put the sun cream on the skin. What does it mean, ‘sun cream’? Bình. S: Thưa cô là ‘kem chống nắng’ (Trans: Teacher, it’s ‘sun cream’) T: Ơ, kem chống nắng. (Trans: Yes, sun cream)</th>
<th>T points to the picture in her textbook and acts as though she is applying sun cream on her arm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(4) Form Instruction

Anh’s lessons were very much dependant on the textbook content, which is grammar-based, so the content also depended on the grammar focus for each Unit. The lessons were
constructed around particular grammar forms and vocabulary. As described above, elements of a variety of instruction techniques that were not CLT-orientated were observed in Anh’s teaching. It is apparent that repetitions and drills were part of Anh’s teaching routines. Most of the repetitions took place when the teacher introduced new linguistic features such as vocabulary and new structures, as in the following extract:

| T introduced new grammar structure ‘Is this your…?’ | T: Is this your book?  
S: Yes, it is.  
T: Is this your notebook?  
S: Yes, it is.  
T: Is this your pencil case?  
S: No, it isn’t.  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-12, Anh – Observation 2) | T holds up school things collected from several students and asks a student, using structure, ‘Is this your…?’ that she is teaching.  
S answers, using ‘Yes, it is’ or ‘No, it isn’t’. She takes the object if it is hers. |

These drills, however, were contextualized with the use of real objects – the students’ school things. When she holds up a student’s school things and ask the owner of these objects, students could connect the words they heard (i.e. book, notebook, pencil case) and the new grammar structure (i.e. Is this your…?) with the meaning of those words and structure. The way Anh connected grammar lessons with a context created to use linguistic structures more comprehensibly can be seen in the instance following Extract 4.5.1.2-12. In this instance, when the teacher asked the student, ‘Is this your pencil case?’ and showed the pencil case to the student, the student moved her hand and intended to reach the pencil case, although the answer was, ‘No, it isn’t’. See Extract 4.5.1.2-13, Anh – Observation 2) below for this instance:

| T introduced new grammar structure ‘Is this your…?’ | T: Is this your pencil case?  
S: No, it isn’t.  
T (smiles): ‘No’ mà cũng cảm nỡ. (Trans: You said ‘No’ but you took it). Thank you.  
‘No’ là hông được cảm.  
‘No, it isn’t’ là hông phải của mình đâu mà cảm. (Trans: ‘No’ means you mustn’t take it.  
‘No, it isn’t’ means it isn’t yours, so you mustn’t take it)  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-13, Anh – Observation 2) | T shows the pencil case toward the student.  
S moves her hand and intends to reach the pencil case. |
It is interesting that, in this instance, when Anh responded to the student’s action she smiled and acted in a humorous way that made students laugh. She explained after the lesson that this was the way she made students comfortable and notice lessons.

Metalinguistic explanations could be provided, where the teacher gave a rule for a specific linguistic item or assigned task to raise consciousness of forms. Extract 4.5.1.2-10 is an example. It is noticeable that, in Extract 4.5.1.2-10, because Anh’s focus was on the structure, ‘These are’, which is the point of this grammar lesson prescribed by the textbook, she only accepted the students’ answer, ‘These are’, and ignored students’ answer, ‘They are’, although it could be acceptable in this case, reflecting a Focus-on-Forms instruction, a non-CLT orientation. The term ‘plural’ used in this extract for ‘two or more than two items’ indicated the teacher’s metalinguistic explanation in her lesson.

In addition to explicit instruction, in many situations implicit form instruction was given. In Extract 4.5.1.2-14 below, for instance, the teacher did not explain explicitly how to combine colour and object in a chunk, but let students draw the rule themselves through providing them examples:

| Teacher presents a grammatical feature implicitly: ‘It’s a/an (colour) (object)’ | T: Bây giờ có có hai câu: ‘It’s a pencil case’ và ‘It’s green’. Cô muốn ghép lại thành một câu thì cô nói thế nào? Cô mời Lisa. (Trans: I have two sentences ‘It’s a pencil’ and ‘It’s green’. What can I say to combine them into one sentence?)
S1: It’s a pencil case, it’s green.
T: Cô muốn ráp lại thành một câu thôi. (Trans: I want to combine them into only one sentence)
S2: It’s red pencil.
T: Sao con? (Trans: What, darling?)
S: It’s a red. It’s a green pencil.
T: Pencil (pauses)
SS: case.
T: Pencil case. |

(Extract 4.5.1.2-14, Anh – Observation 1)
Most errors were corrected explicitly and immediately. Implicit correction, however, such as recasting student responses, was observed in many cases. Whether Anh gave the correct form or not, her feedback aimed to raise students’ awareness of their mistakes and how to correct them. The following extracts are typical:

| Teacher corrects a mistake explicitly | T: What’s this?
SS: It’s a blue pencil.
SS: It’s a orange.
S: It’s a brown pencil.
T: Ok. Minh gọi cái này là orange nhe. (Trans: Ok. We call this colour orange)
SS: It’s a orange pencil.
T: It’s a orange pencil? Is that right or wrong?
(T writes ‘It’s a orange pencil’ on the board)
T: Right or wrong? It’s a orange pencil. Right or wrong?
SS (silent)
T: Wrong. Sai rồi.
T: Bụa trước có có dàn là nếu như chữ này bắt đầu bằng một trong năm nguyên âm ‘u ê oă i’ thì chúng ta sẽ chuyển cái này thành (pauses and writes ‘n’ after ‘a’) (Trans: I’ve told you that if this word starts with one of five vowels ‘u ê oă i’, we’ll change this into)
(T writes ‘n’ after ‘a’ for ‘an’ on the board).
(Extract 4.5.1.2-15, Anh – Observation 1) |

| Teacher corrects a mistake implicitly | S: I can see you bag?
T: Can I see your bag?
S: Can I see your bag?
| (Extract 4.5.1.2-16, Anh – Observation 1) |

It can be noticed that, in Extract 4.5.1.2-15, while the students’ mistake was corrected, Focus-on-Form instruction was activated. The teacher provided explicit grammar teaching (i.e. using ‘an’ before words beginning with one of the five vowels ‘u, e, o, a, i’) when the mistake occurred. This example indicates that the teacher was using a CLT-oriented technique by correcting the mistake as it was happening, in combination with other non-CLT-oriented techniques.

Not only did the teacher correct students’ mistakes, but also students were asked to find and correct peer mistakes. The whole class was required to listen to the students’
performance and comment on the performers’ work. The aim of this was that students would pay more attention to the performance and recognize errors that they might also make. In addition, when students focused on their peers’ performance to find errors, they could observe the way forms were used correctly. This is also a way Anh corrected students’ mistakes explicitly after an implicit corrective feedback, as demonstrated above and in the following extract:

| T asks whole class to comment on a student’s statements introducing school things in front of the class. | S1: Hello, my name’s Lisa. It’s my school bag. This is my pencil. This is my pen purple. This is my pencil case. It’s blue. Look! This is a rubber. I can see you bag? T: Can I see your bag? S1: Can I see your bag? T: Any comments? Có nhận xét gì hông? Peter nhận xét xem bạn Lisa nói đúng không nào. (Trans: Any comments? Peter, did Lisa speak correctly?) S2: Thưa cô bạn nói đúng. (Trans: Yes, she spoke correctly) T: Chắc không? (Trans: Are you sure?) S2: Yes. T: Sit down. Con. (Trans: You) S3: Bạn nói là ‘I can see your bag’. (Trans: She said ‘I can see your bag’) T: À, bạn nói lớn là ‘I can see your bag’ phải không? Rồi. (Trans: Ah, she said ‘I can see your bag, didn’t she? Ok).

(Extract 4.5.1.2-17, Anh – Observation 1) | S1 performs in front of the whole class, holding her belongings when presenting them. |

In most cases, however, mistake correction did not interrupt the flow of speech. Anh waited until students finished their talk or conversations, in order not to make them feel uncomfortable and stressed. In the extracts above, for example, she corrected mistakes after the students completed their description of school things and finished introducing the school things in their bags.

It could be also observed that not all students’ mistakes were corrected. The reason, as Anh revealed later, was that she rarely ignored students’ mistakes except when she did not hear and missed them. The student’s mistake, ‘pen purple’, in Extract 4.5.1.2-17 above is an example.
As the above extracts demonstrate, grammar was a focus of Anh’s instruction and correction; but an argument can be made that, by introducing familiar contexts and actions, Anh implemented communicative-oriented language teaching where the focus was not only on accuracy but also on meaning, as in the following extract where the focus is on personal ownership:

| T returns SS’ belongings after introducing the possessive adjective ‘my’ and its usage. | T: Cái này của cô phải không? (Trans: *Is this mine?*)  
SS: Không (Trans: *No*).  
T: Em phải nói câu gì để em lấy lại cuốn sách? (Trans: *What should you say to get your book back?*)  
S: This is my book (hesitates), my pen.  
T: Ü, thì trả lại. Của bạn đó thì cô trả lại bạn đó, không phải của cô. (Trans: *Ok, here it is. It is hers, so I returned it to her. It is not mine*)  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-18, Anh – Observation 2) | T takes a student’s book and asks the whole class.  
T turns to a student.  
T talks to the whole class. |

However, it is also argued that, in this example, the teacher missed an opportunity to help students to develop communicative competence in L2 forms, as she did not teach them how to respond using a polite form to get their objects back.

(6) Authenticity

In most of Anh’s lessons, the textbook is the primary resource. Following and fulfilling the content of the lesson in the textbook is her duty. Textbooks and materials related to textbooks such as CDs and flashcards were used frequently. However, to make lessons more meaningful and interesting for students, other visuals such as pictures, video clips and texts collected from the Internet were used to support students’ understanding. Realia such as the teacher’s and students’ belongings and things they could find around the classroom were other important resources Anh often exploited.

The focus of this Action Research cycle was vocabulary teaching with authentic material use. It was observable that the authentic materials used for the lessons belonged to the teacher and students and their own body parts. Instead of just looking at pictures in their books, students touched and pointed to real things.
Anh’s practice also included a stage in which communication was simulated. She created situations so students could practice the language they had learned to communicate with the teacher and their peers, as in the following extract:

| A pair of students use their own school things and collects other students’ belongings for their modelling in front of the class. After the students’ modelling, the teacher returns a pencil case and ruler to the rightful owners. | T: Whose pencil case? Cái này của ai đây? (Trans: *Whose is it?*) (A student raises her hand as a signal that the pencil case is hers) S1: Thưa cô bạn Nga. (Trans: *It’s Nga’s, teacher*) T: Is this your pencil case? Nga: Yes, it is. (T gives the pencil case to Nga, holds up a ruler and asks Nga) T: Is this your ruler? Nga: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S2: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S3: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S4: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S5: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S6: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S7: No, it isn’t. T: Is this your ruler? S8: Của em. (Trans: *Mine*) (Extract 4.5.1.2-19, Anh – Observation 2) | In the previous stage of the same lesson, Teacher introduces the meaning of ‘my’ and ‘your’ and the question with ‘Is this your…’. |

|  | | |

A sense of authentic communication in the extract emerged, as the teacher used English to find the real owners of the school things she was holding so that she could return them. The exchanges started with a referential question, ‘Whose pencil case?’, and continued with other questions, using ‘Is this your…?’, as it spontaneously suited the situation (Anh – Field notes). The students paid attention to the teacher’s questions and gave correct answers because they did not want to lose their belongings or receive the wrong objects.

It is noted that L1 was used frequently in Anh’s classroom discourse. The use of L1 in previous sections suggests that it might be an effective means to manage communication.
where both L1 and L2 are used. In the extract above, the teacher used L1 after the question, ‘Whose pencil case?’, because questions with ‘Whose’ had never been taught before, and it helped students to understand what the teacher meant. The next section will provide more details on this aspect.

(7) L1 Use

An important feature of CLT is the use of the target language in instructions and classroom practice (Brandl, 2007). It was observable that, even though Anh tried to use English in her instructions, frequent moves between English and Vietnamese were significant in her lessons. Most of Anh’s instructions in this cycle were in Vietnamese or transferred to Vietnamese. She interpreted her English-Vietnamese transfer:

I want my students to be familiar with English gradually and would increase the amount of English continuously due to students’ limited vocabulary. I think so much English use would demotivate them.

(Anh – Field note)

In discussing the use of L1 in English teaching, Anh argued that sharing L1 with students helped the teacher understand the students. L1 was also an effective means of explanation when the term was too complicated to interpret in English. Anh shared her opinion:

When I communicate with students in mother tongue, I understand what they need better. If they cannot understand an instruction, I can translate it or I can explain it in Vietnamese. It saves my time and energy.

(Group Meeting Two)

Anh used Vietnamese in the following situations:

| Giving instructions for class activities. | T: I have six numbers, six numbers, sáu số. Ok. Each group will choose a number. Mỗi tổ sẽ chọn một số. Ok? Sau đó tôi lướt tổ khác. Quay qua tổ khác. Sau đó chúng ta sẽ trở lại, nhưng mà trong đó chúng ta sẽ có một lucky number, trong đó sẽ có một số may mắn (Trans: Each group will choose a number. Each group will choose a number. Ok? Then another group. We will get another turn later. We will have a lucky number). Don’t answer. Chúng ta không cần phải trả lời và chúng ta get ten marks Don’t answer. (Trans: We don’t need to answer and we’ll get ten marks). Are you ready? |

(Extract 4.5.1.2-20, Anh – Observation 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Making requests. | Can you give a letter? Con cho cô một chữ cái nè. (Trans: *Can you give me a letter?*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-21, Anh – Observation 1) |

| Introducing new vocabulary. | Người ta có thể gọi là bag, người ta có thể gọi là book bag, hay còn gọi là gì nữa? (Trans: *People can call it a bag, people can call it a book bag, or what else?*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-22, Anh – Observation 1) |


(Trans: *‘I’ means ‘I’, is the subject. It stands at the beginning of a sentence, before a verb. The word ‘My’ confirms a possession.*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-23, Anh – Observation 2) |

| Making a joke. | T: Bạn vui quá. Bạn thấy bạn kia trả cái vui quá. ‘Cảm ơn’

(Trans: *She was so happy when he returned her bag that she said ‘Thank you’*).

(Extract 4.5.1.2-24, Anh – Observation 2) |

| Correcting mistakes. | Bạn nói là ‘This is my pencil case pink’. Chúng ta phải đọc là ‘My pink pencil case’ hoặc là ‘This is my pencil case. It’s pink.’

(Trans: *She said: ‘This is my pencil case pink’. We should read: ‘My pink pencil case’ or ‘This is my pencil case. It’s pink.’*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-25, Anh – Observation 1) |

| Managing class discipline. | Giơ một tay thôi, giơ nhiều tay mất quá. (Trans: *Raise one hand, please. It’s tiring to raise both of your hands*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-26, Anh – Observation 1) |

| Translating passages | Bây giờ cô Anh sẽ đọc bài thơ này bằng tiếng Việt cho các nghe thử nhé.

(Trans: *I’m going to read this poem in Vietnamese*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-27, Anh – Observation 3) |

| Marking students’ work | Cô cho bạn Lisa mười điểm. (Trans: *I give Lisa ten marks*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-28, Anh – Observation 1) |

| Praising students | Lisa xung phong rất là tốt nè! (Trans: *Lisa has volunteered. That’s good!*)

(Extract 4.5.1.2-29, Anh – Observation 1) |

Moreover, it is noticeable that the teacher created a link between language teaching and the students’ own experience. Students were encouraged to share their experience and
their knowledge related to the new language they were learning. Due to their limited English vocabulary, Vietnamese was accepted. For instance, when the teacher introduced the new word ‘poem’, students were invited to read a poem they had already learned, as in Extract 4.5.1.2-12.

The observation data also show that English was taught and learned in the mode of Vietnamese. Students practised using English words and forms, however they used them as they used Vietnamese. This was expressed through translation patterns as in the following extract:

| T asks students to look at the picture of a story in the textbook and describe it. | T: Anthony, tell me. What are they doing?  
S: This is my nose.  
T: Ó, Billy nói ‘This is my nose’, còn chị Rosy? Chị Rosy làm gì nè? (Trans: Ok, Billy says ‘This is my nose’, and sister Rosy? What is sister Rosy doing?)  
S: Bôi sun cream. (Trans: Applying sun cream)  
T: À, chị Rosy đang bôi sun cream. (Trans: Ah, sister Rosy is applying sun cream)  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-30, Anh – Observation 4) |

In this story, Billy is Rosy’s younger brother and assumed to be the same age as the students in this study. Thus, when the teacher and students talked about Rosy, they referred to her as if she was a girl of older age in the Vietnamese context, ‘chị’, as a way of showing their respect.

**Summary**

The observations on Anh’s lessons can be summarized as follows:

- The lessons were based on the textbook and drilling was a dominant activity; however, drills could be modified and inserted within activities that promoted forms of authentic communication.

- Forms were taught explicitly, and most mistakes were corrected immediately as long as the correction did not interrupt the flow of students’ speech.

- The teacher played the role of activity controller and also a learning facilitator through providing support and creating a low-anxiety environment. Students had opportunities to interact with peers in pairs and groups so that they had more freedom from the teacher’s
control, and this was an opportunity for forms of authentic communication to emerge, although pair and group work were organized to practise the language. However, teacher-led and IRF exchanges were observed to be dominant in teacher-student interactions.

- L1 was used in Anh’s instructions along with L2 to support student’s understanding, due to their current level of proficiency. It was also the medium of students’ interaction when they negotiated meanings.

- Play, including games and songs, was used as ways of motivating students and teaching the language.

To sum up, in this first cycle of Action Research, CLT was not a strong element in Anh’s lessons, as she combined various techniques and strategies in her teaching. Features of CLT such as authentic materials and situations related to students’ life and interests assisted teaching and learning, in addition to other supportive practices such as forms-focused instruction and use of Vietnamese to facilitate students’ learning, which were observable in all of Anh’s lessons.

4.5.1.2.2. Case Two – Binh: Class Observation Cycle One

Five of Binh’s lessons were observed in the first cycle of the Action Research. The first two lessons were recorded in the English classroom, in which students were seated in a double-U-shaped arrangement. The other three lessons were observed in their regular classroom where these students learned other subjects.

Binh’s lessons often started with a revision of the previous lesson, normally in form of singing a song, playing a game, or reproducing a story/role playing. The songs were parts of previous lessons, and their contents closely related to the vocabulary, grammar and expressions students had learned. The games conducted in Binh’s class were vocabulary games in which the students reviewed vocabulary they had learned. In role-playing activities, students performed the roles in the story they had learned in a previous lesson.

An illustration of a game this teacher used is given below:

| Teacher introduces the game | T: Chúng ta sẽ chơi đoán từ. Bây giờ cờ sẽ hướng dán luật chơi trước. Luật chơi như sau. Trên đây mình có năm bức tranh mình đã học rồi, về chủ đề Toys. Đúng không? (Trans: We’re going to play a word guessing game. I’ll give you the rule for the game first. Here is the rule. We have five pictures) | The class is divided into two teams A and B, each team has 18 students. |
of the topic we’ve learned, about toys. Is that right?)
SS: Da. (Trans: Yes)

Teacher introduces the rule for the game

| Teacher introduces the rule for the game | T: Bây giờ đôi cửa mình cùng một bạn lên đây, chọn ra một tranh, để trên bàn nè. Khí chọn thì team A không biết được bạn chọn bức tranh nào. Các con sẽ là người hỏi ‘Is this a’ (pauses). Nếu con đoán thứ, thì dự như là ‘teddy’ thì câu hỏi sẽ là ‘Is this a teddy?’ và đội này sẽ nhìn coi, nếu không phải thì trả lời ‘No’ (pauses). Trả lời sao? (Trans: A student of one team will come here to choose a picture and put it on my desk. Other students of the team will not know which picture is chosen. Then you will ask ‘Is this a’. If you guess it is a teddy, for example, the question will be ‘Is this a teddy?’ And the other team will see the picture. If it is not correct, say ‘No’. What else?)
SS: No, it isn’t. T: No, it isn’t. Còn nếu đúng thì trả lời (pauses) (Trans: And if it is correct you can say)
SS: Yes, it is.
T: Ở mỗi câu hỏi, mình có ba lần để trả lời. Nếu trả lời sai rồi thì mình được nhắc lại. Nếu trong ba lần đó mình đoán đúng thì lần đầu tiên mình sẽ được 3 điểm, lần thứ hai mình đoán đúng mình sẽ được 2 điểm, tối lần thứ ba mình mỗi lần đoán đúng thì mình chỉ được 1 điểm thôi. Hiểu chưa? (Trans: You have three times to guess. If you can guess correctly at the first time, you’ll get three points. If you can guess correctly at the second time, you’ll get two points. And if you guess correctly at the third time, you only get one point. Do you understand?)
S: Đã hiểu rồi. (Trans: Yes, we do) |

Teacher decides the team to start the game

| Teacher decides the team to start the game | T: Hai bạn ‘make scissors’. Đôi thẳng chỗ trước. Mình chỉ cần chọn một tranh thôi. Bây giờ cô chọn giám nè. Cả đội mình nhìn nè. Đội bên này đặt câu hỏi đi. Một người đứng lên đoán. (Trans: You two ‘make scissors’. The winner plays first. You choose only one picture. I’ll choose it for you. Look at this. This team make a question. One of you stand up and guess) |

Teacher asks one student of each team to play rock-paper-scissors in order to decide which team will start the game.

Teacher chooses the picture for the first time.

Students will choose pictures themselves later.

Students play the

| Students play the | S: Is this (hesitates) |
The use of games demonstrates Binh’s perspectives on language learning, in which play facilitated and motivated learning. Students could recycle their vocabulary or language structures in a low-anxiety atmosphere. They ‘played to learn and then learn to play’ (Binh – Field work). It was observed that play was the teacher’s teaching routine, expected and normally suggested by students. In a lesson observation, for example, students suggested a game called ‘Đập ruồi’ (Trans: Hitting flies) after a drilling activity in a vocabulary presentation. In this game, the class was divided into two teams. Each team sent a student to the board. The teacher placed five pictures demonstrating five body parts they had just learned on the board and drew a circle under each picture. When the teacher said a word of a body part, the students had to hit the circle as fast as possible. The faster student gained one mark for his or her team. After this pair finished their turn, two other students came to the board for another word.
The second part of Binh’s lessons was the new lesson introduction. Binh introduced new vocabulary or new forms of English. The introduction of the new lesson was often followed by students’ practice of the new language items they had just learned. The last part of a lesson was usually a revision activity in the form of a game, an exercise from the textbook, or a written exercise created by the teacher. Table 4.5 is a summary of a lesson of Binh’s class:

**Table 4.5: A summary of a lesson in Binh’s class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s processes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Review of what has been learned in the previous lessons</td>
<td>Activity one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New lesson</td>
<td>Introducing new form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practising new form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing the reading passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to the reading passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen and repeat</strong></td>
<td>SS look at their books, listen &amp; repeat after the CD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Checking understanding of the reading passage** | - T asks questions about things Emma has, SS answer.  
- SS do the reading comprehension exercise in their classbook. |
| **Extended exercise** | T gives instruction and model for SS how to present their own school things. Individual SS introduce themselves and their school things, based on the reading they have just read. |
| **3. Closure** | SS do the exercises in their workbook. T marks some students’ who finish first and gives feedback at the class. The others are marked after class. |

(Binh – Observation Observation 1)

The summary of the lesson above indicates that Binh’s teaching was dependent on the textbook, and reflected more non-CLT aspects, such as drillings and modelling, than CLT features. The following sections illustrate this finding in detail.

1. The roles of teacher and students in lesson construction

Unlike the traditional hierarchical style of teachers, but like Anh, Binh also narrowed the gap in her relationship with students through using intimate personal pronouns ‘con’ (Trans: niece/nephew) or ‘bạn/các bạn’ (Trans: friend/friends). The evidence for this can be found in Extract 4.5.1.2-31 above.

On the other hand, the observations in Binh’s classes revealed a teacher-led or -centred model, in which the teacher played the role of both a model and the controller, and was thus dominant in almost all class activities. Binh first modelled the activities, then her students followed, in order to avoid errors. She was the instructor who provided knowledge of English, corrected students’ errors, and decided what was going on in the classroom.

The students, in most of cases, were the followers and receivers of this knowledge. Their work was under the teacher’s control, with repetitions and drills which were the most common activities in the classroom. The extract below illustrates the role of teacher as a controller and manager of class activities while students follow her instructions:
As a result, interactions between the teacher and students are more dominant than interactions between students in Binh’s lessons, as discussed in the next section.

(2) Interaction in Teaching and Learning Process

It is observable that a teacher-directed learning model was dominant in Binh’s class. Most of the interaction in class was teacher-to-individual and teacher-to-whole-class interaction. The following extract is an example of teaching involving whole-class interaction with the teacher followed by individual interaction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T asks the whole class, then she asks individual students</td>
<td>T asks students to hold up their pencil cases and practise a grammar point: ‘It’s a (item) (colour)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demonstration above shows a traditional IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern of interaction, in which the teacher initiates and closes the exchange. Her question, ‘Is this a rubber?’, in this case implied that students’ answer, ‘It’s a rubber’, was wrong. Students understood and accepted this implicit negative feedback, as it was habitually used by the teacher.
However, in other instances, students initiated a conversation, illustrating their autonomy in their learning process, as in this example:

| SS ask T about 's' endings after T presents new vocabulary about 'Body' | S1: Cô ơi có 's' là có nhiều cái phải không cô? (Trans: Miss, does 's' mean that there are many items?)  
T: Đúng rồi. Bút chì, bút mực, thước kẻ số nhiều, có từ 2 cái trở lên thì mình thêm ‘s’ vào sau đó. (Trans: Right. Pencils, pens, rulers in plural form, with two or more should be added with ‘s’ after them)  
S2: Nếu có chữ 's' thì (pronounce) /s/ phải hóng cô? (Trans: If they have 's', we have to {pronounce} /s/, Miss?)  
S3: Cố, nếu mà bò chữ ‘s’ thì sao cô? Nếu L-E-G (spelled in Vietnamese) không có chữ 's' thì sao cô? (Trans: Miss, what happens if they don’t have ‘s’? What about L-E-G without ‘s’, Miss?)  
T: Thi nghĩa là có một cái chân thôi. (Trans: That means there is only one leg) |

(Extract 4.5.1.2-36, Binh – Observation 5)

In CLT, collaboration and cooperation are considered to facilitate learning through interaction with the teacher and with peers, where students indiscriminately receive and provide assistance to develop the new language. There were no interactive activities observed to engage students in interaction with each other. Instead of getting students to practise the new language in pairs or in small groups to enhance interaction, Binh often called individuals or pairs to practise in front of the whole class. These practice activities normally took place in the form of repetitions and drills rather than ‘real’ communication. Some activities were very much based on memorization. For example, students were called to act out a story in front of the class by saying exactly what the characters said.

Although there were some activities for groups in Binh’s lessons, it is hard to say that those group work activities built collaboration and cooperation among the group members. Instead, they encouraged competition between the groups. The groups were usually big, with ten to eighteen students in two or three groups. The students of each group in turn represented the group to answer the teacher’s questions as fast as possible to beat the other group(s). An illustration of this is shown in Extract 4.5.1.2-37 below:
While competition rather than collaboration and cooperation was built up in the activity above, students still generally used English authentically to achieve their purpose of winning the game, even though their answers could be ‘real’ or not.

Besides a teacher-directed learning approach to activity organization, non-CLT aspects in Binh’s teaching practice also appeared through her instruction.

(3) Instruction Provision

Binh provided instructions and explanations directly so that the information given was made understandable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T explains the usage of ‘my’ and ‘your’.</th>
<th>T: Trong bài đối thoại mình có ‘my’, ‘your’. Nếu là của mình, mình sẽ nói (pauses) (Trans: In the story there are ‘my’, ‘your’. If something is mine, I’ll say)</th>
<th>SS: My. T: My. À, ví dụ như cô nói ‘This is my pencil case’ (Trans: My. Ah, for example, I say ‘This is my pencil case’) [...] T: Còn từ ‘your’? (Trans: What about ‘your’?) S: ‘Your’ là của người ta. (Trans: ‘Your’ means another one’s) T: Yep. ‘Your’ là của bạn mình (Trans: ‘Your’ means our friend’s)</th>
<th>In the previous lesson, SS read a story. ‘My’ and ‘your’ appeared in the story. The focus of this lesson is grammar, the usage of ‘my’ and ‘your’. T writes the words ‘my’ and ‘your’ on the board. She puts her hand on her chest to indicate ‘my’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two SS represent two teams to respond T’s question</td>
<td>T: Minh, Chi. What’s your favourite animal? S1: It’s a goat. S2: It’s a cat. T: Vy, Linh. What’s your favourite toy? S1: It’s train. S2: It’s a train.</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-37, Binh – Observation 5)</td>
<td>T asks SS. The winner is the fastest with the correct answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Binh also related the introduced language forms with input such as familiar terms, familiar objects, or/and the knowledge students had learned in previous lessons. This is demonstrated in the following extract:
T teaches the students how to combine colour with things in a sentence.


(Extract 4.5.1.2-39, Binh – Observation 1)

T shows a flashcard of a pen to the class and asks. There is no word on it. T sticks the flashcard on the board after the student’s answer. She writes ‘a blue pen’ under the flashcard after saying ‘a blue pen’.

In the example above, the school things and the colours were very familiar to the students, and English words indicating such school things and colours had been taught in the previous lessons. Binh drew the students’ attention to the words they had learned, then introduced a new grammar feature, teaching them how to combine these words correctly.

(1) Form Instruction

Binh’s lessons were also very much dependent on the textbook, which focused on grammar. So forms were also the focus in her lessons, and other elements of a lesson were related to and served the usage of the forms. Binh introduced new forms explicitly and directly in order to draw students’ attention to the forms. She spent much of the time in her lessons on repetitions and drilling. Single new vocabulary was introduced and repeated many times so that the students could pronounce them correctly and remember them. New forms were practised through drilling, as in the following instance:

| SS review the previous lesson, answering the questions with ‘What’s your favourite...?’. | T: What’s your favourite colour? SS: It’s blue. T: What’s your favourite colour? SS: It green. (Extract 4.5.1.2-40, Binh – Observation 5) | T shows the flashcards of colours. There were no words on the flashcards. SS answer the questions depending on the colours shown. |
Since the forms were normally introduced in isolation and for the purpose of practicing the new language rather than communication, they became meaningless. In the extract above, the students merely answer the questions because of the colour on the flashcards. They were not really the students’ favourite colours. However, drilling activities could be more meaningful when real objects were used, as in the following example:

| SS practise presenting their school things incorporating colours. | S1: A brown pencil case. T: Good! S2: A pink pencil case. T: Good! Mai. S3: A blue pencil case. (Extract 4.5.1.2-41, Binh – Observation 1) | SS hold their own school things up and present them. |

Students in the extract above were required to use a new grammar point that combined colour and school things to present their own school things. They were eager to engage with this activity, as they could describe real objects with real features of these objects. The grammar point above was presented, although it was not a focus in the curriculum. The teacher picked it up from a reading lesson and presented it, before letting students do other comprehension exercises from the textbook.

(2) Error correction

Most of the errors committed by the students in Binh’s lessons were corrected either explicitly or implicitly whenever possible, whether they influenced the meaning or not. An illustration of this is shown in Extract 4.5.1.2-42 and Extract 4.5.1.2-43, as follows:

| Errors were corrected explicitly | T: Hoa, what colour? S: It’s a red. T: Màu mà đâu có ‘a’. It’s gì? (Trans: Colour doesn’t have ‘a’. It’s what?) S: It’s red. T: Ông, It’s red. (Trans: Ok. It’s red) (Extract 4.5.1.2-42, Binh – Observation 1) | T shows a flashcard of red colour and asks SS. |
| Errors were corrected implicitly | S: This is my pencil. It’s a orange. T: It’s orange. Tiếp (Trans: Keep talking) (Extract 4.5.1.2-43, Binh – Observation 2) | S presents what he has in his pencil case. |
In order to draw the whole class’s attention to those selected performers, she also asked the class to listen and comment on their friends’ work. The aim of this requirement, aside from getting their attention, was to improve students’ awareness of mistakes and correct forms. It is obvious that accuracy was emphasized and dominant in such situations. Here is an example of this kind of correction involving other students’ evaluations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SS comment on a pair’s work after they act out a story</th>
<th>T: Team B vừa mới diễn xong. Cô mới team A nhận xét cho cô. Hai bạn Rosy và Jim này đọc được chưa? Bạn Sang nhận xét nè. (Trans: Team A has just finished. Team A, comment, please. Did these Rosy and Jim work well? Sang, comment, please.) S: Thưa cô bạn Thoa thuộc rồi, bạn Nam còn vấp. (Trans: Teacher, Thoa remembered the story, but Nam did not spoke fluently)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.1.2-44, Binh – Observation 3)

(3) Authenticity

The focus of this Action Research cycle was using authentic materials. Thus, like Anh, in addition to using the textbook and relevant materials such as CD, posters and flashcards, Binh used real materials related to the topics of the lessons, such as school things, toys and body parts, in her class activities. When learning and practicing the new language, the students could connect what they were taught with the real things they saw, touched and felt. Binh encouraged her students to use ‘real’ materials, indicating that, as using authentic materials interested the students, they also understood the lesson better. The use of students’ belongings in Extract 4.5.1.2-41 is an example. However, the effort to use realia did not necessarily stimulate authentic communication when the activities the teacher created were just types of drilling and word substitution, such as the activity in this extract:

| T calls some SS to perform a short presentation about their school things after reading a passage in which a student introduces what school things she has, listens to the passage from T and the CD, and then | S: My name Chau  
Another student: My name is S: This is my school bag.  
T: Good!  
S: This is my pencil. It’s a orange.  
T: It’s orange.  
S: And this is my pencil.  
T: Màu trước, con. (Trans: Colour first, dear)  
S: Pen. | SS bring their own school things.  
T provides the incomplete sentences on the board as hints which SS can look at when they forget what to say:  
1. My name’s _________.  
This is my school bag.  
2. This is my ________. |
However, this doesn’t mean that CLT was not incorporated at all in her lessons. To make this practice more communicative, Binh organized activities for raising students’ interest and need for communication. The game in Observation 1 presented above is an example of this. Only the students of group B saw the picture, while the students of group A did not see it and wanted to know what it really was. One group had information to share and one group needed that information. Thus, both groups had a need to communicate.

We can see another situation in which structure-driven communication occurs, as in the following example, when students practise new language:

| T models, then SS hold up their belongings and practise structure ‘This is my …’ | T: Bây giờ mọi bạn cầm cho cô một cái pen hoặc bất kỳ đồ vật nào cũng được có màu và giới thiệu cho cô. Cô giới thiệu trước nè: This is my blue ruler. (Trans: Hold up your pen or anything which has colour, then describe it. I’ll do it first) | 3. And this is my __________.  
4. Look at this! It’s a ________.  
5. Can I see your bag? |
|---|---|---|
| S1: This is my yellow pen.  
S2: This is my blue book.  
S3: This is my orange pencil. | (Extract 4.5.1.2-46, Binh – Observation 1) |  |

In this exchange, the students followed a sentence pattern demonstrated by the teacher. They were required to present their belongings, making sentences to describe these items, which included colours. It is argued that the students not only practised the new form but also wanted to show off their belongings. The students looked very excited to answer when they raised their school things to show them to the teacher.

(4) L1 Use

While CLT emphasizes the teacher’s use of the target language, it could be seen through the examples in the previous sections that Vietnamese was prominent in Binh’s
instruction. As such, students had limited opportunity to access English naturally from the teacher. She used Vietnamese most of the time, from complex instructions to simple requests; and when English was used, she translated into Vietnamese immediately.

Here are the situations in which Binh used L1 in her class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving instructions for class activities</td>
<td>T: Chúng ta sẽ chơi đoán từ. Bây giờ cô sẽ hướng dẫn luật chơi trước. Luật chơi như sau. (Trans: We’re going to play a word guessing game. I’ll give you the rule for the game first. Here is the rule)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-47, Binh – Observation 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making requests</td>
<td>Close your books. Đóng sách lại. (Trans: Close your books)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-48, Binh – Observation 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new vocabulary</td>
<td>Pencil case là gì vậy? (Trans: What does ‘pencil case ‘mean?)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-49, Binh – Observation 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new grammar points</td>
<td>Vậy bây giờ ‘My’ là mình dùng khi nào vậy? (Trans: So when do we use ‘My’?)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-50, Binh – Observation 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting mistakes</td>
<td>T: A ruler yellow. Nè Minh, hỏi này có vừa mới nói màu đâu vậy? (Trans: Minh, where have I just said colour was placed?)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-51, Binh – Observation 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing class discipline</td>
<td>Ai xong thì ngồi yên đó. (Trans: Sit still if you finished your work)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-52, Binh – Observation 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking students’ work</td>
<td>Đối B bị trừ 1 điểm. Đối A đoán đúng, được ‘Yes, it is’ rồi phải không? Được 3 điểm. (Trans: Team B lose one point. Team A guess correctly. You’ve got ‘Yes, it is’, haven’t you? One point)</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-53, Binh – Observation 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praising students’ responses</td>
<td>Ø, đúng rồi! (Trans: Ok, correct!). Good!</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-54, Binh – Observation 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although L1 use might be argued to limit L2 exposure for students, it is apparent that it facilitated learning, as it made the teacher’s instructions and explanations more comprehensive to students, who were beginning English language learners.
Summary

Binh’s teaching methods in the observed lessons can be summarized as follows:

- Non-CLT techniques such as drilling were dominant in her lessons. Most of the activities were controlled by the teacher.

- Most of the interaction in the classroom was between the teacher and individual students or the teacher and whole class.

- Completing the textbook was her primary goal, and the textbook and its relevant materials were the main materials used in the classroom. However, realia familiar to students’ lives was used to assist learning and teaching activities.

- L1-L2 transfer took place frequently in most of Binh’s instructions.

- Games were favourable activities used to review previous lessons, practise forms, and motivate students.

Overall, it was difficult to see evidence of CLT practised in Binh’s lessons. Nevertheless, Binh’s instruction and the activities she organized stimulated authentic forms communication in some cases.

4.5.1.2.3. Case Three – Chau: Class Observation Cycle One

There were five observations taken in Chau’s class. As mentioned previously, since her school did not have a classroom equipped for English language teaching and learning, the students learned English in the classroom in which they learned all other subjects. The students were seated in three rows and two students shared one desk. This seating arrangement remained unchanged through all of the lessons of this first cycle.

Chau’s class started with a revision activity. The teacher and students reviewed the grammar and vocabulary of the previous lesson through asking and responding to questions using flashcards, singing a song, or playing a game. Chau began lessons with an introduction of the new language elements, and then provided the students with the new language items and practised with the whole class and with individual students. The lessons closed with some writing exercises in student workbooks.
Lesson observations in Chau’s classroom indicated that play was commonly used in her teaching routine both as a means for language practice as well as language review. Like Anh and Binh, Chau used songs, games and role play as a way to motivate students in learning.

A summary of Chau’s class is demonstrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: A summary of a lesson in Chau’s class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s processes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Review of what has been learned in the previous lessons</td>
<td>Students sing the song ‘What’s this?’ learned in Unit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New lesson</td>
<td>Introducing new lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T asks what SS play at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T writes new vocabulary on the board and asks SS to copy new vocabulary into their notebooks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T asks the meaning of new vocab in Vietnamese and writes the meanings on the board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition of the new vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T reads the new vocabulary, whole class repeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals read the new vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting new task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T asks SS about things she has on flashcards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T gives instruction for groups of SS to mimic the action of playing with toys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying out the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS work in groups to discuss how to mimic the action they get on the note received from T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance/Individuals’ reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals represent their groups to mimic the action of playing with the toys they received from their group’s notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members of other groups comment and guess what the toy is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting new task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T writes jumble words (words with letters in incorrect order) on the board and requires SS to reorder them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying out the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS rewrite the jumbled words on their own small boards and hold up their boards to show the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Closure</td>
<td>T asks SS to write words in notebooks and learn by heart the vocab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chau – Observation 4)
Chau’s teaching practice mainly reflected a variety of non-CLT techniques, and is discussed in the following section.

(1) Roles of teacher and students in lesson construction

From the observations in Chau’ class, it is seen that she controlled the majority of class activities. She decided what would take place in the class, organized, instructed, and gave feedback for the class activities. In what could be termed a teacher-led approach to learning, although Chau controlled almost all class activities, she developed strategies to enhance students’ engagement in constructing their knowledge. She was the primary provider of language knowledge and also the supporter of students’ learning process, providing them with scaffolding instructions and modelling.

The major role of students in Chau’s class appeared to depend on repeating the teacher’s words, drilling, and following the teacher’s instruction and modelling, rather than interacting with peers. However, in the interaction with the teacher, students had opportunities to contribute to the lesson and construct their knowledge. The role of interaction in Chau’s lessons is described in the section below.

(2) Interaction in teaching and learning process

It is observed that drilling and repetition were dominant learning strategies in Chau’s classroom, and the students had limited exchanges. Individual responses to the teacher’s questions and instructions were the main activities during the lessons. The extract below is a demonstration of drilling and repetition in Chau’s class:

| SS repeat the words after her in chorus | T: Listen and repeat! Red.  
SS: Red.  
T: Red.  
SS: Red.  
T: Red.  
SS: Red.  
T: Red.  
SS: Red.  
T: Look at the board! Red.  
SS: Red.  
T: Red.  
SS: Red. |
SS read the words individually

T: Cô mới một bản đọc lại cho cô ba màu đầu tiên nè. Minh (Trans: Someone reads three first colours for me, please! Minh)
S: Red, yellow, pink.

While repetition and drilling were dominant in Chau’s classroom, it could be seen that IRF patterns were also typical interactions between Chau and the students. A significant finding in Chau’s interaction with students indicates that she provided students with scaffolding through questions and prompts, as in the following extract:

In the given extract, Chau transferred responsibility for constructing knowledge, when she allowed students to decide what the colour should be, providing scaffolding prompts (e.g. ‘What’s its main colour?’), and giving time for students to think and find the answers (e.g. I want to say ‘this is a red pencil, I’ll say (pauses)).

However, while most of the interaction in Chau’s lessons took place between the teacher and the whole class or individuals, sometimes she organized pair and small group work to promote students’ interaction and collaboration as well as cooperation. In these circumstances, the students had opportunities to share their experience and assist each other in order to accomplish their task. For example, in an activity in Observation 4, students worked in groups of four, and the teacher gave each group a small piece of paper with the word of a toy on it. These groups discussed how they might mimic actions for playing with the toy. During this activity, the students learned how they could play with the toy they received. Some groups might easily find the way to mimic how to play with it and reach an agreement. Those who could not obtain immediate agreement negotiated for it. Others learned new ways to play with a toy from their peers. Some toys were not familiar to some students, so this was an opportunity for them to learn from their peers and at the same time it was an opportunity to share their experience with their peers of other toys. The students had some freedom to speak and autonomy without the teacher’s direct control.
During the discussion, L1 was used as a crucial medium of negotiation and support for learning. It was observed that, in terms of the English language outcome, the students could understand and remember L2 vocabulary they had just learned. Firstly, the students could connect the words in written form with their meaning, as they understood the words received and mimicked the actions related to those words. Secondly, they could connect the words in spoken form with its meaning, as they said the words during the activity and when they were called to guess which toy the actions of other groups referred to.

Data from the observations in Chau’s lessons, like observations in Anh’s and Binh’s lessons, showed that students used L1 to interact with each other aside from L2, when they negotiated for meaning, supported each other, and contributed ideas for the tasks.

(3) Instruction provision

Direct instruction using L1 to introduce and explain new vocabulary and forms was observed in Chau’s lessons, as in the extract below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Extract 4.5.1.2-58, Chau – Observation 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to this direct instruction, Chau also provided students with contextual ‘input’ through familiar terms, objects, actions or contexts. Setting a context when introducing a new lesson was observed as a common way to prepare students to learn new language, for example to teach them when the language was used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T introduces new vocabulary and sentences which appear in the song she is going to teach the SS</th>
<th>T: Trước khi vào bài hát cô muốn hỏi các em là bag, door, window, có gì chúng ở ba vật này he? Khi chúng ta sử dụng thì chúng ta làm sao và khi không sử dụng thì chúng ta làm gì nhỉ? Who can? Hiep. (Trans: Before we start to learn the song, I want to ask you ‘What is the common point of bag, door and window? What do we do)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
(4) Form Instruction

Textbook dependence and form-focused instruction were prominent in Chau’s lessons. Grammar was introduced explicitly in most situations, with students’ attention drawn to the textbook explanation and language rules. Language practice primarily involved repetition and drilling to remember new vocabulary and forms as well as to avoid errors. Extract 4.5.1.2-57 is an example of Chau’s explicit instruction of a new language form without the use of grammatical meta-language.

It is interesting that this grammar point was observed to be taught by all three teachers in this study, although it was not a focus in the textbook. One could argue that the teachers identified differences between Vietnamese and English language, in this case in the order of adjectives and nouns, which could challenge students, and thus taught it as a part of this lesson.

In association with introducing forms explicitly, explicit error correction was also observed in Chau’s instruction, as illustrated in the next section.
Error correction

Students’ mistakes were also corrected explicitly and immediately. Teacher’s feedback as well as peer correction was observed in Chau’s class as a way to draw students’ attention to other’s work as well as to direct their attention to grammatical elements, as in this example:

| T asks for peer correction and corrects mistakes explicitly | SS: What’s this? What’s this?  
S: It’s a (Hesitates) orange (Hesitates)  
Some SS: (Give clue) Pen.  
S: Pen  
T: Again, again. Nói lại cho cả lớp nghe nào. (Trans: Say it again so that everybody here can hear)  
S: It’s a orange pen.  
T: Ah, go to the board and write down.  
T: Now. It’s a orange pen. Yes or no, class?  
SS1: No.  
SS2: Yes.  
T: Yes or no?  
SS: Yes.  
T: Thank you. Rồi. Ngoài ra bạn còn mắc một lỗi nhỏ nhỏ he. Khi nói đến vật gì đó màu cam, một vật gì đó màu cam thì ở đây không phải là ‘a’ mà là (pauses) (Trans: Ok. She has a minor mistake. When we talk about something which is orange, something orange, it shouldn’t be ‘a’ but)  
A student: An.  
Some SS: An orange pen.  
T: Ok.  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-60, Chau – Observation 2) | SS are divided into two groups. T has school things collected from SS and put them in a bag on her desk. Each group has a turn to send a student representative to T’s desk. The student representative will pick up a school thing and the whole class ask her/him, ‘What’s this? What’s this?’. The student has to answer what the school thing is with its colour, and writes the sentence on the board. T asks students to comment on the student’s performance. |
From the extract above, it can be observed that in Chau’s correction procedure, modelling of correct forms was provided both before and during form instruction. Scaffolding provided to the individual who made mistake as well as to the whole class was typical of this teacher, as she required the student who made the mistake to write his incorrect sentence on the board so that the whole class could see it and identify the mistake.

(6) Authenticity

Due to insufficient teaching materials and equipment at Chau’s school, in most of her lessons the textbooks, relevant material sources attached to the textbooks including flashcards and CD, and realia, were used. Although flashcards were used most of the time, real objects such as school things were an important source of teaching materials in Chau’s activities to demonstrate lesson content and to attract student’s attention. Extract 4.5.1.2-58 is an illustration of her use of real familiar objects for instruction.

It could be argued that teaching isolated forms, combined with drilling and repetition as the main practice strategy, would not stimulate authenticity. The observations in Chau’s classroom revealed that most of the students’ activities were just language practice, but did not reach a high level of authentic communication. However, as in the extracts above, the use of realia seemed effective in stimulating authentic communication when the students talked about the colour of the pen with guidance provided by the teacher. This will be analyzed and discussed later in the Discussion Chapter.

(7) L1 Use

Like Binh, Chau was the teacher of students who spent large amount of time on translation and repetition. Almost all new vocabulary introduced in her lessons was translated into Vietnamese, and this was used as a means to support students’ understanding. Aside from long and complex instructions given in Vietnamese, other instances of her use of Vietnamese such as joking to make fun, engaging students and creating a comfortable atmosphere were also observed.

Chau’s use of L1 is demonstrated in the situations below:

<p>| Giving instructions for class activities. | Chúng đã vừa được học những động chỉ rất phổ biến chúng ta thường chơi. Bây giờ có sợ những bạn, nhóm số nhóm lên đây và thể hiện cho cô đồ chơi bằng hành động. Ví dụ như ‘ball’; ‘ball’ sẽ chơi như thế nào nhỉ? (Trans: We have learned the |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving requests.</td>
<td>Các em nhìn lên đây. (Trans: <em>Look at this!</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new vocabulary.</td>
<td>Trong tiếng Việt đây là màu gì ha? (Trans: <em>What is this colour in Vietnamese?</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new grammar points</td>
<td>Từ hai câu trả lời này của cô, cô muốn nói ‘dây là một cái gì đó’, cô sẽ viết như thế nào he? (Trans: <em>From these two answers, I want to say, ‘This is something’, what will I write? Colour and the item</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a joke.</td>
<td>Nhi sắp ngủ rồi đây. (Trans: <em>Nhi is asleep</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting mistakes.</td>
<td>Ngoài bạn còn mắc một lỗi nhỏ nhỏ he. (Trans: <em>And she made a minor mistake</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing class discipline.</td>
<td>Bạn nào ngoan nhất, im lặng nhất thì cô mới mời. (Trans: <em>I’ll call someone who is most obedient</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of frequent use of L1 in her instructions, Chau was aware of the necessity of using L2 and tried to use more English in the classroom in the later lessons. Most of her short and simple instructions were spoken in English only or incorporated with Vietnamese to make the students familiar with English use.

**Summary**

The class observations of Cycle One in Chau’s lessons are summarized as follows:

- Strong teacher-led orientation with significant level of guided support was provided to students

- Non-CLT techniques such as drilling were observed in all lessons.
- The lessons focused on forms, and mistakes were corrected immediately.

- Textbook-dependence was significant; however, some activities were created to give students opportunities to interact with each other meaningfully.

- In most cases, pair and group work were organized to practise the language, and forms of authentic communication occurred while students negotiated the meaning of L2 and contributed to finishing tasks.

- L1 was used as medium along with L2 in most instructions to make them comprehensible to students. L1 was also used as the medium of students’ interaction. L1 use was dynamic, as questions were asked and follow-up statements given as a means of consolidating learning.

- Games and songs were added as activities that motivated students’ learning and as potential ways to review and practise the language being learned.

To conclude, in Cycle One, although expressing their interest in utilising CLT, all three teacher-participants hesitated to practise it fully in their classrooms. Instead, they combined CLT and non-CLT methods in their classroom teaching. Authenticity, the main focus of this cycle, however, was achieved in moments through the authentication processes. The teachers’ practices of authenticity in this cycle were based on real objects and L1 as mediational tools to create opportunities for students to use the target language. In the next sections, the teachers’ reflections on Cycle One and the plan for Cycle Two are presented.

4.5.1.3. Stimulated Recall Session One

After the class observations of the first action research cycle, the researcher conducted a stimulated recall session with each teacher to recall and elicit their perspectives about CLT and its implementation in their teaching practice during this cycle.

The meetings were organised separately with individual teachers. Each teacher saw selected video-recordings of their own lessons and discussed them.
4.5.1.3.1. Case One – Anh

(1) Perspectives on Authenticity

\textit{Real objects helps, but opportunities to communicate are more important}

Four extracts of Anh’s lessons, focused on the use of real objects as authentic materials, were reviewed. In the recalls for Anh’s lessons, she shared her perspectives on authenticity in terms of the way authentic materials supported students’ language learning. She identified that the use of real objects might assist students’ language learning, since what they could see and touch would help them to understand and remember more easily. She gave an example:

I use things they’ve learned. When they learn the pattern, ‘This is’, I take a real pencil and say, ‘This is a pencil’. Then I put the pencil down, take a ruler and say, ‘This is a ruler’. Then I let students to practise the pattern with real things they have on their desks.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

She added ‘This was not a problem because the topics of the lessons were simple and familiar to students’ (Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Anh). However, it was hard to demonstrate all lessons with real objects:

Teaching adjectives, for example, I have to think of other ways. I have to use pictures. Or I have to use my face expressions to illustrate words about emotion.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Thus, sometimes technology was seen to be an efficient means to enrich lessons and a better choice to teach abstract words such as feeling words or to arouse students’ attention and interest:

Television is helpful. Pictures shown on TV are big and easier for students to see. I can show various types of images on TV. For example, I can show on TV many rulers with different colours and different sizes. And abstract words such as ‘happy’ and ‘hungry’ can be illustrated more easily.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

While viewing the video clips of her class observations, Anh stated that the classroom was the environment where students can use the new language to communicate. As these
students were beginners and their English language was limited, creating opportunities for them to practise and use the language was very important. She said:

I always give them opportunities to practise and use the new vocabulary as well as the grammar they’ve learned in the previous lessons in groups. Of course, they can’t use much new language. But it’s important that they can understand what I speak to them.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Anh was asked to compare these three examples in Class Observation Two:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example one</th>
<th>Example two</th>
<th>Example three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **S1:** Is this your ruler?  
**S2:** No, it isn’t. Is this your pencil case?  
**S1:** No, it isn’t.  
**S2:** Is this your book?  
**S1:** No, it isn’t.  
(Extract 4.5.1.3-1, Anh – Observation 2) | **T:** Whose pencil case? Cái này của ai đây? (Trans: Whose pencil case?)  
**T:** Whose pencil case? Cái này của ai đây? (Trans: Whose is it?)  
(A student raises her hand as a signal that the pencil case is hers)  
**S1:** Thưa cô bà Nga. (Trans: It’s Nga’s, teacher)  
**T:** Is this your pencil case?  
Nga: Yes, it is.  
T (Gives the pencil case to Nga, holds up a ruler and asks Nga): Is this your ruler?  
Nga: No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S2:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S3:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S4:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S5:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S6:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S7:** No, it isn’t.  
**T:** Is this your ruler?  
**S8:** Của em. (Trans: Mine)  
(Extract 4.5.1.2-19, Anh – Observation 2) | **S1:** Is this your pencil case?  
**S2:** Yes, it is.  
**S1:** Is this your book?  
**S2:** Yes, it is.  
**S1** (holds another book): This is your book?  
**S2:** Yes, it is.  
(Extract 4.5.1.3-2, Anh – Observation 2) |
Regarding authentic activities or communicative activities as an aspect of authenticity, Anh identified that example one and example three were not communicative, as the students in example one just asked and answered automatically, while they did not personally want to know the answers but were required to know the answers. Two students in example one modelled the pattern for the class, so they just tried to make correct questions and answers. Anh also identified that the activity in example three was productive but not really communicative, as students who sat next to each other might know what school things their peer had, so the activity was likely a practice activity rather than real communication in which communicators have needs to give and get information to and from each other. She explained the aim of this activity, that: ‘It was necessary to make sure students to understand the pattern and have time to practise that pattern before taking any communicative activities; otherwise, they might not know what to do’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One).

On the other hand, according to Anh, example two was communicative because all interlocutors had reasons to give and to receive correct answers. The teacher wanted to know the answers in order to return things to the correct owners. Students wanted to receive their belongings, so they listened to the teacher. She added the reason: ‘I told them (the students), “If you can’t recognise your things, you’ll lose them.”’ So they were afraid that if they didn’t answer correctly, they would lose their belongings’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). Anh acknowledged that students had ‘motivation to communicate’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One) when they needed information and had information to share.

Anh recognised that creating needs for communicating was important. She claimed: ‘It’s necessary to give them needs to communicate’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). Therefore, in order to make the activity in section three more communicative, Anh suggested that students could first borrow things from friends around them to practise in pairs, then return the things, using the sentence structure to find the correct owners. She added that she created activities that were similar to real situations. Through using the language learned in these activities, students were familiar with it and able to use it when necessary.

In addition, they were encouraged to use the language already learned as much as possible ‘to become a habit’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall Session One). She gave an example of
applying sentence structure, ‘Is this your…?’ in real situations, when she returned workbooks to students after marking:

The student who helps me to return the workbooks will ask her or his friends who haven’t got their books back to raise their hands if there are some books without names labelled on them remaining. That student will go to her/his friend, hold up one of the books and ask, ‘Is this your book?’. Her/his friend will look at the book and answer, ‘Yes’ and get it, or ‘No’… Use that sentence whenever possible to become a habit.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

According to Anh, classroom activities could be linked to real-life activities. Students learned and used the language they had learned not only in classroom hours but also during break time. Students were more active and autonomous in learning. Anh provided an example:

I find that students can apply the language learned in many situations. For example, they learned only some words about food in class. After lunch, they took some food which is different from the food they have learned. When I ask them, ‘What are you eating?’, they can answer if they know the word for that food, if not, they ask me how to say that food in English and answer my question […]. Then they run to their friends and ask their friends, ‘What are you eating?’ […]. They usually bring their food served for lunch to the classroom to ask me how to say that food in English.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Besides authenticity as the focus of Cycle One, Anh’s perspectives on interaction as an important feature of CLT were also elicited through this recall session.

(2) Perspectives on Interaction

Pair and group work is a good way to practise language but the teacher must be a facilitator

Upon viewing the recorded class observations of her lessons, Anh confirmed again that pair work and group work were useful activities to increase the possibility of students’ interaction in spite of the challenges related to class control. In addition to the idea that working in pairs or small groups may increase students’ chances to practise and use English, she shared the following experience:

Pair work and group work are really useful. Only some capable students can understand and follow all of the teacher’s instructions if I just call them
individually [...]. Some other students keep silent, just listen or sometimes don’t even listen when their friends speak to teacher or answer teacher. But when they work in pair and groups, they have opportunities to speak, no matter they speak correctly or not, they still have opportunities to speak.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Through interaction in pair and group work, students might receive support not only from their peers but also from teacher, due to their peers’ report. Anh said:

When they work in pair or in group, students may help me to find out which student doesn’t understand or can’t do the tasks or make mistakes. They would call me when their pair or group has problems and I can come down to give them timely assistance.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

From the video recording, Anh showed that she usually arranged more capable students to work with less capable ones so that they could support each other. She reported that this change might also ‘prevent boredom caused by talking to the same partners all the time’ (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). Interestingly, Anh also revealed that she rarely allowed students to choose their own partners, to ensure that less capable students had appropriate peer support and were not left behind with unfinished tasks while the more competent ones only worked with each other:

I arrange a more and a less competent student to work in a pair to support each other […]. Otherwise, some pairs of competent students might accomplish the task within a short time while others can’t finish it […]. After a time teaching them, I can identify each student’s proficiency so that I can provide them with suitable support […].

These are several reasons she gave for assigning students’ partners in pairs and groups:

If they are allowed to choose their own partners, the more competent students only choose to work with each other while the less proficient ones will be in the same groups and don’t know what to do […]. Or girls only work with girls and boys find boys […]. Some students are so shy to work with others […]. So I rarely let them to choose partners themselves.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Anh shared her experience of grouping the students and facilitating their work:

In some interview tasks, for example, I write the interviewees’ name for each student, or require each student to interview at least three boys and two girls
[...]. Or I let them to choose anyone to interview for the first questions and identify the person they have to interview for the last question.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

In addition, Anh revealed that she often moved through the class to observe pairs and groups when they were working so that she could support them in a timely way. She guided them how to work in groups and pairs and how to provide support to each other. She encouraged the more proficient students to initiate the practice.

While providing support to less competent students, Anh also believed that more competent students needed higher level activities that helped them to improve their proficiency. She shared:

Sometimes I organised new activities to encourage more proficient students. In addition to activities that all students in the class can understand and participate, if there’s time more proficient students will have more opportunities to talk about things related to the topics.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One & Field notes)

She explained that these students needed tasks that were a little above their competence to motivate them and to expand their knowledge.

The observations of Anh’s classes showed that teaching forms, correcting mistakes and using L1 were parts of her teaching practice, although they were non-CLT features; so her perspectives on these features were also briefly discussed in the recall session for Cycle One.

(3) Perspectives on Teaching Forms

_Students need to learn sentence structures and practise them before using them in communicative activities._

Anh expressed he view that it was better to introduce forms through examples rather than explaining the rules and ‘forcing’ students to learn the rules explicitly (Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). According to Anh, students could learn the forms through the stories in their textbook and creatively practise those forms when they did the role-plays:

They (students) may understand only some patterns in the stories. Then they apply those patterns in group work. They create themselves conversations with those patterns {to play the roles in the stories with their peers}. 
However, Anh maintained the importance of using non-CLT methods when she emphasized modelling:

[When teaching a new form], I model the form first; then ask some students to model it; and finally, students work in pairs or groups, so they have opportunities to communicate. They have opportunities to talk to one peer and turn to talk to another peer. The whole class can practise the language they’ve learned.

She pointed out that communicative activities should be preceded by practising activities and stated:

Before conducting communicative activities, I have to make sure that students understand and practise well the sentence structure introduced. Otherwise, less competent students might not know what to do. They would keep silent or turn around to ask other students.

(4) Perspectives on Correcting Mistakes

*Mistakes might be ignored in speaking but should be corrected in written work*

Anh claimed that she might ignore students’ mistakes sometimes when they were speaking because she did not want to interrupt them, but helping students to notice their mistakes in their written work was necessary. However, instead of just correcting the mistakes students made directly, she encouraged them to correct those mistakes themselves:

When a student doesn’t understand, and makes a mistake, I call him to my desk, explain the lesson again, leave a red mark on his mistake and ask him to correct it himself. I give him an opportunity to correct the mistake himself because if I correct it for him, he will forget it.

(5) Perspectives on Using L1

*L1 is necessary but L2 should be gradually increased*

The video recording of Class Observation 3 was recalled while Anh talked about her use of Vietnamese in her lesson:
T reviews the vocabulary of the previous lessons

T: Có có một bài tập nhỏ. Thử coi các bạn có nhớ không nhé. Các bạn nhìn lên bảng xem có có bao nhiêu từ? (Trans: I have a small exercise. Let’s see whether you can remember. Look at the board and tell me how many words do I have?)

SS: Twelve.

T: Twelve. Muối hai từ. Rất là tốt! Muối hai từ này có sẽ chia ra làm ba chủ đề. Chủ đề thứ nhất của cô đỗ là Toys (Trans: Twelve words. Very good! I’ll devide these twelve words into three topics. The first topic is Toys). What does it mean ‘Toys’? Mời Anthony! (Trans: Anthony, please!)

Anthony: (silent)

T: Toys. What does it mean? ‘What does it mean? Có nghĩa là gì con? (Trans: What does it mean?) Lisa?

Lisa: Đã thưa cô có nghĩa là ‘đồ chơi’. (Trans: It means ‘toys’, teacher)


S: Màu sắc (Trans: Colours)

T: À, màu sắc. Và nhóm thứ ba của cô sẽ là (pause). (Trans: Ah, colours. And my group three is)

SS: Animals

T: What does it mean ‘animal’? Naomi.

S: Đã thưa cô là ‘con vật’. (Trans: ‘Animals’, teacher)

T: À, con vật, các con vật. (Trans: Ah, animal, animals)

T: Bây giờ cô mời một bạn của nhóm một sẽ lên viết những từ nào thuộc về Toys. Tổ hai một bạn sẽ lên viết những từ nào thuộc về Colours. Tổ ba Animals. (Trans: Now I’ll invite a student of group one to come here and write the words of Toys. A student of group two will come to write the words of Colours. Group three will write the words of Animals)

(Extract 4.5.1.3-3, Anh – Observation 3)
In the example above, L1 was used for instruction of an activity and to check students’ understanding of the words given. It was also used to bring students’ attention to the teacher’s instruction and engagement in the interaction with her. Anh reported that using only English in the classroom was not always effective, as students’ English was limited and giving all instructions in English might influence their understanding. The low level of English was also presented as a reason for the necessity that Vietnamese equivalents of English vocabulary were provided in Anh’s lessons, such as ‘con vật’ for ‘animals’ in the extract above. She wanted to ensure that students understood what the words meant, and this was necessary for students to accomplish the task (Anh – Stimulated Session for Cycle One). In addition, this extract illustrated Anh’s opinion that using both L1 and L2 helped students to understand the teacher’s instructions better, and to be less anxious while listening to her, thus paying more attention to her instruction and feeling it easier to participate in the exchanges with the teacher.

Nevertheless, Vietnamese was the final choice even if there were other ways to introduce new vocabulary such as body language and pictures. Instead, increasing the amount of English use gradually was preferable and considered to be more effective:

If I only use English in the classroom, students will not understand the lessons completely and it takes lots of time to explain. It is better for them get used to English use gradually, step by step. For example, students of grade three are beginners, I may use from fifty to sixty percent of English in the classroom. In grade four classes, I may use from seventy to eighty or sometimes ninety percent of English because they can understand better.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Anh revealed that her efforts to gradually increase the amount of English, depending on students’ levels, had positive results:

The students in my classes now can understand and respond to me more in English. They use less Vietnamese in the classroom.

(Anh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

It is apparent then that, although there were still non-CLT features in Anh’s practice, this stimulated recall session revealed an improvement in Anh’s understandings of CLT. She was aware of the necessity to meet her students’ needs to communicate in L2 language teaching.
Summary

The Stimulated Recall for Cycle One for Anh’s teaching practice had the following main points:

- Anh developed her understandings of authenticity after the first cycle of Action Research. In addition to using real things in her lessons, Anh could identify and suggested situations promoting authenticity in terms of authentic communication in the classroom. Furthermore, she ‘argued’ for the importance of modelling, drilling and language practice before language use.

- Pair and group work was confirmed to be useful to enhance language practice and language use through students’ interaction. It was also a useful means of peer support.

- Anh maintained forms as the focus of each lesson; however, she increased her acknowledgement of the role of fluency over accuracy, as she emphasized that mistakes were not necessarily corrected in some cases, to avoid speech interruption.

- L1 was used along with L2 as an effective mediator of instruction and communication in the classroom.

The next section will present the findings of case two, Binh, from the Stimulated Recall Session for Cycle One.

4.5.1.3.2. Case Two – Binh

The second interview did not record any special change in Binh’s understanding of English teaching and CLT. She revealed that she still did not really understand what CLT was and whether she has been practicing and how much she could satisfy the requirement of the MOET in terms of using CLT. She reported that she was teaching and adjusting her method for her students based on her experience at the language centre and her experiences in sharing with other teachers at her school and with the group of teachers involved in this research.

In this Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Binh revealed her perspectives on authenticity, and the focus of Cycle One, through the discussions about her class observations of this cycle.
(1) Perspectives on Authenticity

*Activities stimulating authentic communication are limited due to discipline issues*

While viewing the video recordings of her lessons, Binh stated that teaching a language should include improving learners’ ability to use that language in listening and speaking. Students should be encouraged and provided with opportunities to use English to communicate in real situations. She said:

Students should be encouraged to use English when they do not understand. They could also ask their classmates in English. I teach them some simple sentences to use in these situations [...]. For example, I require them to use English to borrow their classmate’s belongings, ask for permission to go out. When students are more autonomous to use English, they will remember better.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Binh reported that she used real things as authentic materials to demonstrate her lessons as they assisted students’ memory of new vocabulary:

I encourage my students to bring things such as toys to the classroom in my lessons. When they learn the lesson about body, they point to their body parts […]. When they learn vocabulary about colours, I ask them to find the colours in the classroom and they are very excited.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Binh shared that sometimes she showed animated movies she selected from some other textbooks in the classroom. Acknowledging that these animated movies were not produced for entertainment only, she believed that the content and simple language in the animation was suitable for children and interested them. She indicated that animation stimulated children’s learning. She said:

They (students) ask me while seeing ‘What does it mean, Miss?’. They ask me about the word that they’ve just heard but don’t understand. They ask me and they read that word.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

However, Binh admitted that she did not often organize activities in which students could talk freely in English due to discipline issues: ‘I don’t know how to deal with the noise’ (Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). The aims of the activities of Binh’s lessons
were mainly to check students’ pronunciation and their memory of the stories, and to review or practise new vocabulary or a new form.

Through Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Binh commented on some excerpts of her own lessons and expressed her understandings of ‘authentic communication’ activities. The recalls of these lessons revealed that she had developed more understanding of communicative activities in comparison with the beginning of this cycle.

A part of a recorded lesson in Observation Two was recalled to draw out this teacher’s understandings of communicative activities. In an extract from this observation, students working in pairs took turns to hold up their school things and asked each other, ‘Is this a...?’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SS work in pairs, practicing structure ‘Is this a...?’</th>
<th>S1 (holds up a pencil): Is this a (hesitates). Is this a pen? S2: No, it isn’t. (Holds up a ruler). Is this (hesitates) a pen? S1: No, it isn’t.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.1.3-3, Binh – Observation 2)

Binh explained that the activity demonstrated above is the practice of a new form, not authentic communication, as the students already knew what the items they were holding were and they just replaced the words in the form. She suggested that this activity could be more communicative if the students were required to hide their belongings in a bag and take turns to guess what their peer had in the bag.

Another excerpt of the same lesson was recalled. In this excerpt, Binh divided her class into two groups. A student from Group B was chosen to be the representative of the group. She came to the teacher’s desk and chose a flashcard on the desk. The flashcard was shown to her group fellows. Group A did not see what was on the flashcard and asked a question with the beginning, ‘Is this your..?’ to guess what was on the flashcard. Group B answered with, ‘Yes, it is’ or ‘No, it isn’t’: 
SS are divided into two groups and guess what is on each flash card.

SSA: It is your ball?
SSB: No, it isn’t.
SSA: Is this your bag?
SSB: No, it isn’t.
SSA: Is this your teddy?
SSB: No, it isn’t.

(Extract 4.5.1.3-4, Observation 2 – Binh)

Binh argued that this activity was communicative, as students of Group A wanted to know what was on the flashcard and tried to guess. In this activity, the students understood that they were playing with the flashcards. They understood the rule of this game and could use the new language learned to ask and answer the questions appropriately. This means that they could use the language appropriately in the appropriate situation.

In this Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Binh also shared her perspectives on teaching forms, correcting mistakes and using L1.

(2) Perspectives on Teaching Forms

*Language forms should be taught but in a simple way*

Binh stated that forms should be taught, but in a simple way that students of primary level could understand. Explaining grammar rules might not be necessary, and could confuse students:

It might be unnecessary to explain the {grammar} rules, but I may just ask them (students) what the meaning of the sentences is. They can speak in Vietnamese [...]. The kids don’t stay still and listen to the rules. They wouldn’t understand such {grammar} rules.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Her belief in language teaching sometimes was challenged by opinions of students’ parents. She shared that a student’s father suggested her to teach him about ‘verb, subject and object’, because he ‘did not know grammar at all’ (Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). In spite of being under pressure from some students’ parents, she believes that students could not understand technical terms and were not interested in metalinguistic explanation. She did not agree with some other teachers who taught grammar rules ‘like teaching maths’ (Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One).
(3) Perspectives on Correcting Mistakes

All mistakes should be corrected

With regard to mistake correction, Binh confirmed the necessity of correcting all mistakes students made. She reported: ‘I ask them to repeat the correct forms until they can remember’ (Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Binh). However, she also recognized it was not always an effective method:

Students like playing. If I correct them while they are playing, they don’t feel tired because it is part of the game. But if I ask them to repeat the correct form many times, it is aimless, demotivating and boring to them.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Binh shared that she drew student’s attention to forms through requiring them to listen to and comment on their peer’s work.

When students listen to their peers, they can notice if mistakes occur. That means they understand the lesson and find that their peer is incorrect. So I often require students to pay attention to their peer and identify their peer’s mistakes.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Binh also revealed that mistakes might not be corrected if the class was too noisy so that she did not hear them. Pressure from students’ parents was a reason for Binh’s feedback to students’ mistakes. She shared a colleague’s situation when a student’s parent complained that the teacher did not correct his son’s mistakes; then she concluded:

So sometimes I want to spend more time on students’ speaking and reading {rather than correcting every single mistake}, but I’m afraid that their parents will complain.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

(4) Perspectives on Using L1

L2 should be dominant but L1 is still necessary

Regarding instruction in Vietnamese, Binh stated that English should be the dominant means of instruction in the classroom. She stated:
I think that Vietnamese teachers speaking more English in the classroom would lead to students’ use of English. We need to create more situations to encourage them to use more English.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

She added that frequent use of English in the classroom might stimulate students’ interest and use of the language outside the classroom. She shared an experience of when a student of another teacher ran to her, held up a rubber band and asked her, ‘What this?’ (Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One and Field note).

However, Vietnamese was necessary in some cases such as explaining and giving complicated instructions, due to the fact that students’ proficiency in English was still limited. Comparing a Vietnamese and a native speaker teacher of English, Binh said:

I think Vietnamese teachers can find more effective ways to explain to {Vietnamese students} because we share the same language and the same culture.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Binh gave an example where she had to use Vietnamese in her class. In this example, Vietnamese was used to introduce and explain a situation that was not familiar to many Vietnamese students:

In a lesson, I have to explain to students why people should use sun cream and where should it be applied in Vietnamese [...] I can’t say it in English because it would be difficult for them to understand and the explanation would be ineffective.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Besides instruction comprehensibility, as Binh revealed, Vietnamese instruction was useful when she needed to draw students’ attention and manage class discipline. Students would not follow the teacher’s requests if they did not understand.

The stimulated recall session of Cycle One revealed that, although Binh expressed her confusion over CLT, she had developed her understanding of CLT in terms of the focused feature of this cycle, authenticity.
Summary

Binh’s perspectives on language teaching and learning developed during the first cycle of the Action Research, which are summarized as follows:

- Binh developed more understandings of authenticity. She identified the importance of not only using real and familiar objects but also situations for real communication in L2. On the other hand, Binh expressed her hesitation to conduct more communicative activities due to discipline concerns.

- Forms should be taught, but not metalinguistically due to the age of young students.
- Mistakes should be corrected, and are better corrected through play or by peers.
- L1 was an effective mediator for instruction, especially for long and complicated instruction; however, the amount of L2 should gradually increase.

4.5.1.3.3. Case Three – Chau

During the Stimulated Recall Session, Chau shared that her CLT-orientated changes in teaching practice had gained positive feedback from the students. They were more interested in the lessons, more active in learning, and remembered the lessons better. She recognized her limitations in teaching, and learned teaching techniques from other teachers during the Action Research.

In this Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Chau evaluated her teaching practice in terms of implementing CLT and shared her experience after the first cycle of Action Research. The focus of this cycle, authenticity, was also the focus of this recall session for Chau.

(1) Perspectives on Authenticity

*Learning is facilitated through the use of real objects and situations created for communication*

Upon viewing her class observations, Chau expressed her opinion about language teaching and learning: ‘The aim of learning a language is not to learn the lesson in the textbook, but to use it outside the classroom, to use it naturally’ (Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One).
According to Chau, authenticity in terms of authentic materials required real materials that students could see and touch such as school things, toys, and parts of the body. She reported that, at the age of primary school students, real materials around the students and things familiar to them always attracted their attention and motivated their learning. Realia was really helpful in the case of Chau’s classes. While Anh and Binh could sometimes use technology to support their teaching, the poor condition of Chau’s school did not allow her to access to such high technology and techniques. Instead, realia were used as effective tools to illustrate her instruction and enrich her lessons.

In addition, Chau shared that authenticity could also include situations in which authentic communication arose: ‘It relates to reality, not only real things but also situations taking place around the students’ (Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). She suggested that these situations could be created through connecting students’ real life with the language taught in the classroom:

Students can share what they know with their friends. They will be more interested in the activity when they can talk about what they have experienced [...]. If they can link the language with their real life, they will remember the lessons longer and apply what they learn better.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Chau added that authentic communication could arise when classroom activities stimulated students’ needs to share their information with each other and provided an example to support this opinion. It was a lesson that Chau had evaluated as unsuccessful when she taught in the observed focus class. In this lesson, students read a poem and do some activities related to the poem. Table 4.7 below demonstrates the example that Chau provided.
Table 4.7: Chau’s example for her modified activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem</th>
<th>Activity one</th>
<th>Follow-up activity (Focus class; Class Observation Six)</th>
<th>Follow-up activity (Other classes; revised by Chau; Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, Chau)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My favourite... What’s my favourite toy? My favourite one of all? Is it my train? Is it my car? No, it’s my yellow ball. What’s my favourite colour? You may like it too. Is it green? Is it red? No, it’s the colour blue. What’s my favourite animal? It’s furry and it’s fat. Is it a dog? Is it a goat? No, it’s a lovely cat. Tom, age 7</td>
<td>Students read and answer teacher’s comprehension questions: 1. What’s his name? 2. How old is he? 3. Tom’s favourite toy is a car. Yes or no? 4. Tom’s favourite colour is blue. Yes or no? 5. What’s Tom’s favourite animal?</td>
<td>Replace underlined words with other words depending on students’ likes.</td>
<td>Work in pairs, asking and talking about students’ favourite toy/colour/animal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In activity one, students answered comprehension questions about the poem. After that they did the follow-up activity about their favourite toy, favourite colour and favourite animal. In the follow-up activity in the focus class, when Chau asked students to replace the words in the poem they had just learned with other words depending on their likes, some students could not finish their work. However, when she changed the activity in other classes into speaking about their favourite things, ‘students were more excited and pay more attention to their peers’ ideas’ (Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One), and it was more effective because they could be free to talk about the reality in the activity.
Chau’ understanding of authenticity was also elicited through several recalls of her lessons. In Class Observation One, after teaching ‘Days of the week’, Chau required students to write the days on their school schedule. She explained that, when students wrote the schedule with the days in English, they linked their real-life activity with the new language.

In Class Observation Two, Chau taught students to describe the colours of school things. She borrowed their school things to demonstrate in the lesson. After that, she required the students to describe their school things to get them back:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T holds up each school thing she borrows from SS and SS describe their school things in order to get them back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Bây giờ đến một phần quan trọng không kém. Đó là chúng ta nhận lại đồ vật. Nhưng đồ vật này của bạn nào? (Trans: <em>Now we come to another important part. We’re going to get our belongings back. Whose are these?</em>). Hello.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS: Hello.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Mình xem nhe. Cái đồ này bạn nào lấy được hay là của công nhe. Nếu bạn nói sai thì đồ này là của công. Ok? Đồ này của bạn nào? (Trans: <em>Let’s have a look. Someone will take this or it’ll be mine. If you answer incorrectly, it’ll be mine. Ok? Whose is this?</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: Bạn Duy. (Trans: <em>It’s Duy’s</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Duy. What’s this? Listen! Listen! Chắc là hôm nay sẽ nhận được rất nhiều đồ dùng học tập (Trans: <em>Probably I’ll have a lot of school things today</em>. Stand up! Stand up!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: It’s a purple (hesitates). It’s a purple pen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.1.3-5, Observation Two – Chau)

At first Chau argued that this was a communicative activity, because students had a reason to speak, that is, receive their school things. However, when it was argued that obviously everybody could see the school things and it was not really necessary to describe what these things looked like in that situation, Chau suggested another activity to make the conversation more authentic:

I’ll show all of the school things and ask the students who possess those school things to describe their things. Whole class will identify which of the school things is his or hers to return it to the owners.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)
Although she confirmed that students enjoyed doing activities related to their real-life experience, Chau expressed her concerns that different levels of proficiency among students might challenge their practices. She reported:

Speaking about things related to their (students’) real life is more interesting. But because of different levels {of proficiency}, as some students are at very low level […] while some others are really excellent, it’s difficult for them to practise and do activities in which they need more vocabulary rather than that provided from the textbook.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

She explained that some students of low proficiency might be demotivated when they could not find a way to express their opinions or when their partners used words they were not familiar with.

Interestingly, in discussion about the textbook, on the one hand, Chau believed that conversations and stories composed in the textbooks might become authentic when students applied them in their real communication during classroom activities. On the other hand, she revealed that she just focused on presenting new vocabulary, with the aim of students knowing how to pronounce words and remember contents of these stories, rather than exploring this part as a source of communicative activities. The reason was, as she shared:

Because I heard from other teachers that the aims of these dialogues are repeating new vocabulary, recycling vocabulary that they have already learned, and have a quick view of the grammar they will learn in the coming lesson.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Besides understanding of authenticity, Chau provided her understanding of another feature of CLT, interaction.

(2) Perspective on Interaction

Working in pairs and groups provides more opportunities to practise and use the language as well as more support

Chau stated that students did not have opportunities to use English outside the classroom and practise what they learned in their real life, so activities to promote interaction in the classroom were useful and necessary. She stated:
I think it is good to bring words in real life into classroom and let students practise with them. But bringing the language learned to the real life is a problem. Students do not have any opportunities to use such the words. There isn’t anyone to speak English with them in their real life [...] and the classroom is the only place they can practise English.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

In addition, she suggested that interacting with peers made learning more effective. A benefit of interaction activities, according to Chau, was peer assistance. Students could help each other while they were working together. More competent students were assigned to work with less competent ones, and students could ask their peers when they did not understand the lesson, before asking the teacher:

It is probably easier, faster and more comfortable for students to ask their peer than asking the teacher. If a student doesn’t understand, he can ask his peer. In case his friend can’t answer either, then he can ask me.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

In spite of supported pair and group work to promote interaction among students, like Anh, Chau expressed her concerns about the management of these activities:

Pair work is effective to practise English, but if student can choose their partners, some students are possibly ignored and can’t find a partner [...]. They have to turn forth or back, left or right [...], and they have to move to another desk, so they make noise. The desk arrangement in the classroom leaves insufficient space for activities if students have to move around.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Noise was one of her concerns about group and pair work, but it was also a sign of students’ work, as ‘they are too interested in the activities’ and ‘engaged in speaking’(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One).

Class observations of Cycle One in Chau’s class also revealed that her practice included non-CLT features such as teaching forms, correcting mistakes, and L1 use. Therefore, these features were discussed in this recall session.
(3) Perspectives on Teaching Forms

*Language structure should be taught, practised and used in meaningful activities, but drillings are also useful*

Chau reported that she was confused about methods of teaching forms. She shared that students identifying rules through examples might be effective, as ‘they could remember the rule they discovered themselves longer’ (Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One). On the other hand, she found that, due to the differences of English and Vietnamese languages, students might make mistakes, and explicit explanations would be more helpful.

According to Chau, sentence structures and vocabulary presented to students should be ‘usable’, in order that, after practising these structures and vocabulary with the teacher and their partners in the classroom, the students could use them ‘at home’ (Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One).

In this recall session, Chau also confirmed that repetitions were necessary because they helped students to remember how to pronounce new words. Besides this, students repeating aloud new vocabulary written on the board helped them to connect the sounds with written forms of those sounds.

(4) Perspectives on Correcting Mistakes

*Correcting mistakes is necessary*

Like Anh and Binh, Chau shared that, when students noticed a mistake, they would learn the correct form and avoid a similar mistake in the future. Therefore, she often required students to comment on their peers’ work to find mistakes if there were any. She claimed that this way was effective, as students listened to their peers carefully and evaluated both their peers’ work and their own work.

In addition, she argued that mistakes in speaking activities could be tolerated, but all mistakes in written work had to be corrected immediately. She stated:

I used to correct all students’ mistakes immediately, but recently I let them speak freely and correct their mistakes later, when it’s more necessary […]. Correcting mistakes could be delayed until many students make the same mistakes […]. A
mistake made by a student speaking could be ignored, but an apparent mistake on the board like that should be corrected.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

(5) Perspectives on Using L1

**L1 is necessary due to students’ anxiety and low proficiency**

In terms of facilitating students’ understanding, Chau argued that English should be used as much as possible to make it familiar to students. Instruction in English could be facilitated by the teacher’s action and gestures. However, in some cases, in her opinion, Vietnamese should be used due to student’s limited English levels. She revealed that instructions in English could demotivate students:

> Sometimes, some students avoid my eyes when I speak English, even though I use simple sentences […]. I ask them to look at me, look at my action to understand and follow my instruction, but they still pretend to do other business.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

Chau shared that she was concerned about techniques of giving instructions in English. It was difficult for her to provide appropriate language for students at low levels. In many situations, in spite of recognising it as time-consuming, Chau said L1 was an effective means to give her instructions. She reported:

> Sometimes, I speak English, using very simple words, but they (students) don’t understand […]. So I have to transfer my instructions to Vietnamese.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

In addition to students’ level of L2 proficiency, their young age was another factor that influenced the use of L2 in Chau’s instruction, as she revealed:

> Speaking to young children is different from speaking to adults. I must find words which are simple and familiar to them so that they can understand. So it is easy for them but difficult for me […]. I can use actions to demonstrate words about actions, but I don’t know how to explain other words.

(Chau – Stimulated Recall for Cycle One)

It is obvious that L2 use could not only make students anxious and reluctant in learning but also cause the teacher’s difficulties in teaching in the L2 classroom.
Summary

In short, in this stimulated recall session Chau shared the following perspectives on language learning and teaching:

- Authenticity could be gained through using real objects that were familiar for students and situations that stimulated real communication, relating students’ real life experience and interests.

- Interaction in the classroom could be enhanced through pair and group work, as students had more opportunities to practise and use the language learned. However, sometimes it was difficult for pair and group work as they did not know how to attain harmony and to work together.

- Forms could be taught implicitly or explicitly. Mistakes should be corrected to prevent them in the future, but sometimes they could be tolerated.

- Increasing the use of L2 in the classroom was important, but L1 was necessary for facilitating learning as solely using L2 demotivated students and resulted in the teacher’s work being much harder.

The Stimulated Recall Session for Cycle One found that, although there were non-CLT features in their teaching practice, to some extent all three teacher participants developed their understanding of CLT regarding authenticity, and also interaction, after a cycle of the Action Research.

4.5.1.4. Group Meeting Two: Teacher Reflection and Cycle Two Planning

Group Meeting Two is summarized in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Summary of Group Meeting Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Discussion Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/11/2013</td>
<td>- Teacher-participants: Anh, Binh and Chau - Study researcher</td>
<td>Evaluation of Cycle One and Teacher Reflections Cycle Two Planning Focus: Improving students’ interaction Plan: Creating more activities that enhance students’ interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.1.4.1. Evaluation and Teacher Reflections on Action Research Cycle One

Group Meeting Two was organised after Cycle One finished, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cycle and identify the focus for Cycle Two. Selected video recordings of the participant teachers were used in group meetings with their permission, as there was an agreement reached between the teachers that the video recordings of each of them would be used by the group as a teaching and learning tool.

Authenticity was the focus of Cycle One, and using real materials was the solution that the teacher-participants decided upon in the first meeting to create a real-life-like environment in the English classroom. In evaluating the success of the first cycle, the teachers reported that using real and familiar objects along with other kinds of materials such as pictures and flashcards was really helpful for students, as these real materials assisted them to remember words better, as ‘they can connect words they hear with what they see and touch’ (Chau – Field notes) and it made students feel that they were ‘using English for real life communications’ (Chau – Field notes). Chau, who was the least experienced and the youngest teacher of the three, also revealed that, in comparison with the time before this research, she now used more real objects instead of just pictures in the book or flashcards in her lessons. She indicated that students were more interested in the lessons and it was easier for them to understand and remember new vocabulary.

A videotaped lesson of Anh’s class in Observation 1 was shown and discussed in this meeting (See Appendix K for the copy of the lesson content). Anh had indicated that her teaching focus was to teach students how to combine things with colours, even though it was not the focus of this lesson. She revealed that it may provide more opportunities for them to use their previous language lessons around colours. Anh identified that using real school things with their real colours made it easier for students to combine new vocabulary and its meaning. Other teachers contributed their ideas to develop authenticity for this lesson. They suggested that, in the pair work activity where students presented their school things, the teacher might raise students’ interest to know what their peer had in their schoolbag and pencil case by questions such as, ‘Do you think that your friends’ school things are different from yours?’, and ‘Do you want to see how they are different and what they look like?’.
Students are usually interested in songs, so how to make use of a song in teaching English was also the teachers’ focus. A song discussed in this meeting was ‘Toys, toys, toys’ (Unit 2, Lesson Three, page 16. See Appendix L for the copy of the lesson content). The song describes a child’s favourite toys, with their size and colour, such as ‘This is my big red kite, my big red kite, my big red kite’. The teachers suggested several activities they would do in their classroom. Anh recommended allowing students to bring their toys and present these to the class.

However, the teachers could not always use real materials. For example, the teachers could not ask all students to ‘Open the door!’ at the same time, so they encouraged students to imagine actions indicating ‘Open the door’, and act out the action. In the case of the song mentioned above, Binh shared her experience that she allowed students to sing the song about their own toys or mimic the action while they were singing. Students were interested in this kind of activity as it was fun and supported remembering the language. Binh said:

In my classroom, I require my students to do the actions as if they are playing with the toys, for example, they may imagine that they are playing with a kite and mimic the activity by hands.

(Binh – Field notes)

This type of activity was frequently observed in Binh’s and Chau’s classrooms. It is suggested that, through performing actions using their imagination of familiar objects, students linked the language they were learning, English in this case, with their Vietnamese identities (i.e. linking English with the way Vietnamese children would play with those toys), thus enabling personal authenticity to arise.

Although there was some success, the group of teachers were not really satisfied with the overall performances of their students: ‘Some students could remember and use words they just learned in class, but they forgot those words only some days later’ (Field notes). The teachers explained that this could be the result of lack of opportunity to practise and use the language outside of the classroom. Another problem raised was that some students had difficulty matching written words with their pronunciation. According to the teachers, this is likely to be because students did not have much time for writing in class and did not have to do homework due to the no-homework policy of the MOET and the school.
4.5.1.4.2. Cycle Two Planning Meeting

In this meeting, after the teacher participants discussed and provided their reflection on their implementation of Cycle One, they developed a plan for Cycle Two. The details of this planning and the action are introduced in Section 4.5.1, addressing the second cycle of Action Research.

4.5.2. Action Research: Cycle Two

4.5.2.1. Action Research Cycle Two: Planning

The second part of the meeting was to identify a focus and to plan for Action Research Cycle Two. After recalling a lesson from Cycle One, the teachers expressed their concern about students’ use of English in the classroom. All of the teachers agreed that, the more opportunities for students to interact with each other using English, the higher the possibility they would learn the language. Thus, promoting interaction was the focus of Cycle Two:

Study English is study how to use it. Students must have chance to use it immediately when they learn it in class. They need to speak out instead of just listening to the teacher.

(Field notes)

Although large class sizes and a static seating arrangement were significant problems common to all teachers, they still maintained that pair and group work activities could be created that would enhance students’ interaction. Some inhibitors identified by teachers concerned raised noise levels in pair and group work activities, which may impact on classes next-door. In addition, as students’ seats were arranged in rows, it would be inconvenient and time consuming for students to move around or change their seats to form pairs and groups. Anh shared her experience:

Sometimes I arrange the students’ seatings in U-shape. In some other activities, I even push the desks aside. The students sit on their chairs and need no desks. They need no books, either. The desks might be the obstacles and make it difficult for them to move and run.

(Group Meeting Two)
Moreover, the teachers reported that students changed their behaviour when they changed their seats and partners. Some students became more undisciplined or overactive when they were seated with a new partner. Binh reported:

The students are accustomed to their seats in the classroom, and it becomes difficult to manage them if I change their seats. A student who is familiar with sitting next to his peer, at that corner, for example, may misbehave if sitting next to another peer. Their seats are arranged in groups by the classroom teacher and she is not usually satisfied with this change.

(Group Meeting Two)

The plan to improve students’ interaction and to make pair work and group work more effective in their classes was discussed among the teachers as follows:

- More activities that are suitable for pair work and group work will be organized.
- Students will be encouraged to help each other to do their tasks.
- More competent and less competent students will be arranged to work with each other in pairs and groups.
- Instructions will be more detailed and clearer so that students can understand and follow.
- Students will be well-prepared before working in pairs and in groups (e.g. working with whole class’ practice, teacher’s modelling).

(Field notes)

Local resources that might be useful for this Action Research cycle consisted of:

- Textbooks and relevant materials (e.g. flashcards, posters, teachers’ book)
- School and teachers’ equipment and facilities (e.g. TV, loudspeakers, laptop, classroom, school yard)
- Real materials (e.g. school things, toys, photographs)

The effectiveness of the cycle would be indicated by examining to what extent:

- The students understood the process correctly and were able to practise with their peers.
- Students can perform independently after each task or activity.
The students’ outcomes would be examined within the cycle process through observing students’ performance in class, checking students’ class books and workbooks and listening and speaking tests.

4.5.2.2. Acting and Class Observations – Cycle Two

Table 4.9 summarizes the number of class observations conducted during Cycle Two of Action Research.

Table 4.9: Summary of class observations of Cycle Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-participants</th>
<th>Class observations</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anh</td>
<td>5 lessons</td>
<td>From 13 November 2013 to 10 December 2013</td>
<td>My body, Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh</td>
<td>4 lessons</td>
<td>From 13 November 2013 to 04 December 2013</td>
<td>My body, Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chau</td>
<td>5 lessons</td>
<td>From 04 November 2013 to 04 December 2013</td>
<td>My body, Jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to compare the teacher-participants’ teaching practice in Cycles One and Two, the significance of thirteen class observations of Cycle Two in three teacher-participants’ classrooms is described under the following five headings:

1. Roles of teacher and students in lesson construction: to what extent the teacher controlled class activities and the students had opportunities to be responsible for their own learning;
2. Interaction: to what extent the students had opportunities to interact with their peers and negotiate for meaning;
3. Form instruction: to what extent the teachers explicitly provided language forms;
4. Error correction: to what extent errors were explicitly corrected;
5. Authenticity: to what extent students were engaged in ‘authentic’ communication;
6. L1 use: to what extent and for what purpose L1 was used in the lessons.

4.5.2.2.1. Case One – Anh: Class Observations Cycle Two

Five lesson observations were conducted in Anh’s class with two of these lessons taking place in the everyday classroom, two others in the English classroom, and one in the school yard. There were three types of seating arrangement applied to four indoor lessons:
rows, U shape and small rectangular shape. The reasons for seating changes were that U-shaped seating formed a big space in the middle of the classroom for some kinds of activities and small rectangular arrangements allowed students to work in small groups. The choice of the school yard for one of the lessons was for more flexible grouping and various activities that could have been hindered by desks and chairs if conducted indoors.

(1) Roles of teacher and students in lesson construction

In Cycle Two, Anh’s roles in the classroom were more flexible and more diverse. She was the manager of the class who planned and organised class activities; then she led, provided guidance, and evaluated the activities. She was a facilitator who provided assistance when necessary, and in some activities acted as a coordinator of the students who took part in the activity. When Anh’s students learned a song and practised singing that song, for example, she instructed them how to perform in groups, at the same time she also participated in singing and performing with the groups.

When the teacher was not the centre of the class activities, student autonomy increased. Anh’s students in these observations were given more autonomy and more responsibility not only for their own study but for their peers as well. They had opportunities to contribute to the lessons with their knowledge of the language and their own experience, as in the following example:

This is an observation of a review lesson. In the observation above, the students work in groups of six, with six groups of children in total. Each group received a big piece of paper with a topic written in the centre of the paper. All of these topics were taught in previous lessons, including numbers, days of a week, school things, toys, parts of the body, and jobs. The students were to complete a diagram with the words related to their topics. After the groups finished their task, Anh collected their paper, stuck it to the board, and checked the words with the whole class. The topic of the group in this extract was toys. Some words provided by this group had not been taught in previous lessons and were possibly learned outside the classroom. Some of the students in this group had an opportunity to provide new vocabulary that they knew, while others had an opportunity to learn from their peers.

Peer correction was another means that Anh applied to encourage students to be more responsible for their own and their peers learning. When students were required to correct their peer, they would take more notice of the form:

| T requires SS to listen to a pair perform their practice at the board. | S1: Is (hesitates). He is a pilot? S2: Yes, he is. T: Listen! Nghe và nhận xét nè. (Trans: Listen and comment) S: Thưa cô bán Chi ‘Is he a teacher?’ mà bán nói là ‘He is’ (Trans: Teacher, ‘Is he a pilot’ but Chi said ‘He is’) T: Còn gì nữa không? Nhận xét cho cô xem nè. (Trans: What else? Comment, please) S3: Thưa cô, bán nói là ‘No, he is’. (Trans: Teacher, she said ‘No, he is’) T: Ở, đúng rồi. Bạn (pauses and asks S2) (Trans: Ok, correct. You) What’s your name? S2: Yen. T: Bạn Yen vẫn còn quên là ‘No’ thì phải ‘isn’t’. Bạn cứ nói là ‘No, he is’ hoặc là ‘No, she is’ phải không. (Trans: Yen forgot that ‘No’ had to go with ‘isn’t’. She said ‘No, he is’ or ‘No, she is’, didn’t she?) (Extract 4.5.2.2-2, Anh – Observation 9) | SS has just learned to make yes/no questions about jobs with ‘Is he/she’. They practise in pairs with the pictures in their classbook. After SS practise in pairs, some pairs perform at the board. S1 & S2 perform at the board while others look at them and give comments. |

Furthermore, interaction is observed to be another factor contributing to student autonomy as through interaction students had more freedom to practise and use the
language. Anh’s methods to maximize her student interaction are described in the following section.

(2) Interaction

The focus of this cycle was enhancing students’ interaction, to improve their opportunities to use English in class and it is noticeable that the teacher had made considerable efforts to organise different activities to increase interaction. Pair and group work activities were organized in the lessons. Anh created a variety of activities to engage her students in interaction which included singing a song, playing a game, and practicing a new language form or new vocabulary.

In this cycle, Anh conducted a variety of activities to enhance interaction and changed the students’ seats as well as their learning environment to make them suitable for the activities. Aside from Observations 8 and 9, which retained the normal seat arrangement, in Observation 6 students were seated in a rectangular shape to work in small groups, in Observation 10 they were arranged in a U-shape so that the space in the classroom was big enough for a group of over ten, and in Observation 7 they studied in the school yard for review activities.

In these activities in Anh’s lessons, students had opportunities to practise the new language as well as review previous language. They assisted each other, learned from each other, and taught each other. At the level of these students, while the aim of the activities was English use, it was observed that L1 was used frequently to communicate and negotiate understandings. The following extracts demonstrate these observations:

| SS practise new language | S1: Is he a housewife?  
S2: No, he isn’t.  
S1: Is he a fireman?  
S2: Yes, he is.  
S1: She is a pupil?  
S2: yes, she is.  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-3, Anh – Observation 9) | SS practise after learning making the question, ‘Is he/she’ to ask about jobs. |
| SS review the language learned in previous lessons | S1: (points to the picture of an arm) Cơ bắp hình như mình chưa học. (Trans: We haven’t learned ‘muscle’)  
S2: Cái tay. (Trans: Arm)  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-4, Anh – Observation 7) | SS play a board game on which parts of the body are drawn. |
Another aim of interactive activities was to help maximize authenticity since students were free to communicate in the target language with each other. However, as illustrated in the above extracts, L1 was prominent, and it could be argued that the activities often focused on practicing new language forms rather than communication. This does not mean, however, that a level of authentic communication could not be achieved and this issue is presented in the next section.

(3) Authenticity

Although interaction may result in authentic communication, some activities in Anh’s lessons were identified as controlled practice rather than communicative activities. For example, in a review lesson, the students were divided into groups of six and required to review vocabulary of the topics they had learned. Each group wrote down vocabulary related to a topic on the diagram provided by the teacher. After that, they practised developing questions and answering the questions related to their topics. In the following extract, the groups simply recycled and practised questions as well as vocabulary learned in the previous lessons:

| SS assist each other | S1: She is a teacher?  
S2: Yes, he is.  
S1: He is a fireman?  
S3: Yes (hesitates)  
S2 (assisted): Yes, he is.  
S3: Yes, he is.  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-5, Anh – Observation 9) |
| SS work in pairs, practicing after learning to make the question, ‘Is he/she…’ to ask about jobs. There is one student left after others make pairs, so he works in this group. |
| SS teach each other and learn from each other | S1: He a... she ... She is a teacher?  
S2: Cái này phải là ‘he’ mà. (Trans: *This must be ‘he’*)  
S1: She is a fireman.  
S2: ‘He’ chờ. (Trans: ‘That’s ‘He’*)  
S1: She.  Ý lộ, ‘he’ mà, quên. (Trans: *She. Oh mistake, that’s ‘he’. I forgot that*)  
S2: Con gái là ‘she’, con trai là ‘he’. (Trans: ‘She’ is for a girl, ‘he’ is for a boy)  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-6, Anh – Observation 9) |
| SS work in pairs, practicing after learning to make the question, ‘Is he/she…’ to ask about jobs. |

A group with topic ‘Days of a week’  
S1: What’s your favourite day?
S2: My favourite day is Saturday.
(Extract 4.5.2.2-7, Anh – Observation 6)

A group with topic ‘Colours’
S1: What’s your favourite colour?
S2: My favourite colour is blue.
(Extract 4.5.2.2-8, Anh – Observation 6)

It is argued that, even though the students in these extracts did not know each other’s answers and the answers were correct, they did not really pay attention to the answers. Nevertheless, as students worked in groups and had more freedom to speak, some instances of authentic communication emerged, as in this example:

A group with topic ‘School things’
S1: Is this your marker?
Others SS (silent)
S2: What? Is it marker?
S1: It is marker. Đây nè, (Trans: Look at this), ‘marker’ (points to the word ‘marker’ on the marker)
(Extract 4.5.2.2-9, Anh – Observation 6)

S1 holds a marker up. ‘Marker’ has not been taught and S2 did not know what it is called in English.

In the above extract, the first question and answer were just language practice, as all of the students in this group knew that the marker belonged to the teacher; but then it was followed by authentic communication when a gap appeared between S1 and the others about what ‘marker’ is called in English. Before this conversation, other members of the group did not know what a marker was called in English, so they immediately paid attention to S1’s first question, ‘Is it your marker?’ as the word ‘marker’ was a new word to them. S2 indicated his interest and his needs when he asked, ‘What? Is it marker?’, to fill the gap between what S1 knew and what he, S2, did not know.

It is interesting that in these lessons of Cycle Two, the teacher supported the students’ learning by eliciting their previous knowledge and encouraging them to link their previous knowledge and experience with the language she was teaching. Authenticity in this way was stimulated through meaningful interactions between the teacher and students. The following exchanges illustrated this point:
| --- | --- | --- |
The students in these extracts demonstrated that they were able to connect their local knowledge and experience of jobs to the new English words for the jobs. New vocabulary of the lesson was introduced through recontextualization. It can be argued that to some extent, in this activity, the teacher implemented one of the features of CLT which emphasizes the value of students’ own personal knowledge and experience in the learning process.

In the next section, form-focused and forms-focus instructions in Anh’s lessons are discussed.
(4) Form Instruction

Textbook dependence was maintained in Anh’s lessons, so forms were still the focus, and other elements of the content of a lesson were constructed based on particular language forms. When Anh taught about jobs, for example, the pronoun forms ‘he’ and ‘she’ were the focus of her lesson. Therefore, the activities were organized to practise using ‘he’ and ‘she’ to introduce a person’s job. The forms were mostly introduced explicitly, as illustrated in the following extract:

| T introduces “she” and “he” | T: Look at this! Who’s she? Who’s she?  
S: She’s a housewife.  
T: She’s a housewife. Is it right or wrong?  
SS: Right.  
T: Who’s he? Who’s he?  
S: He’s a pupil.  
T: Khi nào mình dùng “she’s”? Khi nào mình dùng chữ “she’s”? Con.  
(Trans: When do we use “she’s”? When do we use the word “she’s”? You)  
S: Thưa cô vì đó là người nữ.  
(Trans: Teacher, because that’s a female person)  
T: À, vì đó là người nữ. (Trans: Ah, because that’s a female person)  
T: Và khi nào dùng “He’s”?  
(Trans: And when do we use “he’s”?)  
S: Khi là boy. (Trans: When that’s a boy)  
T: À, khi là boy hoặc là người nam thì chúng ta sẽ dùng “He’s”. (Trans: Ah, when that’s a boy or a male person)  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-11, Anh – Observation 8) | In the previous lesson, SS learned the words about jobs.  
T points to a woman on TV screen when she asks, ‘Who’s she?’; then T points to a man on the TV screen when she asks, ‘Who’s he?’.
In most cases of class observations, students’ errors were corrected, both explicitly and implicitly. According to Anh, she tried to ‘correct as many mistakes as possible’ (Anh – Field notes). Here are two examples of error correction Anh implemented in her class:

SS practise making sentences, using “she’s” and “he’s” to introduce someone’s job.

| T: Who’s she? |
| S: She a teacher. |
| T: Again? |
| S: She a teacher. |
| T: SHE’S a teacher. Again. |
| S: She a teacher. |
| T: SHE’S |
| S: She’s. |

(Extract 4.5.2.2-12 5.5.2.1-11, Anh – Observation 8)

| T holds up a picture and S makes a sentence. |

| S: She a pupil. |
| T: She’s a pupil. |
| S: She a pupil. |
| T: She’s a pupil. |
| S: She’s a pupil. |
| T: Thank you. |

(Extract 4.5.2.2-13, Anh – Observation 9)

| T points to a picture in the textbook and S makes a sentence. |

In these examples, students created single sentences without any context, when they were practicing a language form. Errors made when students practised language forms in individual sentences or single words were almost always corrected. The usage of “she’s” and “he’s” were instructed in two lessons. Anh revealed that, in the second lesson, the students understood how “she’s” and “he’s” were used, because the students often made mistakes in speaking but not in the written exercises (Field notes). She explained that when students did written exercises, they had more time to think, and chose correct forms.

On the other hand, errors made when students were using English for more communicative activities such as playing a game could be ignored or correction was delayed until the activities finished as in the extract below:

| Errors in answers ‘It’s a red’ and |
| S1: What’s your favourite colour? |
| S2: It’s a red. What’s your favourite colour? |
| Students are sitting in a big circle and playing a game in three groups. Each student |
L1 continued as a crucial part in Anh’s teaching practice. She used it to both organise and manage the class’s activities. However, it is observed that L2 was used more frequently while L1 was limited to complicated instructions. Other cases in which Anh used L1 included giving feedback, joking and maintaining discipline. She reported:

The students are too young and have little English vocabulary. If I use English all the time, they will not understand and it will take time to explain. I would let them to be exposed to the language gradually, step by step. For example, students of class three are just beginners, so I would use around from fifty to sixty percent of instructions in English; I would use from seventy to eighty percent of instructions in English in class four or sometimes up to ninety percent; then possibly from ninety-five to a hundred percent of English can be used in class five.

Summary

- Anh was observed to have a more flexible role in the classroom compared to that in Cycle One. She was not only the manager of the activities but also the facilitator or coordinator of those activities. Although the teacher-fronted model was still dominant in Anh’s lessons, she was not the only source of language input. Students were given more autonomy, as they were encouraged to contribute to the lessons. Furthermore, students had more activities in which they could work without the teacher’s control, thus they more actively cooperated to complete the tasks assigned for their pairs or groups.

- As pair and group work were conducted to enhance interaction of students, they should enhance students’ use of the target language meaningfully. Nevertheless, L1 was observed to be used to mediate the meaning of L2. It was also used in the teacher’s instructions in addition to L2.

- Although textbook content and drilling were found in most lessons, in Anh’s lessons communicative activities or situations created for forms of authentic communications to occur were inserted.
- A focus-on-forms orientation was maintained, and mistakes were corrected when they were made.

- Games were used not only for motivation and language practice but also for language use.

To sum up, in this cycle Anh maintained practices she had used in the first cycle and made changes to apply CLT appropriate to her students.

The next presents a description of the observations in Binh’s class, to understand what and how she practised in her teaching in Cycle Two in order to implement CLT.

4.5.2.2.2. Case Two – Binh: Class Observations Cycle Two

In Cycle Two of Action Research, four of Binh’s lessons were observed. One of the observations was cancelled due to an unexpected interruption, and the class schedule was changed. All of her four lessons took place inside the classroom. Three of them took place in the everyday classroom, and the rest took place in the English classroom. The students in Binh’s class was seated in three rows, two students shared each desk and sat on separate chairs.

Binh’s class observations are described in terms of the role of teacher and students in lesson construction, interaction, and authenticity.

(1) Roles of Teacher and Students in Lesson Construction

In this cycle, Binh maintained a form of teacher-directed instruction where she controlled most of the class activities. She gave instructions, modelled the language patterns, and corrected students’ mistakes.

However, she gave students more time to work together in pairs and groups to enhance their interaction and autonomy. Binh revealed:

I want to provide more freedom to my students. I want my students to have more opportunities to work in pairs and in groups, but I’m afraid of noise they may make. Other teachers usually complain about the noise of English classes. Students are more controlled and many students pay more attention to the lesson when they work in the whole class activities such as chorus.

(Binh – Field notes)
(2) Interaction

As described in the section above, the focus of this Action Research cycle was increasing interaction between students to improve their chance to practise and communicate in English. Therefore, in this cycle, Binh created activities in which her students worked in groups. It could be argued, however, that the effectiveness of these group activities was not fully realised. In the first observation of this cycle, for example, students worked together in groups of four to make a paper lion. The aim of this activity was for the students to review the vocabulary of body parts they had learned in the previous lesson and learn more words pertaining to an animal’s body parts. They also needed to understand and follow the instructions in this lesson. The observation showed that the students understood and followed the instructions, but throughout the group work only Vietnamese was used. Frequent use of first language has been explained as being to assist students to understand the teacher’s instruction and feedback (Binh – Field notes). However, it is argued that, at times, this language transfer was overused and unnecessary, since Binh could have used other ways to modify her instructions.

Binh created pair and group activities not only to provide students with opportunities to interact with each other but also to assist each other. In the following extract, after Binh showed the students the flashcards of parts of the body and they responded, she let students work in pairs to review the vocabulary of body parts on a copy of paper lion delivered to each pair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A pair looks at the copy of the paper lion, in turn pointing to the lion body parts and saying what the parts are.</th>
<th>S1: Eyes, legs, paws, body, tail, mouth, ear. S1: Tail /tai/ S1: Tail /teɪl/ S2: Tail /teɪ/, leg, ear, eye, eye S1: Hai cái mắt là eyes. (Trans: Two eyes are eyes) S2: Eyes, paw /pæ/ S1: Paw /poʊ:/ S2: Đọc là /poʊ:/ hà? (Trans: Is it read paw?) S1: Ú, /poʊ:/ (Trans: Yep. Paw)</th>
<th>S2 points first and S1 speaks; then S1 points and S2 speaks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-15, Binh – Observation 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to help each other to review the words and their pronunciation that they had learned. Binh explained:
This was an opportunity for the students, especially those who were shy to talk in front of the teacher and the whole class, to practise and ask their peer the words they didn’t remember. It also saved my time in comparison to practise with individuals.

(Binh – Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two)

When the students practised the language as required by the teacher, they were more responsible for their work, since at the time, they had just worked with a peer, the one with an equal role, not with the teacher who controlled them.

The students in the extract above not only reviewed vocabulary about body parts that they had learned but also assisted each other, as S1 corrected pronunciation of the words ‘tail’ and ‘paw’, and plural form of ‘eye’ for S2. It is suggested that, in this interaction, the students did not negotiate meaning but negotiated learning, since they both noticed language forms through correcting peers’ mistakes. This was an aim of Binh’s pair and group work activities.

The following section provides more details about Binh’s teaching practice toward language forms.

(3) Form Instruction

As in Cycle One, Binh’s lessons focused on the language forms that the syllabus required, and class activities were organized to practise those forms. Other language elements were also taught related to the language forms, language patterns were introduced and the students practised in order to remember. In the following illustration, for example, it was observed that the students reacted to the teacher automatically when she showed them the flashcards of body parts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SS review the vocabulary of body parts learned in the previous lesson.</th>
<th>SS: Legs. T: These are SS: These are my legs. SS: These are my nose. T: Chì vô luôn nhe (Trans: Point) SS: These are my ear(s). SS: These are my arms. SS: These are my finger(s) SS: These are my arm(s). SS: These are my eyes.</th>
<th>T holds up flashcards of body parts, SS look at the flashcards and say them. SS say &amp; point to their body parts after T reminds them to do that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS: These are</td>
<td>SS: These are my legs.</td>
<td>SS: These are my nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: These are</td>
<td>SS: These are my ears.</td>
<td>T: Chì vô luôn nhe (Trans: Point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS: These are my nose.</td>
<td>SS: These are my ear(s).</td>
<td>SS: These are my arms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Chì vô luôn nhe (Trans: Point)</td>
<td>SS: These are my finger(s)</td>
<td>SS: These are my arm(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS: These are my arms.</td>
<td>SS: These are my eyes.</td>
<td>SS: These are my eyes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forms were also introduced implicitly, as in the following example when Binh introduced the personal pronouns, ‘he’ and ‘she’:

| T writes on the board ‘He’, ‘She’. T reads the words several times and SS repeat. | T: He  
SS: He  
T: He  
SS: He  
T: He  
SS: He  
T: He  
SS: He  
T: She  
SS: She |
|---|---|
| T shows the flashcards of a fireman, then a teacher and says ‘he’ & ‘she’, SS repeat. | T: He  
SS: He  
T: He  
SS: He  
T: She  
SS: She  
T: She  
SS: She |
| T sticks 2 flashcards on the board, one under ‘he’ (fireman) and one under ‘she’ (McCloskey et al.). T points to some SS, whole class say ‘he’ or ‘she’. | T (points to a boy): ‘he’ or ‘she’?  
SS: He  
T (points to a girl): ‘He’ or ‘she’?  
SS: She  
T (points to a girl): ‘He’ or ‘she’?  
SS: She  
T (points to a boy): ‘he’ or ‘she’?  
SS: He  
(T points to a girl and waits)  
SS: She  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-17, Binh – Observation 9) |

Forms were also presented explicitly. Explicit grammar explanation was used since it was a fast way to enable students to understand the new forms (Field notes). In the same lesson as the Observation 6, after introducing implicitly ‘he’ and ‘she’, Binh let the students
practise with ‘he’ and ‘she’. The students looked at the flashcards of jobs and made sentences, introducing people’s jobs; then they did an exercise in the classbook, completing sentences with ‘he’ or ‘she’. Finally, the teacher summarized when to use ‘he’ and ‘she’, as follows:

| T asks SS to identify ‘he’ & ‘she’. | T: Khi nào mình dùng ‘He’? (Trans: When do we use ‘He’?) S1: Thưa cô là đề nói về ông ấy, anh ấy. (Trans: Teacher, to talk about a man) S2: Khi thay ai lớn tuổi. (Trans: When we call somebody old) T: Phải không? (Trans: Really?) S3: Thua cờ lúc đoc ‘He’ là đề nói người con trai. (Trans: Teacher, we use ‘He’ to talk about a male person) T: Vây nếu nói về bạn Mai Lan thì có dùng ‘He’ được không? (Trans: So if we talk about Mai Lan, can we use ‘He’?) SS: Đã không. She. (Trans: No. She.) T: À, bây giờ là ‘she’. Khi nào dùng ‘She’? (Trans: Ah, now ‘She’. When do we use ‘She’?) S4: Khi là con gái. (Trans: When that’s a female person) T: À, khi là con gái thì mới dùng ‘She’. (Trans: Ah, when we talk about a female person, we use ‘She’) |

(Extract 4.5.2.2-18, Binh – Observation 9)

A forms focus was also observed during error correction in Binh’s lessons, and is discussed in the following section.

(4) Error Correction

Error correction was still an important part in the teacher’s lessons. Binh corrected her students’ errors either explicitly or implicitly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T corrects the error explicitly</th>
<th>S: He a pilot. T: He’s a pilot S: He’s a pilot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-19, Binh – Observation 9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T emphasises ‘He’s a’</td>
<td>T corrects SS’ pronunciation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

200
Errors were corrected explicitly not only by the teacher but also by students in the form of correcting fellows’ mistakes. The students were required to comment upon mistakes committed by their peers or the other groups. For instance, after a group performed a role play in front of the class, the students from other groups commented on the group performance:

SS corrects their classmates’ mistakes. | S: Thưa cô bạn Sang đọc câu hỏi không có lên giọng. (Trans: Teacher, Sang didn’t raise his intonation at the end of the question)
T: Bạn đọc câu nào không có lên giọng? (Trans: Which sentence didn’t he raise the intonation?)
S: Is she a teacher?
T: Ah, ‘Look! Is she a teacher?’ Phải lên giọng ở cuối câu. (Trans: The intonation at the end of the question should be higher)
(Extract 4.5.2.2-21, Binh – Observation 9)

(5) Authenticity

Binh maintained using realia in combination with other materials such as flashcards to demonstrate the meaning of new vocabulary. In addition, connection to students’ real life was sometimes carried out as a follow-up activity to give the students more freedom to talk. In the Observation 9, for example, Binh invited some students to introduce and talk about themselves after group work, in which students reordered the provided jumbled words to make correct sentences:
Although the aim of the teacher was to provide students with opportunities to use the language learned, she acknowledged that students might not really ‘use’ these sentences in communication: they just ‘practise’ the language by replacing words.

(6) L1 Use

The observations in Binh’s lessons in Cycle Two revealed that she made efforts to use a greater amount of English compared to that in Cycle One. Except for complicated instructions, most simple requests and instructions were in English, or given in English and then transferred to Vietnamese:

T: Stand up and repeat after me. Khi mà đứng lên thì phải lặp lại theo cô n sscanf, nghe chưa? (Trans: Stand up and repeat after me. When you stand up, repeat after me, ok?)

(Extract 4.5.2.2-23, Binh – Observation 9)

Binh revealed she was aware of her L1 overuse:

I think I haven’t used enough English in class. But I would minimize the translation of my instructions from English into Vietnamese. I think students would pay more attention to my instructions if I use more English. Or I would translate an instruction or a request into Vietnamese once or twice at the beginning.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two, Binh)
Summary

The lessons observed in Binh’s classroom are summarized with the following main points:

- The teacher-directed model was maintained where the teacher controlled most of the class activities.

- Pair and group work were sometimes conducted but primarily to practise the target language rather than to ‘use’ it. L1 was used as the medium of the activities and to negotiate the meaning of L2.

- Textbook dependence and focus-on-forms instruction were dominant in Binh’s lessons, and mistakes were explicitly corrected when they occurred.

- Although drilling was often used to practise the language, Binh created more opportunities for students to use the target language.

In general, Binh had achieved changes in her understanding of CLT and teaching practice to implement more CLT features in her lessons. Nevertheless, she recognised that her implementation was still limited.

4.5.2.2.3. Case Three – Chau: Class Observations Cycle Two

All of five lesson observations of Chau’s class were conducted in the classroom, although she said sometimes she organised activities in the school yard. The students’ seating arrangements were similar to those in Cycle One of the Action Research. Two students shared a desk, and a long bench was attached firmly to the desk, making three rows of desks for 36 students, with each row having 12 desks.

(1) Roles of Teacher and Students in Lesson Construction:

The teacher-led model remained dominant in Chau’s classroom. While she was the instructor, manager and organiser of all class activities, she also modelled students’ activities. The students, on the other hand, followed her instructions and repeated what she said. The extract below is an illustration of Chau’s modelling of language patterns that she wanted the students to learn:
| T models the activity before requiring SS to work in pairs. | T: Để hỏi xem là những đồ chơi yêu thích của những bạn xung quanh mình là gì thì mình hỏi ‘What’s your favourite toy?’. Để biết xem màu sắc yêu thích của bạn mình thì mình hỏi ‘What’s your favourite’ (pauses) (Trans: In order to ask what others’ favourite toys are, we ask ‘What’s your favourite toy?’ If you want to know your friend’s favourite colour, you ask ‘What’s your favourite...?’) SS: Colour T: Vậy thì bạn thân mình như thế nào Nhi? Có mỗi một bạn dùng lên luyện tập với cô nào. You. Bạn nữ. (Trans: So what about yourself? I would like somebody to stand up and practise with me. You. That girl) SS: Nhi. T (to class) Listen! T: Nhi. What’s your favourite toy? S: It’s a teddy. T: It’s a (pauses) S: Teddy. T: What’s your favourite colour? S: It’s pink. T: It’s pink. Ask me. Hỏi cô nào. (Trans: Ask me.) S: What’s your favourite toy? T: It’s a car. S: What’s your favourite colour? T: It’s green. Thank you. T: Bây giờ chúng ta luyện tập như cô và bạn Nhi vừa mới hỏi nhé. Hỏi xem bạn mình có thích màu sắc và đồ chơi giống mình không. Two minutes. Chúng ta có hai phút để hỏi màu sắc và đồ chơi yêu thích của bạn mình là gì (Trans: Now we’re going to practise as me and Nhi did. Ask your friend to find out if his favourite colour and toy are the same as yours. Two minutes. We have two minutes to ask about your friend’s favourite colour and toy). One, two, three. (Extract 4.5.2.2-24, Chau – Observation 7) | After this modelling, SS work in pairs to ask each other the favourite toy and colour. |
The teacher’s role as the centre of class activities sometimes changed, when she let her students work in pairs or in groups. After the modelling activity described above, the students worked in pairs to ask a peer about his or her favourite colour and toy. Chau stated:

While working with each other in pairs in such activity, the students had more freedom to work in their own pace since they could escape from teacher’s control and students, especially the shy ones had more time to practise and use English.

(Chau – Field notes)

(2) Interaction

As the aim of this cycle was to encourage students’ interaction and create opportunities for students to use English in class. It is observable that Chau had made efforts to organise activities to increase students’ interaction. Pair work and group work were organised to provide students opportunities to use the new language. In the following extract, students worked in pairs after learning how to ask about favourite toys and colours. They were required to ask a peer, using the sentence form, ‘What’s your favourite...?':

| Students of a pair ask each other | S1: What’s your favourite toy?  
S2: It’s a teddy.  
S1: What’s your favourite colour?  
S2: It’s pink. What’s your favourite toy?  
S1: It’s a car.  
S2: What’s your favourite colour?  
S1: It’s red |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

(Extrait 4.5.2.2-25, Chau – Observation 7)

The students not only practised with the language they had learned but also used the language to talk about their likes. In the same activity, in another pair, S2’s response revealed that he was thinking of a real answer, not just an answer for practice. This was facilitated by the use of L1:
It is apparent that S2 did not merely repeat the language form required to practise but was trying to use L2 to show up his identity. The use of L1 in response to S1 in this extract indicated that it was a necessary means for interaction and also a means for learning L2.

The students in pair and group work interacted with each other to assist each other and correct each other’s mistakes, as follows:

| Students of a pair ask each other | S1: What’s your favourite colour  
S2: (silent)  
S1: Trả lời đi (Trans: Answer)  
S2: Tôi đang suy nghĩ (Trans: I’m thinking). It’s red.  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-26, Chau – Observation 7) |

| SS work in pairs, using ‘he’ and ‘she’ to talk about jobs of people in flashcards. | S1: He a fireman.  
S2: Four.  
S1: He a /ˈpaɪlət/  
S2: cái gì? (Trans: What?)  
S1: He a /ˈpaɪlət/ /ˈpaɪlət/  
S2: /ˈpælɪt/  
S1: Pilot  
S2: Five. She a teacher.  
S1: One  
S1: She a pupil.  
S2: He  
S1: She  
S2: Con trai là ‘he’, con gái là ‘she’. Đây là con trai mà. (Trans: ‘He’ is for boys and ‘she’ is for girls. This is a boy)  
(Extract 4.5.2.2-27, Chau – Observation 10) |

| SS look at the flashcards of jobs stuck on the board. The flashcards are numbered from 1 to 6. SS take turns describing the flashcards. When a S describes a flashcard, the other guesses which flashcard on the board is described, and says the number of that flashcard. |

Chau reported that she created pair and group work to encourage students’ autonomy. According to her, the small number of members working in a group forced students to perform the role they were assigned. She stated:
When students work in groups and each member is assigned with a role, they will encourage, assist and even force each other to complete their task. Because the number of a group is limited to a small number, in case a student doesn’t work, others will not able to work [...]. Students have more opportunity to say what they really want to say rather than just doing exactly what I require.

(Chau – Field notes)

Interaction among students not only took place when students worked in small groups but developed when they interacted with the teacher. In the following extract, although predominantly in L1, the students contributed to the lessons through interaction with the teacher to make the meaning clearer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T checks the vocabulary</th>
<th>SS write on the board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Eyes, eyes, eyes. What does it mean, Nhi?</td>
<td>S2: Những đôi mắt. (Trans: Pairs of eyes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: Thưa cô là đôi mắt. (Trans: Teacher, a pair of eyes)</td>
<td>T: Hai đôi mắt. Bạn nào có ý kiến khác? Nghi. (Trans: Two pairs of eyes. Who has another idea?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: A, đôi mắt. (Trans: Ah, a pair of eyes)</td>
<td>S5: Hai đôi mắt là bốn cái mắt. (Trans: Two pairs of eyes are four eyes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Bạn Tiến vừa nói hai đôi mắt là bốn con mắt ha. Nếu như hai người thì có mấy đôi mắt nhà? (Trans: Tiến said two pairs of eyes are four eyes. How many eyes do two people have?). Four (pauses)</td>
<td>SS: Four eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS: Four eyes.</td>
<td>T: Four eyes. Four eyes thì mình có thêm ‘s’ phía sau không nhé? (Trans: Do we add ‘s’ after four eyes?). Yes or no?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS: Yes.</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-28, Chau – Observation 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Form Instruction

Like Anh and Binh, Chau’s lessons also focused on the language forms related to the syllabus. The lessons depended on the textbook and other elements of language were taught to construct the forms focus. When Chau taught the lessons about body parts, for example, ‘s’ ending and ‘these are’ and ‘this is’ were the focus of her lessons. The
activities organised in Chau’s class were aimed at practising these forms. Forms were introduced either implicitly or explicitly, as illustrated here:

| Form is instructed explicitly | T: Now, class. One finger, one finger and fingers. Chúng ta thấy khác ở chỗ nào nhỉ? (Trans: Do we find it different?) SS: Bàn tay. (Trans: Hands) T: Phu. S: Những ngón tay thì có ‘s’ ở đằng sau, còn một ngón tay không có ‘s’. (Trans: Fingers have ‘s’ at the end while a finger has no ‘s’) T: À, đúng rồi. Nếu như có nói ‘one finger’, có có ‘s’ phía sau không nhỉ? (Trans: Ah. Correct. If I say, ‘one finger’, do I add ‘s’?) SS: Không. (Trans: No) T: Không. Fingers, những ngón tay. (Trans: No. Fingers. Fingers) (Extract 4.5.2.2-30, Chau – Observation 8) | T spreads one of her finger, then all ten fingers. Phu is the student’s name. |

In Extract 4.5.2.2-29, students identified the difference between ‘arm’ and ‘arms’ for one arm and for two arms, respectively, due to the teacher’s performance with her arms and with the emphasis in her pronunciation on ‘arms’. In Extract 4.5.2.2-30, in combination with the teacher’s performance with her fingers, the rule for singular ‘finger’ and plural
‘fingers’ was identified through the interaction between the teacher and the students, and explicitly stated.

Forms-focused instruction was also related closely to error correction, which will be presented in the following section.

(4) Error Correction

Chau’s practice in error correction revealed that it was still an important aspect of her instruction. Errors were corrected either explicitly or implicitly. Recasting responses remained the most used strategy for correction. Other kinds of correction such as clarification requests were also used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error is corrected</th>
<th>T: What’s this? S: It’s a kite /kai/ T: What? It’s a S: kite /kai/ T: Again. It’s a kite /kait/ S: It’s a kite. T: It’s a kite. S: It’s a kite.</th>
<th>T holds up a flashcard of a kite and asks S. S makes a mistake with the pronunciation of ‘kite’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explicitly</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-31, Chau – Observation 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error is corrected</td>
<td>S1 points to his nose. S2: Nose. S1 points to his legs. S2: Legs /leŋs/ T: Legs. S2: Legs. Ears. T: Ok, thank you.</td>
<td>Two SS are invited to work in front of the whole class. S1 points to his body parts, S2 says what it is. S2 makes a mistake with pronunciation of ‘legs’. T corrects the mistake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implicitly</td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-32, Chau – Observation 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only the student who made an error was engaged in correction but also the whole class were involved when Chau asked them to correct their peers’ errors as in the following example:
T asks the whole class to check individuals’ work on the board.


This is a part of activity in which SS review vocabulary of body parts they learned in the previous lesson. T draws a person on the board and writes the numbers on the parts of his body. SS who volunteer are invited to write the corresponding body parts next to the numbers. After they finish, T ask the whole class to check whether the words are correct.

Chau reported that she usually let students check their peers’ work so that they paid specific attention to the work at the board and were aware of the errors as well as the correct forms.

(5) Authenticity

Authenticity remained one of the important aspects of Chau’s teaching practice in this cycle. For more authenticity, the teacher let students learn the language through learning activities that applied new vocabulary in creative ways. In the following class Observation 9, Chau taught more new vocabulary of body parts through instructing students to make a paper lion. This is an illustration of how she enhanced authenticity in her lesson:

T introduces new vocabulary of a lion’s body parts.

T: Now, this is a body. Body. It’s a body. What does it mean? S1: Đạ cơ thể (Trans: Body) T: Tail. S2: Thưa cô là cái đuôi. (Trans: It’s a tail, teacher) T: Paws. S3: Đạ bàn chân. (Trans: Feet) T: Bàn chân này khác với bàn chân của con người thế nào nè? Nó có cái gì? (Trans: How are these feet different from people’s feet? What do they have?) T asks SS about a lion’s body parts. She sticks a copy of lion’s body on the board and points to its body parts. She points to the lion’s body while she is asking SS about it.
S4: Thưa cô nó có móng, và ngón nó ngắn hơn của mình nữa. (Trans: They have nails, and their fingers are shorter than ours)
T: Nó có móng vượt, đúng không nào? (Trans: They have claws, don’t they?)

(Extract 4.5.2.2-34, Chau – Observation 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T instructs how to make a paper lion.</th>
<th>T: We’ll make a paper lion. Now, class, first, you will colour the face, the body. Ok? Colour the face and the body.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Extract 4.5.2.2-35, Chau – Observation 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T says and demonstrates the instruction. SS follow the instruction and make the lion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the example above, T used English to instruct SS to make the paper lion. SS listened, saw and did, so they listened for the purpose of applying the language.

It was also observed that controlled practice was dominant and accounted for most activities in the classroom. In the lesson, ‘He’s a hero!’, for example, students worked in pairs after they had learned the new vocabulary of five jobs consisting of teacher, pupil, housewife, fireman, and pilot. Each student of each pair in turn described a job by miming, then his/her peer guessed what the job was. Although students used their experience and knowledge of the jobs to mime the jobs, it is argued that this activity was not a real communicative activity, and students simply practised the words, and the jobs were prescribed. The jobs were limited to five, and were probably not jobs students really wanted.

(6) L1 Use

Although L2 was used more frequently in Chau’s lessons, L1 was a crucial element of instruction. Chau used L1 mostly for complicated explanation and requests due to the low level of English of her students. In other cases, the teacher used English or used English and then transferred to Vietnamese in order to ‘help them (students) to be familiar with English gradually and not to feel stressed’ (Chau – Field notes). However, in
interaction with students, short and simple instructions or requests were made in L2 or first in L2, and then transferred to L1 as in the illustration below:

| L2 was transferred to L1 in an interaction between T and SS | T: Look at the pictures, class. Put your pen down! Tất cả đặt bút xuống nào (Trans: *Put your pen down, everybody*!). One two three. Tất cả đặt bút xuống nhẹ (Trans: *Put your pen down, everybody*). Now, look at the pictures! T: How many people are there? One SS: Two, three, four. T: Write down four people. T: Number one, a girl with wavy hair. S1: wavy T: Number two, a boy. Number three, a girl with long straight hair. S2: Long hair, teacher. S3: Long red hair. Long hair. T: Number four, a boy with glasses. S4: Giọng y cô. Cô đeo kính. (Trans: *Looks like you, Miss. You wear glasses*) (Extract 4.5.2.2-36, Chau – Observation 7) | T shows the picture in her textbook, points & counts. SS count with her. Then T draws 4 heads for 4 people on the board. |

For illustrations of forms and vocabulary instruction expressed in L1, see Extract 4.5.2.2-30 and Extract 4.5.2.2-34. Extract 4.5.2.2-33 demonstrates the way in which Chau transferred from L2 to L1.

**Summary**

The findings from the data of Chau’s class observations can be summarized as follows:

- While the teacher-led model was dominant in the classroom, pair and group work were conducted for students to be free from control of the teacher.

- Pair and group work were organized to promote interaction between students and to provide students with opportunities not only for L2 practice but also for L2 use.

- Closely following the textbook was the aim of Chau’s lessons. Thus focus-on-forms instruction was the priority.
Mistake correction was considered necessary in Chau’s teaching practice. Both non-communicative and communicative activities were conducted so that students could practise and use the language more meaningfully.

L1 was used to facilitate the teacher’s instruction as well as to mediate the meaning of L2 in students’ interaction.

In conclusion, observations of the three classes and teachers revealed that, although they were trying to implement CLT in their teaching by using more authentic materials and creating more opportunities for students’ interaction, it is arguable that they were not practicing a strong version of CLT; instead, to some extent, it was a weak version of CLT adapted to their teaching circumstances and existing teaching practices.

4.5.2.3. Stimulated Recall Session Two

The Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two was the last one conducted at the end of Action Research Cycle Two. Each teacher was interviewed after their last lesson of the cycle, to investigate their understanding of English teaching and CLT. The teachers recalled their lessons by viewing video recordings of their lessons and discussing their teaching activities. As the aim of interaction is stimulating authenticity, the teachers also shared their views of authenticity during this stimulated recall session.

4.5.2.3.1. Case One – Anh

During the second Stimulated Recall session, Anh discussed her perceptions of both English teaching and CLT practice as well as her implementation of the plan for this cycle that she would use for her classes. This cycle aimed to enhance students’ learning through focussing on interaction, a significant feature of CLT; so it was the focus of this recall session and also the first issue discussed.

(1) Perspectives on Interaction

Pair and group work promote interaction among students

Viewing the video recordings of her lessons, Anh made positive evaluations of her lessons in terms of promoting interaction of students through pair and group activities. Anh reported that interaction between students was enhanced through pair and group work.
Pairs and groups provided more opportunities for students to talk in less structured and contingent ways compared to whole class activities:

In a whole class activity, I can only call several students, so only those students can practise the language with me. But when they work in pair and group work, all students can talk at the same time.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Anh added that pair and group work provided students with opportunities to listen to other voices than that of the teacher. She shared:

I organize pair and group activities so that students don’t have to listen to my voice all the time but have opportunities to listen to their peers. In pair and group work, students interact with each other and they are the centre of the activities.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Several extracts from Anh’s lessons in Cycle Two were shown to recall her understandings of interaction, as in the following extract:

| SS work in groups of five, using vocabulary about the topics they have learned in previous lessons. Each group has to complete a diagram for their topic. The topic of this group is ‘Parts of the body’. S1 was assigned to write the words on the diagram by the group. |
|---|---|
Evaluating the students’ collaboration in the activity above, Anh stated:

They (students) collaborate well in this activity. They collaborate to find as many answers for the problem as possible. They share their ideas and help each other to fulfil the task.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

In addition, Anh shared that students developed collaboration skills through interaction. Though using mainly L1, students learned to work together and assisted each other to complete tasks:

Previously it was hard to ask them (students) to work in groups. They blamed each other and didn’t like to work with each other. They didn’t get on well with each other. By many different ways, I’ve grouped them and helped them to collaborate, to be friendlier with each other. They understand each other better. [...]. I encouraged them (the more competent students) to assist their peers. When they assist their peers, they learn how to collaborate with their peers.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)
Anh reported that she grouped students of different levels so that they could support each other in their tasks:

> I often change the participants within groups. In a group there are always more and less competent students working together [...]. Students understand their peers’ strengths and weaknesses through collaboration.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Anh also stated that, in terms of co-construction of language, pair and group work was effective in the way students contributed to task completion. Discussing the extract above, Anh said that each of the members in that group was aware of their responsibility for the task. They gave the words belonging to the topic, ‘parts of the body’. The contribution was not only in the form of pronouncing words correctly but also spelling the words.

The second extract selected for the stimulated recall for this cycle was a lesson given in the school yard. Students sat in a u-shape and were divided into three groups of twelve. They had to complete asking and answering three questions in turn, in three rounds. The question for round one was ‘What’s your favourite toy?’. The question for round two was, ‘What’s your favourite colour?’. The question for round three was, ‘What’s your favourite animal?’. Each student of each group asked his/her peer on his/her right. This activity was kept going until the last student of each group answered the questions. The group who finished these three rounds in the least time was the winner. The following extract and the picture attached illustrate this activity:

---

T: Tổ hai. Tổ này mười một người nên cô sẽ hỏi trước (Trans: Group two. Group two has eleven students, so I’ll ask first). What’s your favourite colour?
S1: It’s green. What’s your favourite colour?
S2: It’s blue. What’s your favourite colour?
S3: It’s green. What’s your favourite colour?
S4: It’s blue. What’s your favourite colour?
S5: It’s red. What’s your favourite colour?
S6: It’s a red. What’s your favourite (hesitates)
S5: (reminds) Colour?
S6: Colour?
S7: It’s yellow. What’s your favourite colour?
S8: It’s blue. What’s your favourite colour?
S9: It’s red. What’s your favourite colour?
S10: It’s pink. What’s your favourite colour?
S11: It’s pink.

Anh commented that she modified this activity in other classes to enhance more interaction between students. She let students work in groups of five. She drew a table with these three questions on the board. Students copied the table and the questions into their notebooks, asked their peers these questions, and took notes for the answers. Anh concluded that this modified activity was much easier for students to interact with each other:

It’s much easier for them than sitting in such long line because {in a long line} the students may not pay attention to and hear each other clearly. It takes time as they can’t hear each other. Working in small groups, they have opportunities to ask and hear each other. They pay attention to their peers’ answers.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

As communicative activities are crucial to promote interaction, Anh was asked to give her understanding of communicative activities. Anh argued that a communicative activity should raise the need for information from students:

A communicative activity is probably for form practice but it should require students to use more language for communication purposes rather than just doing drill exercises. For example, an exercise in which I hold up something and ask, ‘Is it a...?’, is not communicative because they already know the answer [...]. To make it more communicative, I can put those things into a bag and students guess what I have in the bag. Students do not know the answer before they ask me and they are curious to know what there is in the bag.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

The teacher also claimed that a communicative activity should arouse students’ needs and interests in speaking out and expressing their opinions, being allowed to say whatever they like, so they would speak more freely and more creatively. This was supported earlier in the teacher’s report for the recalled lesson of Class Observation 7 above:

When the students asked their friends, ‘What’s your favourite animal?’, they didn’t know each other’s answer. And when they were asked, they wanted to give the true answer. Some were very eager to respond with a new word. Some
didn’t remember the word for their favourite animal or they hadn’t learned the word before but they didn’t give up. They asked me or other students instead.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Anh, however, expressed her confusion with communicative activities when she revealed that she did not think the board game she created for the class activity in Extract 4.5.2.3-3 Observation 7 below was a communicative activity. In this activity, the students played a board game with the class divided into five groups. Each group had a board with the pictures of people’s body parts, and instructions on the board such as ‘go forward 1 space’, ‘go back 3 spaces’, ‘roll again’ etc. Anh claimed that, as the students just threw the dice, read aloud the words on the board, and followed the instructions, this activity was not a communicative activity. However, it can be argued that there was a communicative dimension when students completely concentrated on the game, understood the instructions and used English while playing the game, as illustrated in the following extract:

SS take turns to throw the dice, read aloud the number they get on the dice, count their steps on the board and read aloud the word they reach on the board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1: Two. One, two. Head.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S2: Six. One, two, three, four, five, six. Eye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: Four. Leg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: Two. One, two. Head.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.2.3-3, Anh – Class Observation 7)

Furthermore, it was observed that students of some groups used more Vietnamese than English while they were playing. Anh shared that insufficient instructions and explanations contributed to this issue. In another class with the same activity, Anh reported that actions were preferable for demonstrating meaning:

I wrote, for example, ‘Go back’ on the board. I explained and demonstrated by actions. I drew part of the game board on the class board, demonstrated ‘Go back 2 spaces’ on that board. I counted, stepped back and marked an x on the board.
While having developed understandings of the aspects of CLT such as interaction and authenticity, Anh’s teaching practice in this cycle still showed that she employed non-CLT aspects as well. Forms-focused instruction was dominant in her lessons, so it was another point discussed in this session.

(2) Perspectives on teaching forms

*Students need to practise as much as possible*

In this stimulated recall session, Anh maintained her view that language forms should be taught to students and students needed to practise those forms before they could use them. Viewing the recording of her Class Observation 9 in which ‘he’ and ‘she’ were identified, Anh commented that students understood what ‘he’ and ‘she’ indicated. They could identify ‘he’ and ‘she’ when they did written exercises on their textbooks, but they might make mistakes when speaking because they did not practise enough.

Nevertheless, Anh suggested that explicitly interpreting linguistic structures was not always effective. Instead, in some cases they could be taught implicitly and through activities.

(3) Changing in Perspectives on Mistake Correction

*All errors and mistakes should be corrected as long as correction does not interrupt communication*

According to Anh, explicit form instruction was a focus of her teaching process. She also confirmed the necessity of error correction, stating that errors and mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible to avoid bad habits:

If I don’t correct their mistakes, they would think they are correct and repeat the mistakes later, and it would be much more difficult to correct them when these mistakes become habit [...] I ignored students’ mistakes when I don’t hear them clearly or if they’re not very serious; otherwise, I correct them immediately.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Nevertheless, Anh added she sometimes hesitated to correct a mistake if this action might interrupt students’ talk and influence their interest. These mistakes would be noted and
corrected after the student finished his/her work or she might remind the whole class about mistakes so that others would learn from it.

(4) Perspectives on L1 Use

*L1 is necessary to facilitate learning*

In this cycle, Anh herself was concerned with her Vietnamese use in the classroom. She shared the reasons she used Vietnamese for her instruction:

There’s not enough time to explain everything in English. Actually, it depends on each lesson, the aim of the lesson and amount of time for that lesson. Some instructions and vocabulary are difficult and it takes time to explain them [in English], so there’s not enough time to complete the lesson. Moreover, if I explain in English, only around one third of the students can understand. The others may not understand. So I have to check their understanding in Vietnamese to ensure the whole class understand my instruction.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

Meanwhile, being aware of the role of English instruction, Anh added:

But I usually use English first, at least once or twice. If it’s too difficult to explain in English, I will translate it into Vietnamese.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)

The student’s attitude is another reason for using English and Vietnamese instruction in Anh’s classroom. She shared that, in some classes, students were very interested in listening to English, while in some other classes they waited for the teacher to transfer instructions to Vietnamese and did not follow the instructions until they were explained in Vietnamese. A solution for this problem was that she created situations to encourage and elicit students’ use of English as much as possible:

I create situations for the shy students to use English. I call them more than the others and force them to speak English [...]. All commands and requests must be in English. For example, {when a student asked for permission} ‘May I go out?’ (in Vietnamese) ‘Uh huh? Again! Speak English!’. He didn’t know how to say it in English, so he ran to his classmate and asked. I just let him go when he could say it in English [...]. The students in my classes gradually get accustomed to listening to and using English.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh)
Summary

It is argued that, while Anh developed her understandings of the aspects of CLT, she also acknowledged the importance of non-CLT practices and of combining both in her English teaching. Her perspectives on L2 learning and teaching during the second cycle of the Action Research are briefly summarized as follows:

- Anh emphasized students’ collaboration while they were working with peers in pairs and groups. Identifying an English classroom as a particular social context where social order was set up and maintained though interaction between its members, she shared experience of assisting students’ interaction, so they worked collaboratively.

- She believed that communicative activities promoted interaction among students, and that these activities were organized based on students’ needs of communication.

- Anh maintained that accuracy was important, but mistake correction could be set aside if it affected communication flow.

- While sharing techniques to improve the use of L2 in the classroom, Anh identified L1 as an important tool of instruction in her lessons due to students’ low proficiency in L2.

4.5.2.3.2. Case Two – Binh

The stimulated recall interviews for Cycle Two with Binh were conducted to investigate Binh’s perception of English teaching. Some parts of video recordings of her class observations were recalled for this cycle with the main focus being interaction.

(1) Perspectives on Interaction

Pair and group work does not ensure effective interaction

While the video recordings of her lessons were shown, Binh shared her opinion regarding setting group work activities for her class. She claimed that, while working in groups, students could support each other. More competent students would assist the less competent to accomplish the task of their group. According to Binh, group work enhanced students’ learning as they could teach each other. For example, students might teach and learn new vocabulary from each other. Students were creative when they were working
together and at times they might act out to explain the meaning of a new word to their peers:

When students introduce new words of the toys or outside activities to their group, for example, they describe these words by action, helping the others understand what the toys and activities are and how to play with them. Other students would be able to imagine and connect these words with real-life activities and their experience.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

In the lesson on Observation 6, Binh said her aim to organize the students to work in groups to make a paper lion was so they could assist each other to understand the instructions in their textbook. Nevertheless, she also recognised that the students only used Vietnamese to communicate while they were working. She reported:

I think I should ask them to act out the instruction so that they can remember the verbs and the instruction. Then I will require them to use English while they are working in groups and giving instruction to their peers. I’ve tried to do that in another class and it worked.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

(See Appendix M for the copy of the lesson content)

It was observable that, in Binh’s lessons, whole class or large group activities were dominant over pair and small group activities. Binh explained that she did not conduct pair and group work often in her lessons, as they were not effective in the current conditions of the classes. One of the reasons was the difference in students’ levels of proficiency. She reported:

Depending on each lesson I will decide whether I organize pair or group work activities [...]. Actually, all lessons are potential to create pair and group work activities, but when students work, competent students can be engaged in these activities while others aren’t interested in the activities [...] When the more competent ones failed to assist their peers, they report and make noise [...]. So I hesitate to let students work in pairs and groups.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Binh was challenged due to students’ failure to collaborate in pair and group activities:

Some students are not patient enough to help their peers [...] . When the less competent student can’t respond, the more competent student becomes lazy to keep going with the activity.
Another difficulty Binh encountered in conducting pair and group activities was the seating arrangement and the large class. She suggested a pair activity that she claimed could motivate students’ interaction:

I hand out worksheets with questions they’ve just learned such as, ‘What’s your favourite colour?’, ‘What’s your animals?’. Students ask their peers, write down their peers’ names and their answers.

However, Binh revealed that she could not completely apply this activity in her class and needed to modify it:

I let students to ask their peers about their favourite colours and animals but not write down the answers. If they have to write, they will want go around the classroom and ask the ones they like, so I can’t manage them [...]. Because there are many desks and chairs in the classroom, they can’t move to the one they want to interview.

On the other hand, in some circumstances whole class and large group activities showed some interactive effectiveness. She explained:

I can manage the students’ activity and control the noise. Students pay more attention to what’s happening in the activity and don’t do anything which does not relate to the lesson.

One of the issues that Binh was most concerned with when deploying whole class and larger group activities was students’ engagement with those activities. Due to different levels of English language competence, some students were less confident to take part in activities and kept silent while others were speaking. She said:

I often let the more competent student work in another pair or group while I’m assisting and explaining the task to the less competent one. Then they will work together later. But sometimes I cannot help all of them.

However, Binh argued that even those who were silent in group activities were also learning while others were doing the tasks. The lesson of Class Observation 9 was an
example. In this lesson, the students were divided into three groups. Each group had a topic: school things, body parts or toys. The students had to write all the words they learned and knew belonging to their topics. One student of each group had to go to the board and write a word as fast as possible. Then that student returned to his/her seat so that another member of the group could go and write another word. It was observable that several students just stayed at their seats and kept silent. Binh stated that these students seemed not to participate in the activity, but they looked at their peers working, listened to their peers, and reviewed the words themselves. It is suggested that these students were, therefore, also learning. It can be argued that these students were actually learning from the class activities. Although they were not engaged in the activities through taking a turn to write on the board, they looked at the words provided on the board carefully and checked them in their textbooks. Some other students were checking their books for the words they thought about.

The class observations in Binh’s class of this cycle showed that L1 use, a non-CLT feature, was dominant in her instruction. Therefore, it was discussed in this recall to understand her perspectives on this issue.

(2) Perspectives on Using L1

L1 is used due to student’s proficiency and the teacher’s lack of confidence in teaching methods

According to Binh, English use in the classroom influenced students’ proficiency, as the classroom was the major environment in which they practised and used English. Nevertheless, Binh reported that, in some cases, English was not effective for instruction. The need for further explanation was a reason that she shared:

Sometimes students don’t understand and can’t follow my instructions. So, I have to transfer them to Vietnamese [...].

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Class management also accounted for Vietnamese use in Binh’s class. She explained:
Simple and short demands such as ‘Close your books!’, ‘Open your books!’, ‘Stand up!’ and ‘Sit down!’, can be effective when the class is silent and disciplined. When they are noisy, I have to use Vietnamese to manage the class because they don’t pay attention to my instruction in English.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Besides giving instructions in Vietnamese, providing and requiring students to write Vietnamese equivalents of English vocabulary were part of Binh’s teaching practice. She reported:

Previously I didn’t require them (students) to write Vietnamese [next to English words], but later I found that some students couldn’t remember what they (English words) mean.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Binh revealed that one of the important reasons of her frequent shifting between English and Vietnamese was her lack of confidence in her teaching methods. Even though she did not think it was effective in supporting students’ learning, she was confused about having a better method. She said:

I don’t know what to do. I may use pictures to explain vocabulary, but this way doesn’t always work because not all words can be demonstrated by pictures, so I have to use Vietnamese.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Moreover, it is apparent that other teachers, especially senior teachers, influenced Binh’s teaching methods as she explained:

I often let my students draw pictures [for the meaning of new vocabulary] in their notebooks, but sometimes I find that other teachers require students to write Vietnamese meanings [...]. So, I also let my students to write Vietnamese meanings on their notebooks.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)

Pressure from students’ parents was another reason for Binh’s teaching methods. She expressed her concern:

Students only remember the meanings of the words when they look at [the pictures] in the textbook, but I’m worried that they wouldn’t remember anything when their parents ask them.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh)
Like Anh, the stimulated recall for this cycle showed that although Binh had changes in her perspectives on language teaching, she was unsure about her teaching methods and maintained confidence by using non-CLT strategies in her teaching.

**Summary**

- Binh shared her concerns about class management for conducting pair and group work in her class. Thus, whole class or larger group activities were preferable, as they were more effective for a big class. However, students’ engagement in these activities was her major concern, and she was unsure how to deal with this issue.

- Binh revealed the reasons she used L1, aside from low proficiency of students, was her lack of confidence in teaching methods. She felt unsure of student’s understandings of the lessons if only L2 was used.

The next section is the Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two with Chau, to investigate her perspectives on interaction, which was the focus of this cycle, and non-CLT aspects which appeared in her teaching practice during the cycle.

4.5.2.3.3. Case Three – Chau

(1) Perspectives on Language Learning

*Pair and group work is ‘good but not the best’ for effective interaction*

During the Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two, Chau emphasized the important role of interaction in her classroom activities. She repeated that, through interaction, not only opportunities for students to practise the language they had learned was enhanced but also students might learn from each other due to peer assistance: ‘Less competent students may ask their peers for explanation when they don’t understand, instead of waiting for the teacher’ (Chau – Field notes). Chau claimed that opportunities for students to interact with each other could be established through pair and group work. She said:

> The teacher should create group activities and introduce structures which students can practise with their peers and later can use outside school time.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

According to Chau, students were more active when they worked in groups or pairs. They were more responsible for their work to complete their tasks. Although she couldn’t
explain clearly and fully about this, Chau stated that, when working in small groups, they were more responsible for their work and free from the teacher’s authority.

While emphasizing the role of pairs, Chau shared that due to the big class size and seating arrangement, only some kinds of pair and group activities were appropriate to be conducted:

Because of the arrangement of students’ desks, it is difficult for them to move around and to sit in groups. Sometimes I let them to work in groups of students of two desks but the space was too narrow to turn around and to put their schoolbags.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

In generally, Chau expressed that she thought pair and group work are ‘good but not the best’ for students’ interaction (Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Binh). She pointed out:

Interaction can be stimulated in whole class activities, when students talk to teacher, when they listen to, answer and ask the teacher.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

Aside from emphasising the role of interaction, Chau reflected on her perspectives on communicative activities conducted to promote interaction. Authenticity, including real material and real-life experiences, were Chau’s strategies to make a lesson more communicative:

I think I should give more situations related to students’ real life so that they can talk about themselves. They can use the language they learn in the lesson they’ve just learned. They can connect their experience with the lesson and they can apply the lesson to their real life. [...] I find that anything connecting to real life often helps students remember easier and longer and engage them much better in the activities.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

Chau also expressed her opinion that students should play a more active role in class activities as well as in learning. Therefore, the teacher should create situations to encourage students’ autonomy in learning:

People learn a second language to communicate […], so the teacher should teach students how to use that language […]. The teacher should have clear requirements and promote the need of communication from students […]. Some students are curious. We teachers can make use of this to build up situations for
students’ communication need. Kids like games, for example, so the teacher can create a ‘selling and buying game’ to encourage them to use the vocabulary they learn in that game.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

Chau claimed that connections between lessons, classroom activities and students’ real-life experiences could make activities more effective:

I found that activities related to real life attract students more and help them to learn better. Otherwise, it takes time and is ineffective.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

This view was reflected in Chau’s comments on the conversation between herself and a student in Extract 4.5.2.3-4 of her lesson in Class Observation 7:

| T – student model | T: Để hỏi xem là những đồ chơi yêu thích của những bạn xung quanh mình là gì thì mình hỏi ‘What’s your favourite toy?’ Để biết xem màu sắc bạn chúng ta yêu thích là gì thì chúng ta nói là ‘your favourite colour’. Vậy bạn thân mình thì như thế nào? Có một bạn dùng lên luyện tập với cô nào. (Trans: To ask about your friends’ favourite toys, you can ask ‘What’s your favourite toy?’ To know what our friends’ favourite colours are, we say ‘What’s your favourite colour?’ Then what about ours? I’ll invite someone to practise with me.). Nhi. What’s your favourite toy?
   S: It’s a teddy.
   T: It’s a
   S: Teddy.
   T: What’s your favourite colour?
   S: It’s pink.
   T: It’s pink. Ask me. Hỏi cô nào.
   S: What’s your favourite toy?
   T: It’s a car.
   S: What’s your favourite colour?
   T: It’s green. |
| T and a student practise the questions written on the board: ‘What’s your favourite toy?’ and ‘What’s your favourite colour?’ |

Châu expressed her opinion about the above stimulated extract:
It is not [an authentic] communication. It’s just a practice of the sentence structure on the board. They (students) just repeat the sentence structure and they don’t have a purpose to communicate.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

Chau suggested that, in order to promote real communication, in this case:

The teacher should let students think about their own favourite things. Then they will ask others and answer others’ questions about what they really like instead of just limit the answers to the vocabulary in their textbook.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

She identified that the pair work following this practice was communicative since she required students to ask their peers, ‘Ask your friends to find whether they and you have the same favourite colour and toy’, as in this extract:

| T set up a situation for pair work activity | T: Bây giờ chúng ta luyện tập như cô và bạn Nhi vừa mới hội nè. Hãy xem bạn mình có thích màu sắc và đồ chơi giống mình không. (Trans: Now we’re going to practise as I and Nhi just did. Ask your friends to find whether they and you have the same favourite colour and toy). Two minutes. Chúng ta có hai phút để hỏi màu sắc và đồ chơi yêu thích của bạn mình là gì (Trans: We have two minutes to find what is your friend’s favourite colour and toys). One, two, three. |

(Extract 4.5.2.3-5, Chau – Class Observation 7)

Chau also suggested another activity she organized for the same lesson in another class in which students had a chance to share their real answers:

I required students to draw a table so that they can ask at least two peers [...]. I found that students could do that successfully and they gave the answers about their real favourite things and colours.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

Class Observation 9 of Chau’s lesson was recalled so that Chau could clarify her opinions on communicative activities.

When commenting on the activity in Class Observation 9 (See Appendix N for the copy of the lesson content), Chau reported that students learned new language through doing.
They learned new vocabulary through listening to and looking at a teacher’s real actions, as in demonstrations of her instructions in making a paper lion. She explained:

> Through real actions such as cutting, sticking and colouring, students learn some new verbs. They associate what they see and what they do with the body parts of a real animal [...].

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

According to Chau, students could understand the language through her actions. She said:

> When I gave the first instruction, ‘colour the face’, I didn’t do the action, so some students didn’t understand what they had to do.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

On the other hand, her instruction was more effective and comprehensible when she was ‘saying and doing at the same time’ (Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau).

While Chau demonstrated that she was developing more understandings of CLT in terms of its aspects including interaction and authenticity, she maintained perspectives on other language teaching aspects that are not CLT such as forms instruction and L1 use.

(2) Perspectives on Teaching Forms

*Explicit instruction is preferable*

An extract of Chau’s lesson in Class Observation 7 was recalled to illicit her perspectives on form instruction:

| T introduces new vocabulary about body parts | T: Now, class, ear.  
SS: Ear.  
T: Point to your ear. Ear.  
SS: Ear.  
T: Ear.  
SS: Ear.  
T: Ears.  
SS: Ears.  
(Extract 4.5.2.3-6, Chau – Observation 7) | T points to one of her ears and SS repeat  
T points to both of her ears and SS repeat |

Interestingly, while the extract above showed Chau’s implicit instruction, she reported that explicit instruction was preferable in her teaching practice:
I think in this situation students understand and find the rule through some examples, then I should explain directly so that they can understand thoroughly. Because adding ‘s’ or not is important for them and they will have to use it very often in the future, explanation at the first time will help them to remember the rule for later use.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

(3) Perspectives on Using L1

L1 facilitates L2 learning but overusing L1hinders L2 learning

On the one hand, Chau stated that students could understand meaning from contexts:

Students may understand through the situations, teacher’s questions and other students’ answers [...]. For example, [in order to introduce the word ‘favourite’], I say ‘I love dogs. My favourite animal is a dog. I love red. My favourite colour is red’. Then they will connect [the meaning of these sentences]. They understand what ‘love’ is, so ‘favourite’ may have similar meaning [...]. They can’t think that ‘favourite’ means ‘dislike’.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

However, Chau also noted that meaning could be understood through teacher’s actions:

[When requiring students to point to their body parts], I let them see me, then I say and act so that they understand what ‘point’ is.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

On the other hand, she recognized that she overused Vietnamese in her lessons:

I find that I often transfer to Vietnamese when it’s not really necessary, overuse it, so students miss chances to listen to and use English. English use in interaction decreases due to language shifting.

(Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Chau)

(4) Play in the classroom

Play can promote interaction and thus generate authenticity

In an informal conversation about teaching, Chau shared how she promoted interaction and authentic communication in a grade four lesson:

Chau: Thỉnh thoảng trong lớp em cũng hay có. Nó diễn ra một cách rất tự nhiên. Hoặc đơn giản chỉ là nghe bạn nói và cười phản ứng lại, e nghị cũng là tương tác. (Trans: Sometimes I allow other students to take part in my conversation
with a student. It takes place very naturally. Or students simply listen to their friends and laugh, I think it’s interaction).

Researcher: Interesting. Sao em cho rằng đó cung là tương tác? (Trans: Why do you think it’s interaction?).

Chau: Vì hiểu bạn nói gì thì mình mới cười. Thấy bạn cười chuyện mình đang nói, mình cũng ngầm hiểu là bạn đang nghe. (Trans: They understand what their friends say, so they laugh. The speaker sees that his friend is laughing, so he knows that they are listening to him).

Researcher: Em có nhớ được trường hợp cụ thể nào diễn ra như thế không? (Trans: Do you remember any situation like that?).

Chau: Ví dụ ‘What food do you like’? Da sờ đều trả lời về ‘food’ đã học. Riêng một em nói ‘I like dog’. Cả lớp cười ầm lên. Em đó định chính thêm ‘dog meat’. Lớp không cười nữa, một vài em nhận mặt, không đồng ý, nói chen vào ‘No, I like dogs’. Ban đầu các bạn hiểu nhầm em đó để lạc đề qua ‘animals’ nên cười. (Trans: For example, ‘What food do you like?’ Most students answered with food they learned. Only one student said, ‘I like dog’. All students laughed. That student added ‘dog meat’. The students didn’t laugh anymore, some students frowned, showing that they didn’t agree. They said, ‘No, I like dogs’. At first they misunderstood that the student talked about the topic ‘animals’ and they laughed).

(Chau –Field notes)

Summary

- Chau focused on students’ autonomy when they work in pairs and small groups. As students were free from the teacher’s authority, they had more opportunities to practise, talk and learn from their peers. However, Chau argued that pair and group work was not the best for students’ interaction. Their engagement in interaction could be most effective when activities related to their real-life experience and interest, even when these were whole class activities.

- Chau considered modelling combined with using the target language for instruction as an effective method in her teaching.

- Explicit forms teaching was maintained in Chau’s perspective on language teaching.

- Identifying L1 use was necessary for low-proficiency students; Chau was also concerned that overuse of L1 would limit students’ interaction in L2.

- Chau believed that interaction and authenticity could be enhanced through play.
The Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two found that there were important changes and development in the three teacher-participants’ understandings of and perspectives on CLT, especially in the focus of the cycle: interaction and authentic activities. However, non-CLT orientations remained a dominant part of their perspectives on language teaching. This hybrid orientation of these teachers’ perspectives and practices will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

4.5.2.4. Group Meeting Three: Group Meeting – Teacher Reflections

Meeting Three was the last meeting of the research fieldwork, and took place after the class observations of Action Research Cycle Two finished. The purpose of this meeting was for the researcher and the teacher-participants to evaluate how the plans of Cycle Two were implemented and the effectiveness of this cycle. Table 4.10 summarises the meeting content.

Table 4.10: Summary of Group Meeting Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Discussion Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04th November 2013</td>
<td>Researcher 3 teachers: Anh, Binh and Chau</td>
<td>Evaluating the Action Research Cycle One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus: Improving students’ interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan: Creating more activities that enhance students’ interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this meeting, some parts of the lessons recorded from the three teachers’ classes were recalled. The teachers saw video clips of their classes and discussed them. They interpreted the methods used, commented on each others’ lessons, and suggested resolutions to problems.

The first concern of the teachers was the possibility of group and pair activities in their classes. The obstacles they suggested included noise and class management resulting from activities in a big class. All three teachers, however, decided that group and pair work could be conducted in their classes, agreeing that the benefits of these activities would outweigh the problems. They maintained that working in groups and pairs would enhance students’ opportunities to practise and use the new language. Students would
have more time to practice the new language. Every student would have a chance to speak, instead of only the ones who volunteered or were called by the teacher. The teachers recognised the role of a teacher should not always be the conductor and the authority in the classroom; instead, students should be given more power to have more autonomy in their learning.

The next part of the meeting focussed on recalling individual teachers’ lessons. The videos of these lessons were shown, and Chau’s lesson was discussed first. In this lesson, the students learned a poem and then answered the teacher’s comprehension questions. The class was divided into three groups according to their seating rows. This extract was a part of Chau’s lesson and chosen to be discussed in the meeting. The teachers were asked to give comments about the way Chau implemented group work and its effectiveness:

| Teacher gives instruction for the activity. | T: Close your book. I will give you some questions. Cố sê cho chúng ta câu hỏi hay. Và bạn nào biết câu trả lời sẽ nói 'Bingo!'. Bạn nào biết câu trả lời thì kêu ‘Bingo!’ và đứng lên trả lời hay. Bạn nào, nhóm nào trả lời chính xác sẽ get ten marks (Trans: I will ask you some questions. And if you know the answer, you will say ‘Bingo!’). Say ‘Bingo!’ if you can answer and stand up to answer. You’ll get ten marks if you can answer correctly). Close your books! | SS are divided into three groups. After T asks a question, SS of the groups say ‘Bingo!’ as fast as possible if they can answer. The student saying ‘Bingo!’ first will represent his/her group to answer the question. |
| Teacher asks question one – Student answers the question. | T: What’s his name? What’s his name? Bình thường mình nghe là ‘What’s your name?’ (Trans: Normally we hear ‘What’s your name?’). What’s his name? Thằng. What’s his name? What his name? S1: (inaudible) T: One, two, three S1: Tom T: Nói lớn lên nào. (Trans: Speak loudly) S1: Tom. | One student answers on behalf of his group while remaining students keep silent and listen. |
| Teacher checks the answer. | T: Tom. Yes or no, class? SS: Yeah. T: Vây thì ten marks thuộc về ai nhỉ? (Trans: Which group gets ten marks?). Group (pause) SS: Group three T: Group three. Ten marks. | Some students say ‘Yeah’, the others look very unsure. |
**T asks question two - Student answers the question.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>How old is he?</td>
<td>Minh answers on behalf of his group, while remaining students keep silent and listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:</td>
<td>Bingo!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Minh.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:</td>
<td>He seven old.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>What? He’s (pauses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:</td>
<td>He’s seven years old.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>He’s seven years old. Yes or no, class?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher checks the answer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>He’s seven years old. Yes or no, class?</td>
<td>Some students answer, ‘Yes’, while the others were silent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**T asks question three - Student answers the question.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Number three, câu hỏi số ba. Try your best! Group one, Try your best! Tom’s favourite toy is a car. Yes or no?</td>
<td>Minh and only one more student of his group say ‘Bingo’ and raise hands for the answer, but Minh says ‘Bingo’ first and he is called.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:</td>
<td>Bingo!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Minh. Bạn Minh rất là nhanh tay. Chúng ta có gang phat huy he. (Trans: Minh is very quick. You should be quick like him)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2:</td>
<td>Đã thưa cô, no, it isn’t. (Trans: Teacher, no, it isn’t)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher checks the answer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>No. Yes or no, class? Tom’s favourite toy is a car. Yes or no?</td>
<td>Most students are unsure and keep silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Extract 4.5.2.4, Chau – Class Observation 6)

The teachers had two comments with respect to this activity. Firstly, they indicated that this was actually individual work, because only some students could answer the questions while the others just waited and listened. The teachers suggested that this could be because students were probably not able to follow the teacher’s questions. Secondly, the teachers claimed that in terms of improving interaction between students, this activity was not effective as students did not have a chance to discuss the answers with each other.

The next lesson recalled in this meeting was Binh’s lesson observed of Observation 9. The students in this lesson were required to work in groups of six to do a jumble-word exercise. The students had to put the words in correct order. Binh explained that she divided the class into groups so that students could assist each other to complete the task. This group work was followed by an activity in which the students introduced themselves based on the sentences they had just reordered. Other teachers commented that this exercise was mainly to review and practise the language learned previously. They indicated that students needed more freedom to make their own sentences to talk about themselves rather than just replacing words in the exercise.
Lastly, the lesson of Anh’s class of Observation 6 was recalled and discussed. The students in this lesson worked in groups of five or six, completing diagrams with vocabulary of different topics they had learned. This activity was followed up by an activity in which the students of each group asked each other questions related to their topic and answered the questions. Anh explained that the target of this lesson was to review the previous lessons. She organised group work activities for this lesson so that students might support each other while they were working. They also learned new vocabulary from each other; and when they answered the questions in the later activity, they were free to give their own information. The other two teachers agreed with Anh that, in the second activity, the students had more chance to speak freely.

In general, after two Action Research cycles, the teacher participants had made changes to their understandings of CLT as well as language learning and teaching. They highlighted authenticity not only of materials but also of communication within interaction when they indicated that students should be given opportunities for real communication and exchanging their experiences in class activities.

4.6. Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the major findings in terms of teachers’ practices and understandings of CLT through their implementation in the MOET’s project of teaching English for elementary students in Viet Nam. The findings mainly derive from interviews with the teacher participants, the class observations, the stimulated recall sessions, and the meetings with the group of the teachers.

The data from the initial interviews, which were conducted before the Action Research Cycles, revealed that the teachers had limited understanding and knowledge of CLT. This lack of understanding of CLT might result from lack of teaching experience, insufficient pedagogical knowledge, and lack of support for professional development in CLT. The teachers reported that their teaching practices were mostly based on their understandings of language teaching and learning perceived from their own language learning background, and from senior colleagues sharing their teaching experiences.

The data from class observations and stimulated recalls during and after two Action Research Cycles indicated that the teachers had developed understandings of CLT while retaining non-CLT oriented perspectives of language learning and teaching. They not
only implemented CLT in their classrooms but utilised a combination of various teaching methods including both CLT-oriented and non-CLT-orientated approaches. Figure 4.2 demonstrates the teaching methods used.

Figure 4.2: Combination of the teachers’ practices

The combination of the teachers’ practices is summarized in Table 4.11 below.

On the one hand, the evidence from the data revealed that non-CLT-oriented approaches were practised in these teacher participants’ lessons, reflecting their understandings of and perspectives on English language teaching. Direct instruction was provided to make the lessons understandable and accessible. Activities such as models and drills were still dominant in the classroom. These non-communicative activities were deployed as preparation for students prior to more productive and communicative activities. The observations also showed that forms-focused instruction was significant in the teaching practices. Forms were the focus of the lessons, and other elements were dependent on them. Mistakes were corrected explicitly when they occurred, to avoid the possibility of their repetition in the future. Teachers in these activities played the role of a model and an expert, while students followed and copied their actions. In addition, although all three teachers stated that English should be maximized in the classroom, it was observed in the teachers’ practices that Vietnamese was useful for lesson regulation, instruction and clarification, if used judiciously.

Table 4.11: Summary of findings from class observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLT oriented approach</th>
<th>Non-CLT oriented approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative activities were conducted to engaged students in authentic communication</td>
<td>Models and drills were practised prior to productive activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language was used through interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the other hand, the teachers developed their understandings of language teaching and learning as well as CLT in terms of the two focuses of the Action Research: authenticity and interaction. Learning through using the language means language teaching should promote students’ needs to communicate. As a result, the term ‘authenticity’ not only meant real objects but also authentic communication that could be developed through communicative classroom and imagined real-world activities. Although communicative activities were not frequently observed, the data from stimulated recalls and group meetings revealed that the teachers, to some extent, were aware of raising situations in which authentic communications could take place.

The data also showed the teachers’ practices and the underlying perspectives on interaction that were focused upon in the Action Research Cycle Two. The teachers had similar views of interaction, that it promoted learning through peer assistance and collaboration. Pair and group work was stated to be preferable for enhancing interaction, as it maximized students’ opportunities to practise English through providing more freedom to talk. Interestingly, while values such as choice, independence, freedom, privacy and equality underlie pair and group work, they seemed not always to work in this context as the teachers revealed, for example, that students were not allowed to ‘find a partner’ (Sullivan, 2000, p. 118) but worked with the partners the teacher nominated for them.

The next chapter will provide detailed discussions of the findings presented in this chapter, by directly answering the research questions addressed in the beginning of this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiar information related to the lessons was used to demonstrate meaning</th>
<th>Direct instruction was provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language features were used in meaningful and communicative activities</td>
<td>Forms were focused and explicitly introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistakes were implicitly corrected in some situations to maintain fluency</td>
<td>Mistakes were explicitly corrected to build up accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher played the role of a facilitator and co-communicator, students were free from teacher’s control and used English for meaningful and communicative activities</td>
<td>Teacher played the role of a model and an expert who controlled class activities; students followed and imitated teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 was used to facilitate instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the key findings with reference to the research questions, with results discussed in relation to previous research studies. Section 5.2 explores the MOET’s program and the impact of Action Research within the present study. Section 5.3 considers participant teachers’ understandings of CLT and their classroom practices, which appear to reflect a combination of both CLT and non-CLT approaches. Section 5.4 suggests how CLT can be adapted in the socio-cultural context of Vietnam and also draws together the previous discussion to respond to the main research question:

*How is CLT implemented in the MOET program of ELT in Vietnamese primary schools?*

This question concerns teachers’ understandings of the nature of language learning and teaching and their roles in the classroom using the teaching methodology required by the MOET: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

As previously mentioned, each of the three teacher participants highlighted their lack of knowledge regarding the precepts underpinning CLT. They revealed that neither the pedagogical course at their teacher training college nor the workshops sponsored by the MOET provided them with any theoretical or practical knowledge concerning CLT. This lack of understanding with respect to the principles of CLT was explored in depth during the interviews and stimulated recalls. During this process, teachers’ views on CLT were expanded upon and further developed in response to a CLT orientation session presented by the researcher and via the activities advanced through the Action Research Cycles.

In addition, the teaching practices of each participant throughout the Action Research process served to reflect their understandings of, and perspectives on, language learning and teaching as well as particular principles of CLT. These practices included both CLT and non-CLT oriented approaches.

The following section will discuss the teachers’ perspectives on the nature of English language learning and teaching, their improvement in understandings of CLT, and class observations reflecting this change.
5.2. The MOET’s Program and the Impacts of Action Research

As introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, the MOET’s program of teaching English for students of primary schools is a part of the Government’s project, ‘Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national educational system period 2008 – 2020’ (2008), with English specified as the main foreign language. The aim of this project is to ‘innovate teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system’ and ‘to enable most Vietnamese graduates to communicate in an integrating environment by 2020’ (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ, 2008, p. 1) (Trans: Prime Minister 2008). In order to attain this aim, the MOET requires CLT to be used as the main teaching approach in the program (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b).

It is interesting to note that this is not the first time that CLT has been officially introduced into Vietnamese schools. As early as 2006, CLT was identified as a requirement to support the implementation of an English language curriculum for secondary schools (Le, 2011). A number of studies related to the implementation of the new teaching approach required for this curriculum followed. These studies found that the implementation was problematic, as teachers maintained traditional teaching methods and techniques such as teacher-fronted models and focus on forms instruction (Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen, 2011a; Tran, 2015). One of the most important reasons identified for the problems in implementation has concerned the teachers’ lack of language proficiency and pedagogical knowledge. To support the teachers of the program, the MOET conducted short-term training courses and workshops for teachers’ professional development. However, research indicates that the effectiveness of this support addressing change in their teaching practices has required further evaluation (Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2011a). Data from the interviews and stimulated recall sessions in the present study revealed that not all teachers who took part in the MOET program could access these courses and workshops, with only key teachers in each town being provided with these opportunities. Once these key teachers had completed the MOET workshops, they returned home to run similar workshops to professionally develop their colleagues, with the support of their local department of education and training. These workshops, conducted in the form of model lessons, did not always address the needs of individual classroom teachers, due to them not reflecting their classroom reality in terms of student numbers, proficiency levels, or teaching equipment. The size of the MOET model classroom is often idealised as having
16 students, while actual elementary classroom sizes range from 30-40 students. The students in each model classroom are the highest achieving students selected from a local school. The model classrooms themselves are also much better equipped than standard classrooms, with audio-visual materials, while in reality teachers in many schools have to teach with only flashcards and textbooks.

Moreover, opportunities for teachers to share experiences with colleagues within and outside these workshops was limited. As the teachers in the present study revealed, the ‘model lessons’ presented did not adequately reflect CLT practice, with the model teachers presenting lessons that primarily depended on the textbook. The model teachers also used drills for vocabulary presentation and focused on linguistic forms. This type of professional support may partly explain why the teachers in the present study identified a lack of clarity and confusion concerning their knowledge of the principles of CLT.

As teachers play a key role in teaching, it is argued that they must be ‘in the best position to engage in inquiry about their practice’ (Klein & Palgrave, 2012, p. 3). The Action Research conducted in support of the present study enabled participant teachers to investigate their own practices and construct new knowledge of language teaching and learning while increasing their understandings of CLT. It is argued that the teachers in the present study, after two cycles of Action Research, like the teacher in Zheng and Adamson’s study (2003, p. 335), expanded their ‘repertoire rather than rejecting previous approaches’.

It is apparent that the Action Research Cycles and the focus on CLT stimulated the teachers’ re-examination of their own understandings and practices of second language learning and teaching. Their perspectives and teaching practices did not necessarily reflect a CLT approach but demonstrated a wider view of second language teaching. CLT, instead, acted as a catalyst, promoted by the Action Research component of the present study, to encourage them to reflect on their teaching (Pickford, 2016). CLT discussions triggered teachers’ adjustment of their teaching practices that included a more communicative orientation. The practices of the teachers in the present study were closer to Hymes’s notion of communicative competence than that which has become known as CLT (Leung, 2005). Strategies to improve the communicative environment included: mixing L1 and L2 with a gradual increase of L2; narrowing the social distance between teacher and students; creating a friendly classroom atmosphere; and combining CLT and
non-CLT teaching techniques, providing a broader definition of communication competence, authenticity and interaction. Students did not merely learn English sentences, but were given opportunities to use the language appropriately in the classroom context in addition to learning how to use L2 in potential situations in their real life. They learned in interaction how to achieve successful communication in L2 in an L1 social and cultural context, as well as learning English.

The changes in teachers’ perspectives on language teaching and learning, their understandings of CLT, and their reflections on teachers’ practices, will be discussed in detail in the next sections.

5.3. Teachers’ Understandings of CLT and Their Practices

5.3.1. Combination of CLT and Non-CLT Practices

With respect to the data collected via interviews and stimulated recall sessions, it was apparent that the teacher participants’ views on teaching and learning English were a hybrid of both CLT-oriented and non-CLT oriented approaches.

5.3.1.1. Form Instruction

CLT theories view knowledge of grammar as an aspect of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983b; Savignon, 2002) that should be taught implicitly, as it arises in context, rather than intentionally and decontextually taught, as is more common in traditional language teaching methods. Long (1991) distinguished between two types of grammar instruction: ‘focus on form’ and ‘focus on forms’. A ‘focus on form’ occurs in order to ‘draw students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication’ (Long, 1991, p. 46); whereas a ‘focus on forms’ draws students’ attention to pre-selected forms which are isolated from the communicative context. With respect to the preceding principles, it is possible to identify that, in the main, teachers in the present study viewed the nature of language learning and teaching as requiring a ‘focus on forms’ approach, and therefore their teaching approach was not indicative of the dominant CLT approach of ‘focus on form’ (Ellis, 2008a).
In the teachers’ view, English is a subject to be studied, strictly following the school syllabus and completing lessons in the textbook as the primary target of their teaching. They also believed that English lessons should provide language knowledge comprising a set of grammar structures and lexical items. They argued that these features of language should be presented and practiced so that students could understand them before using them in communicative activities. This finding is comparable to those of previous studies of English language teaching in Vietnam and other countries in similar contexts (e.g., Andrews, 2003; Le, 2011; 2013; Nishino, 2009; Sato & Ballinger, 2016; Shihiba, 2011; Tran, 2015; Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012; Xiaohong, 2009). Standing in contrast to this view is an underlying precept of CLT that communication is a primary focus and that grammar will be acquired in the context of communication activities (Nunan, 1987; Nunan & Bailey, 2009). In the present study, however, there was ample evidence that grammar-based instruction dominated in the teacher participants’ views of English language teaching and learning. For example, Anh stated that she liked to teach grammar because it helped students to understand what to say, and how to say and apply it correctly. Anh and the other two teachers tended to believe that it was necessary to explicitly provide students with language structures first to enable them to produce the language in the context of themes that were being developed in each unit. Similarly, they believed that vocabulary should be pre-taught for text comprehension. This belief was shared by the teachers in previous research in Vietnam, such as that reported by Nguyen (2013). The teachers’ forms-focused orientation can be explained by the fact that these teachers had limited opportunities to experience other ways of second language learning and teaching. They weren’t provided with broad theoretical or practical foundations in second language teaching and learning during training courses at college, and lacked opportunities to attend professional development workshops organised by the MOET. Their teaching practices were mainly based on their own experiences as second language teachers and learners, and teaching experiences shared by colleagues.

The teachers’ views of forms instruction in the present study developed during the Action Research cycles and were more closely communicative-oriented, as shown in their practices and noted when comparing stimulated recall sessions with their initial interview responses. It should be noted that while in the initial interviews, the teachers demonstrated little understanding about CLT-oriented instruction, evidence from the study indicated that, during the Action Research, unlike traditional forms-focused instruction based on
grammar rule explanation, the focus-on-forms instruction the teacher participants practiced emphasized language functions. Language forms taught in these classrooms were used in real-life situations. As Anh shared in the stimulated recall session for Cycle Two, after students learned the structure, ‘Is this your…?’, they could use this structure appropriately in everyday classroom activities: as when a student helped the teacher to return unlabelled/unnamed workbooks after marking, or when they saw a schoolbag on the floor. In addition, in spite of a ‘focus-on-forms’ orientation in the teachers’ teaching views and practices, communicative activities were created and inserted within lessons, while forms were presented mainly with reference to the textbook content and themes. As Anh and Chau claimed in the stimulated recall sessions, creating a need to communicate was crucial for language learning, arguing that communication needs were crucial for authenticity to occur in the classroom. Anh, for example, in the Extract 4.5.1.2-19, exploited the structure, ‘Is this your …’, in a grammar lesson that she had just taught, when she wanted to return school things to her students. In this instance, even though the question was repeated until Anh found the owner of the ruler, and although it sounded like drilling, this form-driven and form-led communication between teacher and students was ‘authentic’, as both questioner and answerers wanted to return and receive the correct items.

As teaching elementary students differs from teaching older students and adults (Brown, 2007; Pinter, 2006), the teachers believed that grammar forms should not be explained, as young children would not be interested in or understand metalinguistic explanations and technical terms. Ensuring that structures were supported through examples and teacher and student modelling, Binh, for instance, claimed that metalinguistic explanations were boring and inappropriate when teaching young children. This appears to support Pinter’s (2006, p. 84) idea that ‘young children are not ready for or interested in thinking about the language system or manipulating the language’. Children are curious and need frequent changes of activities, rather than being expected to just ‘sit and listen’ (Binh, Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two). Children are eager to use language to play games, role-play or sing songs (Pinter, 2006); and the teachers in the present study also identified these types of activities as preferable ways to recycle grammatical forms and previously taught vocabulary.
Play as a mediator of forms ‘contains an imaginary situation in a concealed form’ (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 96). During play, children’s imagination is fostered, helping them to decode and encode vocabulary and language structures used in these activities. Before singing a song, for example, the children in the present study were asked to suggest actions illustrating the song, and then act while singing, thus ensuring that forms were taught implicitly rather than explicitly. Furthermore, as Vygotsky (1978) suggests, ‘play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviours; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself’ (p. 102). For instance, as the teachers shared, when playing in groups children learned to collaborate with their peers, and learned to respect and listen to them in order to win the games; and via this process, they also learned the language. Similarly, taking up roles through acting can shape children beyond their current position. Children not only copy and imitate the language designed in a play but they also use the language creatively and imaginatively, as Anh shared in the Initial Interview. Language play is not only identified as a mediator of language learning but also as an ‘end’ of language learning (Cook, 2000). It is suggested that, although the teachers in the present study practiced teaching forms rather than form, a variety of practices that interested and engaged students in participating in the activities engaged them in learning forms, and thus could be considered to be an effective teaching approach.

In terms of correction of language forms, while proponents of CLT see learner errors as part of the learning process (Brumfit, 1984; Krashen, 1982), the teacher participants in the present study strongly believed that errors and mistakes should be corrected immediately in order that they would not be repeated. Thus, error correction was observed frequently in the classroom. The teachers usually corrected students’ errors when possible, either explicitly or implicitly. However, it is interesting to note that, although Anh agreed that mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible to avoid bad habits, she also recognised that mistakes were part of learning and encouraged students to use English in communication without being afraid of making mistakes. This view by Anh appears to contradict the perspectives of the Vietnamese teachers in Barnard and Nguyen’s study (2010) and Nguyen’s study (2013), who viewed students’ mistakes as ‘a failure of the learning process’ (Nguyen, 2013, p. 277). In addition, two of the teachers in the present study, Anh and Chau, stated that they would ignore students’ mistakes or hesitate to correct them if this might interrupt students while they were talking and serve
to demotivate them to talk later. This view was reflected in their practice, when in most cases the teachers selectively corrected students’ errors as they appeared only in drills or written work. Binh added that she organized games for students to practice the target language, and believed that error correction in play would not make students anxious. She explained that, during the games, errors were considered as part of the game, which helped to identify winners, not as an individual student’s learning problem. It could be argued that these correction strategies closely align with that suggested in CLT, since they did not interrupt the flow of communication (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004) and the focus was on ‘meaning’ rather than ‘form’. It is noted that this view of corrective feedback was developed during the Action Research component of the study, as Chau admitted that, previously, before the Action Research cycles, she almost always corrected students’ mistakes as soon as they were made. These perspectives and practices on error correction obviously contrasted with the observations about forms teaching mentioned above, indicating the teachers’ judgment of which teaching strategies to use, either CLT or non-CLT strategies.

I argue that Action Research cycles open the door for the change of the teachers’ perspectives and practices through providing the teachers with the tools to explore the nature of language teaching and learning. Originally, their teaching primarily focused on the content of the textbook and the aim of their teaching was to complete that content. During and after Action Research, they had gained more insights of teaching and learning as a process. The teachers developed deeper understandings of the way language was learned and tried out innovations in their practices. Therefore, it could be argued that Action Research reveals the details of teaching and learning processes and therefore creates an awareness in the mind of the teacher of where, when and what to change in their teaching to support more successful learning – this is adopting a “process” perspective. Without that perspective teachers may never improve on what they are doing and blame learners for any learning failures, rather than looking at their own practices (Pickford, 2018).

5.3.1.2. Teacher-directed teaching

The class observation data also revealed that teacher-directed teaching was dominant in classroom activities, with teachers controlling the majority of the activities. They were the experts and the primary source of the target language, and interaction between the
teacher and individual students or between the teacher and whole class appeared more prominent than student-to-student interaction. The teachers’ reluctance to conduct more student-centred activities was reportedly due to contextual constraints such as classroom management, and personal factors such as the teachers’ personality (e.g. Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Nishino, 2009; Perera, 2001). Unlike the learners in other studies conducted in Vietnam who were teenagers or adults with several years of English learning experience, the learners in the present study were young children just beginning their study of English. They had no experience of working in pairs and groups either in the English classroom or in other subject classes. These factors contributed to the teachers in the present study maintaining teacher-directed teaching as their dominant model, because they had to do both jobs: teaching a new language, a new subject; and building up new classroom routines for the students.

The dominant role of teachers in the present study was that of transmitters of knowledge, while learners were positioned as acquirers of knowledge (Gibbons, 2006). The teachers appeared to believe that they should model the use of linguistic components before letting learners practice these in controlled activities. It should also be noted that, as students of the present study had very few opportunities to access English outside the classroom, they required repetition to remember words and how those words could be used in sentences. Brandl (2008, p. 182) states that the ‘advantage of repetition is that it helps with freeing up memory’, and ‘learners need many opportunities for retrials, which makes the strategy of task recycling necessary’. Thus, non-CLT techniques such as modelling and drilling were observed to be dominant learning support activities in the classrooms of the present study.

As Sullivan (2000) argues, the teacher-directed model does not conflict with CLT, and it does not mean that authentic communication in the target language cannot take place within this type of classroom. The data from class observations demonstrated that the teachers could stimulate authentic communication instances during language practice. Extract 4.5.1.2-57 is an example, where teacher and students talked about the colour of a pencil. The students participated in the conversation to argue and reach an agreement with the teacher about the pencil colour.

Anh and Chau, the teachers in the two extracts above (Extract 4.5.1.2-19 and Extract 4.5.1.2-57), exploited situations in the classroom to stimulate the interaction of students
and develop authentic forms of communication and participation that, in turn, promoted authenticity in the classroom. Breen and Candlin (1980, p. 98) have similarly claimed:

The classroom itself is a unique social environment with its own human activities and its own conventions governing these activities. It is an environment where a particular social-psychological and cultural reality is constructed. This uniqueness and this reality imply a communicative potential to be exploited, rather than constraints which have to be overcome or compensated for.

5.3.1.3. The role of L1 in the classroom

In addition to the non-CLT elements discussed above, L1 use in the teacher’s instruction was observed to be dominant in the classroom. As mentioned in Chapter 4, L1 was used for various purposes in classroom activities. While there is little advocacy within CLT theory with respect to the use of L1 (Atkinson, 1993; Cook, 2001; Nunan, 2004; Swan, 1985), it is hard to be persuaded that, in monolingual classrooms where all students and teachers share the same first language, as in the classrooms in the present study, L2 should be the only effective language to negotiate for meaning (Littlewood, 1981). As the teachers explained in the interviews and stimulated recall sessions, L1 use was necessary for effective L2 introduction, and the amount of L2 use should increase gradually. They gradually increased L2 use in their classroom for instructions and other types of communication such as discipline management. This gradual increase in L2 use, as Anh revealed, was to ‘avoid students’ shock from exposure to too much English’ before they were ready. Chau also shared her concerns as she observed that sometimes students ‘avoided her eyes’ and ‘pretended to do other business’ when she used L2. Through repeatedly using both L1 and L2 for instructions and requests initially, they gave students time to become familiar with the new language, then gradually decreased the use of L1 once students were used to these instructions and requests.

It was observed that, in the present study, L1 was used to stimulate and maintain interaction, as it promoted communication exchanges (Hall & Cook, 2012; Cook, 2001). The use of L1 then enabled conversational authenticity to exist and develop in the classroom, contributing to increasing L2 use. Thus, in the present study, L1 should be considered as a bridge or a tool rather than an obstacle in the L2 teaching and learning process (DiCamilla & Antón, 2012; Hall & Cook, 2012). The role of L1 in promoting authenticity and interaction will be discussed in detail in the next sections.
5.3.2. Teachers’ Understandings and Practices of Authenticity

The advocates of CLT emphasize language use in context, i.e. purposeful language use rather than simply the practice of language forms. Since a CLT focus is authenticity, which refers to genuine language use rather than simply a focus on grammatical rules (Lightbown, 2000), the use of authentic materials is desirable in order to promote authentic language use. It is noted that the CLT literature identifies authentic materials in terms of authentic texts with a requisite condition to increase communication (e.g., Brandl, 2008; Harmer, 1991; Morrow, 1977; Nunan, 1989; Rogers & Medley Jr., 1988). However, arguments about authenticity and appropriateness of authentic materials have arisen. Doughty and Long (2003) argue that such texts are produced for and by native speakers, so they are often too difficult for L2 learners to understand, requiring explicit metalinguistic explanation to assist comprehensibility. This factor was the case for the young beginning learners in the present study. These students were at the very early stages of English learning and had limited English knowledge to support their understanding of even simple texts or to communicate in this language. Due to this, as Anh revealed, it was difficult for her to find a text that was appropriate for her students’ level. Chau also shared similar experiences, that at times it was hard to select appropriate L2 words for her instructions because of the students’ young age and their level of L2.

Breen (1985) earlier argued, however, that ‘any text is potentially authentic to the learner... we should be willing to welcome into the classroom any text which will serve the primary purpose of helping the learner to develop authentic interpretations’. Nevertheless, Widdowson (1996) later stated that language in a text that is appropriate in one context can be inappropriate in another context. That is, English used in a text made by and for English native speakers may be real for them but may be unreal for learners of different communities, due to lack of appropriate contextual conditions. Both Breen and Widdowson make the point that authenticity is ‘not primarily as a product, or a property of language or even language use, but rather a process of validation, or authentication’ (Van Lier, 1996, p. 127). This indicates that genuine texts themselves cannot create authenticity; rather, authenticity should be created through meaningful social processes. In the context of a language classroom, the participants may authenticate available materials and resources through meaningful interaction. Therefore, authenticity can be gained, even in a grammar-based classroom (Van Lier, 1996).
material, participants and context in the process of authentication can be demonstrated as in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Authentication process**

In the context of the present study, the teachers developed strategies for authentication with the use of both L1 and L2 as mediators of communication when the participants interacted in classroom situations. The situations created were relevant to students’ background and experience as well as their interests, which promoted their engagement in communication. Students’ engagement in communication was also stimulated through the use of objects easily found in their real life. This situated authentication can be illustrated as in Figure 5.2.
Figure 5.2: Teachers’ strategies for authentication

As mentioned above, genuine materials do not guarantee authenticity in the language classroom and are not inherently effective in language teaching and learning. On the other hand, while using textbooks as the primary material, the teachers in the present study took advantage of other types of materials for authentication. They suggested that young students were interested in materials that they could see, touch and feel, and would learn better with the use of these materials. Thus, real objects relevant to the topics could be employed. Decades ago, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) noted that real objects might serve to effectively enable students to use target language terms for concrete items in real communicative exchanges. The teachers used real objects that were familiar to students, such as their school things and toys, to demonstrate the meanings of new vocabulary and sentence structures or to review these words and structures in language games.

The teachers indicated that they also used familiar objects to create communicative contexts and hence stimulate communications. Binh shared that she allowed students to use their own toys and school things when they role-played, and that this engaged them in the roles they were performing. This use of familiar objects assisted students to contextualize concepts in authentic communication. For instance, when Anh returned the school things to students in Extract 4.5.1.2-19, these school things were central to the context for communication between the teacher and the students. The use of familiar real objects was helpful in Chau’s teaching context, where accessing materials and equipment
provided by the MOET was limited. While Anh’s and Binh’s teaching was aided with some resources relevant to the textbook and technical equipment such as iTools, CD-ROM and television, the visual aids Chau could use were limited to the textbook and flashcards, because her school did not have a room equipped for English teaching. Therefore, real items related to lesson topics enriched her lessons and contributed to the effectiveness of her teaching (Chau, Field notes). Although the use of real objects may be limited, as language does not always present concrete items, as Anh stated, it is argued that realia can construct foundations for further learning.

However, it is inadequate to propose that the use of a real object alone could be effective for authentication. It is noted that L1 played an important role in fostering social interaction and thus interactional authenticity in the classroom. L1 was also used to authenticate the items in the textbook, as it was a bridge connecting the meaning of texts in L2 with learners’ knowledge, thus making the texts understandable. It was an efficient way for the teacher to explain new vocabulary and structures that students encountered in the texts. Cook (2016) presents two ways of how an L2 word may be conceptualized for instruction. The word links to the object it refers to and directly links to the concept; or it indirectly connects to the concept via the L1 medium. The teachers in the present study also used L1 as a tool to mediate L2 vocabulary access to the concept when they presented new vocabulary. They explained that L1 use in this early stage of learning English, along with showing familiar real objects, was helpful, because: initially, students needed to understand exactly what the act of showing the real objects meant; they needed to know what L2 words and their equivalent L1 words were in order to write them in their notebooks; and it was the simplest and shortest way to explain an L2 word in case a real object to demonstrate it was not available. Similarly, L1 use was necessary to facilitate the teachers’ instructions. In order to give an instruction for a language game, for example, the teachers used both L1 and L2 to make this comprehensible. As stated above, the use of L1 in a thematic unit gradually decreased, while the use of L2 gradually increased once students were more acquainted with L2. However, it is observed that, when a new theme was introduced, the use of L1 was likely to rise. This suggests a more complex picture of L1 use than simply one of an ever-increasing use of L2 and reduction of L1.
Learning English in a context where it is not used in everyday activities and communication meant that the students in the present study did not have access to English registers outside the classroom, which access is often considered as a crucial factor in language learning (Brandl, 2008) and communicative competence. Therefore, the teachers in the present study believed that authenticity was important in their teaching process and should be created within the classroom. Compared to the teachers’ understandings of CLT and its characteristics at the beginning of the study, there was ample evidence of the development in the teachers’ understanding of authenticity during the Action Research process. It is argued in the present study that authenticity in the teachers’ understandings and practices diverges from the definition of authenticity in CLT; and authenticity as acknowledged and practiced by the teachers in the present study, as discussed above, is a synthesis of different types of authenticity, under what van Compernolle and McGregor (2016) refer to as authenticity of correspondence and authenticity of genesis. ‘Authenticity of correspondence’ is the view that what is considered to be authentic language conforms to a particular standard of language use, as is often expected in language textbooks where ‘native language’ by ‘native language speakers’ provides models for authentic language. It is argued here that this alone cannot be sufficient and be applied to a classroom in a context such as Vietnam, where English is not an everyday language. ‘Authenticity of genesis’ refers to the view that language can be authentic even when differing from language norms, as in classroom learner language. It is argued in the present study that authenticity can be seen as a unification of: ‘text authenticity’, that is, materials that correspond to real world language use; ‘learner authenticity’, which refers to learners’ appropriate responses to teacher’s instructions, texts and realia; ‘competence authenticity’, that is, competence to use a language correctly and appropriately in particular sociocultural contexts; and ‘classroom authenticity’, which means language used in the classroom within the conditions provided for language use (MacDonald et al., 2006).

In tandem with an initial, limited understanding of CLT, teacher respondents also had little understanding with respect to the value of using authentic materials in classroom practice. This lack of knowledge concerning pedagogical issues and theories of CLT by the teachers participating in the present study was a matter that Vietnamese teachers have discussed in previous studies (Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015). Nonetheless, while it was true that, in terms of the present study, Binh had no understanding of authenticity
and Chau expressed confusion and concern about the ‘unreality’ of the textbook or text authenticity, Anh was able to identify perspectives of English language learning and teaching that were somewhat related to this aspect of CLT. In fact, Anh was the teacher with the most authenticity-related ideas from the beginning of the study, and this was to increase with further exposure to the Action Research component of the study. Although the term, ‘authenticity’, itself was not mentioned explicitly, Anh was able to identify ideas about the way authenticity could occur to support classroom practice as different kinds of authenticity. She connected this to using English language through interaction with the teacher and student peers in classroom conversations (classroom authenticity), creating opportunities to use English outside the classroom through greetings and excursions to bookshops, supermarkets or the beach (competence authenticity). Once Anh thought that her students could learn and use English outside the classroom, English in her perspective was not limited only to the textbook and activities inside the classroom. According to Anh, students should have opportunities to use and be exposed to English not only with English native speakers but also English speakers of other language backgrounds. This aligns with Leung’s view of communicative competence (Leung, 2005), in which ‘the Input-Interaction-Output model of SLA cannot account for what goes on outside the classroom, where language learners can encounter even more complex contexts and rules of social interaction’ (p. 137). In a context where English is not necessarily learned to communicate only with English native speakers but to be used as a medium of communication with speakers of other languages, communicative competence should include the ability to shift between languages and varieties of English.

The teachers’ sense of authenticity changed through discussions about selected class observations in the Action Research group meetings, through discussions with the researcher of the present study after their lessons, and within stimulated recall sessions. It is suggested that, within the Action Research process and especially in the reflecting stage, teachers shared their ideas about communicative activities and authentic communication and this helped to develop their knowledge of authenticity (Burns, 1999; Creswell, 2014; Mills, 2011). The most significant point was their view on creating contexts for communication. Connecting the language learned in the classroom with students’ real-life experience, stimulating students’ needs to communicate, and giving students freedom to talk, were the ways they suggested to build up authentic communication in the classroom.
In addition, all teachers of the present study maintained that L1 should be used to support students’ learning. They used L1 to set up the context of L2 use, and facilitated the authentic communication that took place with the use of both L1 and L2. In Extract 4.5.2.2-10, for example, Anh used L1 to set up a context in which students could use L2 to say what future job they wanted to do, and made it the basis for introducing new vocabulary. In this situation, students connected the new vocabulary with the jobs they already knew from their lives, and were engaged in interaction with the teacher to talk about the job they wanted or did not want to do. Authenticity in this situation was not understood as ‘everyday communication’ but was ‘authentic classroom communication’ raised through contextualising the L2 vocabulary for the purpose of a pedagogy of L2 teaching and learning.

The teachers of the present study adapted available resources primarily from the textbook to engage students through connecting the language in the texts with student’s life experiences, including, where possible, the cultural norms they were sharing. For instance, Anh shared that, when she introduced a story in the textbook in which a child visited a family, she advised that s/he should greet the oldest person first, then greet other people depending on their age. Anh, in this situation, connected L2 use to an L1 register, as this was a social rule in the localised L1 context. Relating this to communicative competence, Leung (2005, p. 139) also states:

... the unquestioned and routine adoption of a particular native-speaker variety of English and a particular set of idealized social rules of use is no longer educationally satisfactory or desirable... The pedagogic language model for any English-teaching programme should be related to its goals in context. An idealized native-speaker model should not be an automatic first choice.

The teachers in the present study acknowledged that they could create contexts for communication by stimulating students’ need to share ideas or access the information they held, as Chau stated in Stimulated Recall Session for Cycle One: ‘It (authentic communication) relates to reality, not only real things but also situations taking place around students’. From a CLT perspective, Breen (1985) argues that any classroom event and activity that raises students’ actual needs and interests might authentically be potential for communication. Nunan (1987) also suggests that genuine communication can occur in classroom interaction. However, Seedhouse (1996) states that it is impossible for teachers ‘to replicate (L2) conversation in the classroom as part of a lesson’ (1996, p. 18), because pedagogical purposes in the lesson cannot shape a discourse of free
conversation. He argues that a free conversation must take place in a non-institutional setting; and that all participants must have equal rights to monitor the discourse and negotiate the topic. Van Lier (1996), on the other hand, argues that it is unnecessary to distinguish and choose between the ‘classroom world’ and the ‘real world’, as the classroom is also a real context with its own real participants and real conversations. He suggests that authentication can help to create authentic communication during lessons. In addition, Richards (2006b) states that Seedhouse identifies ‘lesson’ restrictively as ‘the teacher’s pedagogical purpose’ and ignores instances in which spontaneous statements occur and provide valuable learning opportunities. Extract 4.5.1.2-19 provides evidence that illustrates Richards’ view. In this extract, the question was asked, ‘Is this your [ruler]?’. This had previously been taught as a referential question; however, in this instance the teacher really wanted to know the owner of the object in order to return it. This resulted in the students becoming highly engaged in this conversation in order to get their belongings back. ‘Turn-taking’ and ‘participation rights’ of the interlocutors in this conversation were expanded as Students 1 (S1) and Student 8 (S8) contributed to the conversation, even though they were not directly asked by the teacher. The teacher’s transfer of the first question to L1 made the question understandable to students and raised the context for the conversation; and the responses in L1 of S1 and S8 illustrated their real involvement in this conversation. Such instances of communication were observed to arise when the teachers taught the stories, vocabulary and sentence structures. Students had opportunities to talk about their own interests, such as their favourite animals or favourite colours, when for example they learned vocabulary about these topics. This example further illustrates Richards’ argument challenging Seedhouse’ assumption that it is impossible to produce a genuine conversation as part of a lesson (Seedhouse, 1996). Richards (2006b) argues that any lesson may include ‘the many unanticipated, incidental and spontaneous interpolations’ (p.11) that provide valuable opportunities for learning.

However, it is necessary to add that, although the classroom can be a context for authentic communication, it requires more than a teacher following routines and habits unreflectively. Through reflection generated by Action Research, as in the present study, teachers can design classroom routines, actions and environments to support authentic use of predetermined forms. In this classroom context, communicative competence is connected to classroom competence, which is the ability to understand and follow the routines of the classroom.
The use of L1 in Extract 4.5.1.2-19 aligns with Hymes’ earlier view of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), in which sentences were produced and understood appropriately in a particular situation. This practice demonstrated the teacher’s broader definition of communicative competence rather than that provided in versions of CLT, while expanding the idea of authenticity from a single form of language use to include different kinds of authenticities, as argued above. Communicative competence does not only mean an ability to use a language the way a native speaker of that language does, but refers to the ability to understand and perform it appropriately in a given situation, with appropriate manners, following appropriate linguistic rules, but depending on mutual language proficiency.

It is noteworthy that teacher participants’ acknowledgement of this strategy developed in stimulated recall sessions as the teachers reviewed activities in their own lessons that were non-communicative and suggested modifications to these activities to make them more communicative. For example, in Stimulated Recall for Cycle One, once Chau reviewed an instance in her lesson (see Extract 4.5.1.3-5), she suggested a situation in which students described their belongings among the school things collected for the previous activity to get them back correctly, instead of showing each school thing for the owner to describe. Anh and Chau admitted that they had modified some of the activities discussed in the stimulated recall sessions when they taught the same lessons again for other classes. In the present study, this is attributed to the impact of Action Research on their teaching.

Evidently, it is the teacher, not the textbook, that ultimately has to develop authenticity in the classroom, where the teacher can use available resources to create meaningful contexts. This is the issue that CLT, an approach that focuses on communicative competence, should be about. The risk to L2 teaching that embraces CLT is that it is based on a disaggregated set of competencies. The classroom is already a complex context, which L2 theorists and curriculum writers need to acknowledge.

5.3.3. Teachers’ Understandings and Practices of Interaction

A consideration of interaction was an important factor for language learning, and the teachers in the present study both shared similarities and showed differences in their views on and practices for engaging their students in different kinds of interaction. Their
perspectives and teaching practices with respect to interaction indicated a divergence of interaction arrangements, rather than the consensus suggested in the CLT approach.

The teachers believed that interaction could be effectively enhanced via the use of pair and group work. They pointed to the benefits of pair and group activities as both saving time and providing increased opportunities for students to practice the target language. In SLA theories, interaction benefits students when they negotiate for meaning, and it is argued to make ‘input’ comprehensible as students notice language forms and modify their output (Gass, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996; Long & Porter, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2002; Swain & Suzuki, 2010). However, when initially interviewed, the teachers in the present study revealed no knowledge of SLA theories; instead, they emphasized that working in groups and pairs were good ways for students to collaborate and help each other to ‘understand lessons better’. ‘Lessons’ here referred to ‘linguistic forms’. This interactive perspective of the teachers was actualized in their practices, by pairing less competent students to work with more competent students, implicitly creating a zone of proximal development as a scaffold for L2 learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In most of the cases observed, this aligned with the teachers’ perspectives mentioned above, as pair and group work was conducted with a view to practice linguistic forms rather than to use the target language to freely communicate.

Although all three teachers expressed positive views about pair and group work in general, in the reality of their individual classrooms they implemented these activities differently. Binh did not often use these types of activities, due to the management of seating arrangements and students’ personal relations in a large class. Anh, however, saw it as ‘unavoidable’, and tended to use this approach for language form practice, as in the strategy of PPP, despite similar class management issues as those identified by Binh. In contrast, Chau had positive views on pair and group work, but preferred pair work due to existing class seating arrangements. Chau revealed that, even though initially noise and discipline problems were a major issue in the class, she was prepared to persevere. She later saw positive results of students’ engagement and was more confident to conduct these kinds of activities. Being novice teachers and therefore lacking teaching experience, pedagogical theory and practice affected the teachers’ confidence and willingness to conduct these activities (Nguyen, 2013; Nishino, 2009). Another important component in this type of interaction concerned the fact that the students were at a very early stage of
their English language learning. In addition, pair and group work activities were unfamiliar to them, as students hadn’t been exposed to these types of activities in other subjects.

If language is a tool of communication and learning a language involves learning how to use that tool to communicate, the language classroom should be seen as a social community in which that language is learned in order to be used. Interaction, in this case, is considered as interaction between the members of that community. Each teacher in the present study developed particular strategies to promote interaction, participation and a sense of community within her classroom.

In addition to considering interaction as a crucial factor for second language learning, CLT advocates see negotiation for meaning as an important process taking place during interaction.

**5.3.3.1. Negotiation for Meaning (NfM)**

During interaction, it is argued that learners negotiate for meaning in the target language by adjusting linguistic forms to achieve comprehension and expression. The present study reveals that, while students worked in pairs and groups, there were interaction instances in which students negotiated meaning, though this occurred using L1 as a mediating tool. For example, in Extract 4.5.1.2-7, when S4 asked for the meaning of ‘correction pen’ in L1, S3 provided an equivalent L1 word to explain the meaning.

Using L1 between students while working in pair and group work is usually considered by CLT advocates as a limitation in the classroom for students who share the same L1. It is argued here that L1 should be viewed in a more positive light, as in the examples above L1 mediated students’ interaction while they were learning L2 and could be considered as a means for learning L2. In this case, the equivalent L1 word was used effectively to decode a new L2 word. It is a tool for managing communication as well because, when both L1 and L2 are shared, communication is maintained and might be developed to achieve L2 communicative purposes. As the example above indicated, without the use of L1 communication would break down and come to a deadlock.

It is noted that, during interactions, not only negotiation for meaning (NfM) occurred and contributed to the learning process but other types of negotiation also took place. Block
(2003) argues that, as CLT emphasizes NfM, it focuses narrowly on the informative function of interaction rather than its social function. Block, Valsiner and van der Veer (2000) earlier argued that communication is not merely information transmission but involves ‘negotiation of position’, which means people communicate with objectives in mind such as determining and responding to social status, building relationships, or providing support; and that messages are constructed purposefully to achieve these objectives.

The following section will discuss types of interaction and other kinds of negotiation in addition to those NfM interactions previously discussed.

### 5.3.3.2. Types of Interactions and Participation

The data from initial interviews, stimulated recall sessions and class observations demonstrated that lessons were designed containing a diversity of activities, resulting in diverse interactions. In the observed lessons, although a teacher-fronted style was dominant, activities were designed involving group or pair work where students had more freedom. These experiences varied from non-communicative activities focused on linguistic practice to other activities that provided students with increased freedom to communicate and use the target language. This diversity resulted in different types of interactions and can be identified as follows:

#### 5.3.3.2.1. Teacher monologue

Teacher monologue refers to instances when the teacher ‘holds the floor without interruption’(Gibbons, 2006, p. 114). Teacher monologues took place mainly when giving instructions and introducing new language forms, as well as for disciplinary purposes. Due to students being in the early stages of their learning of English, the teachers used L1 frequently in concert with L2 to support understanding. However, as the teachers reported, they were aware of the necessity of increasing L2 in their instruction. This strategy of using L1 not only supported students’ comprehension but also decreased their anxiety when learning the new language.
5.3.3.2.2. *Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/F)*

The teaching discourse structure, initiation, response, evaluation or feedback (IRE/F), was occasionally used by the teachers in the present study as a means of supporting students’ learning and responses. For the most part, feedback was provided as evaluation of students’ responses. In support of Gibbon’s findings (Gibbons, 2006), the IRE/F interactions in the present study occurred when the teachers checked students’ understandings after instruction, when they focused on a linguistic form such as a grammar structure or vocabulary, or when they checked students’ understanding of a text.

The teachers used a variety of feedback forms in reply to students’ responses. The feedback could be verbal, such as ‘right’, ‘wrong’, ‘okay’, and ‘good’; or it could also be non-verbal, such as a thumb up for correct answers and a thumb down for incorrect answers. The teachers’ repetition of students’ answers using tonal differences implied a correct or incorrect answer.

In the context of the present study, however, the IRF interactions diverged from the standard recognised pattern as teachers’ engaged students to promote the provision of peer feedback. This involved the teachers drawing students’ attention to forms while listening to their peers’ performance. In contrast to the expected IRF sequence, feedback giving, in this type of IRF interaction, was sometimes transferred from the teacher to students. In the accepted IRF pattern, instructional discourse is closed by the teachers, who give final comments and feedback related to peer responses. In the present study, however, there is a different pattern referred to as IRReFF/E, where the teacher initiates by asking a question (I), a student responds (R), the teacher asks another student to provide feedback on the first student’s response (Pickford, 2008), the student provides feedback (F), then the teacher provides summary feedback or evaluation (F/E). This occasionally took place when there was a focus on linguistic form. Therefore, in this IRReFF/E pattern, students were provided with an opportunity to check and confirm their understanding of the form. Another divergence from the IRF pattern observed in the present study was that teachers might give implicit feedback, as they sometimes implied that an answer was correct when they moved on to another student with another initiation when the response was correct, without responding to the first student. This discourse structure could be considered as an IRiF (Initiation-Response-implied Feedback) structure.
In addition to the traditional IRE/F pattern, it can be seen that the teachers in the present study stretched the discourse, using questions and providing follow-up explanations in L1 and L2 as pivots, as suggested by Wells (1996). With this technique, they developed the discourse based on students’ knowledge and experience of the topic. This elicited students’ contributions to the lessons and expanded their potential understandings. For example, in the instance of Extract 4.5.2.2-24, Chau provided a follow-up explanation:

Để hỏi xem là những đồ chơi yêu thích của những bạn xung quanh mình là gì thì mình hỏi ‘What’s your favourite toy?’. Để biết xem màu sắc yêu thích của bạn mình thì mình hỏi ‘What’s your favourite…?’ (pauses) (Trans: In order to ask what others’ favourite toys are, we ask ‘What’s your favourite toy?’ If you want to know your friend’s favourite colour, you ask ‘What’s your favourite…?’).

The question, ‘What’s your favourite toy?’, helped students to link to another question, ‘What’s your favourite colour?’, to ask about somebody’s favourite colour. In this discourse, Chau provided modelling and scaffolding so that students could make another question about another thing in a similar way. L1 was a mediational means that helped students to understand the meaning of the first question, ‘What’s your favourite toy?’, then know how to create the question, ‘What’s your favourite colour?’.

In another example, Extract 4.5.1.2-9, Anh elicited the students’ answers for the equivalent word in L1 of ‘poem’, and then developed the discourse by asking the students to read a poem they knew. The teacher, in this case, helped the students to connect the new L2 word ‘poem’ with the L1 equivalent ‘bài thơ’ and its concept, through describing what it meant and by providing an illustration of a poem that students had learned. In this way L1 was used to build new knowledge from students’ prior knowledge. It would be impossible for the teacher and children to continue to expand the conversation this way if only L2 was used, due to the children’s limited L2 knowledge.

In this example, the teacher did not provide direct corrective feedback for incorrect answers (e.g. ‘A song’, ‘A verse’). Instead, she invited other students to participate in the interaction by encouraging them to provide supportive feedback. This strategy helped to maintain good relations between all members of the classroom community: between teacher and students, and between students and their peers. This revealed social dynamics of participation that are additional to the focus of CLT on negotiation for information or negotiation for meaning.
This pattern of interaction demonstrated high levels of teacher-directed instruction, while CLT aims to be less teacher-centred (Brown, 2007; Littlewood, 2013). However, it is argued here that IRF as a teacher-directed strategy was used in the present study due to a number of reasons. Firstly, teachers used practices where they controlled the classroom discourse because the teaching and learning activities took place in a ‘Confucian’ social context where the influence of hierarchy in the teacher-students relationship was still considerable (Tran, 2012), preserving a wider social and moral order. In this classroom context, with young children, teachers were the authority and decided who could talk, when they could talk, and what they could talk about. Secondly, different forms of feedback helped teachers check students’ understandings of the lessons, and thus they could evaluate the achievement of pedagogical goals for each lesson. Thirdly, due to the student’s early stage of English learning, the teachers’ feedback drew their attention to the correct forms of language and thus built up accuracy, not easily achieved in a Vietnamese EFL context, where the classroom itself is the primary environment for practicing the target language with the teacher as the primary source of language input.

Classroom observations, however, also demonstrated that teachers could extend classroom discourse dialogically (Gibbons, 2006).

5.3.3.2.3. Dialogic exchanges

A dialogic exchange pattern refers to discourse in which the participants contribute to the content while the teacher remains in control of the discourse. It is considered as an extended IRF-like pattern, as the teacher is still the person who initiates and closes the discourse of the lesson as a whole. However, unlike a traditional IRF pattern, dialogic exchanges allow students to initiate individual exchanges relating to a focused topic (Gibbons, 2006). An example of dialogic exchanges observed in Anh’s class (Extract 4.5.2.2-10) showed that, in this instance, within the discourse of the lesson about jobs students provided their individual exchanges. In this case, while Anh introduced the new word ‘nurse’, she initiated the discourse by asking students the equivalent L1 word for ‘doctor’. As a result, a student described what a nurse’s duty was, and initiated a new sub-topic of jobs: ‘policeman’.

This instance of interaction demonstrated how the teacher expanded the students’ participation when she engaged the whole class in this conversation. Like the illustration
in Extract 4.5.1.2-19 previously discussed, negotiation for participation, a social function of communication, occurred along with, and as a requirement for, negotiation for meaning.

5.3.3.2.4. Participatory exchanges

Participatory exchanges refers to co-constructed conversations shaped by all participants (Gibbons, 2006). This pattern of interaction normally occurred between students as they worked in pairs or groups, where students could negotiate task orientations (Brook & Donato, 1994). The students in the group work in Extract 4.5.2.3-1, for example, focused on how to complete the task while they spelt the word ‘face’ to assist the writer-student.

This example also demonstrates that L1 was used to mediate and assist L2 learning. It was observable that, with the assistance from peers and the use of L1, the student who was responsible for writing words on the diagram for the group eventually wrote the word ‘face’ correctly.

Although this participatory pattern of interaction was not frequently observed in the present study between teachers and students, it was evident in this case amongst students. Extract 4.5.1.2-36 is an example of a participatory exchange involving students and teacher discussing a new linguistic point: the plural form of nouns. They negotiated a language form rather than meaning in this example. L1, again, played an important role in the instances of interaction mentioned above. It was the medium of communication between students and the teacher for learning a linguistic form of L2. They made use of the shared language (L1) effectively to explore the use of another language (L2). This triggered conversational authenticity in the lesson when the students actively initiated the conversation about the issue they paid attention to or were interested in. It is arguable that, in this case, authenticity related to the genuine circumstance of the classroom context, where L1 was shared between the teacher and students and used as an effective medium of teaching and learning L2 forms. Here, L1 provided a template for transcribing (or copying) and translating L2 forms and uses, which could then be drawn upon outside the classroom (Pickford 2016). The students in this case could transfer or copy the L2 learning – the use of the plural rule, which was delivered in L1 - to situations outside the classroom where L2 is needed. From a SCT perspective, it is also argued that L1 in this demonstration was used as a self-mediational tool controlled by the learners (Chavez,
2016), when other-mediation was transferred to self-mediation (Guk & Kellogg, 2007). The question made by S2 in this extract (Nếu có chữ ‘s’ thì (pronounce) /s/ phải không cô? (Trans: If they have ‘s’, we’ll have to (pronounce) /s/, Miss?) indicated that he noticed and understood the linguistic form. His question was actually for a confirmation of his understanding.

It is noted that the MOET’s aim is to enable learners of a second language to communicate that language in an ‘integrating environment’ (Thủ tướng Chính phủ, 2008, p. 1). Thus, it is suggested that a second language teaching method that is sensitive to the local social and cultural context should be considered. That could be a version of CLT approach, or a hybrid approach that draws on both L1 and L2. With the use of L1 in classroom instruction, the learners of the present study indirectly learned that they could use both L1 and L2 to solve problems in communication. An approach in which both L1 and L2 are used is a dual or emerging bilingual approach rather than a traditional CLT approach (Pickford, 2016).

The use of various patterns of interaction demonstrated above indicated that the teachers changed their perspectives on language teaching and learning during the cycles of the action research component of the present study. They not only used traditional types of interaction in the classroom to provide students with instant feedback but also provided opportunities for learners to participate in classroom interactions that encouraged their autonomy in learning as well as competence authenticity in L2.

5.3.3.3. Socio-cultural Participation in Classroom Interaction

In CLT, interactions between interlocutors are based on arguments of ‘choice, freedom, independence, privacy and equality’ (Sullivan, 2000). Students are ideally free to choose their partners, and to decide what to share with the teacher and other classmates. They do not have to work entirely under the teacher’s control. Students are encouraged to be independent in learning, and all interlocutors are equal in status. According to a CLT perspective, the teacher plays the role of a ‘facilitator’ rather than a model or a controller of all class activities. The teacher’s role is to create an environment for target language use through creating activities aimed at maximizing interaction in the classroom.

Data from the present study suggest that the teacher participants were ‘facilitators’ of their students’ learning process. However, their role as a ‘facilitator’ in these cases should
be explored from a broader view. According to sociocultural theory (SCT), learning occurs through social interactions and relationships between individuals. The teachers in the present study facilitated learning not only by constructing situations for L2 use but also by creating low-anxiety interactive learning environments, supporting peer work and giving assistance to individuals, as required.

Unlike the more traditional role ascribed to Vietnamese teachers, the teachers in the present study attempted to narrow the gap between themselves and their students. Anh shared that she considered herself as a friend or a sister of her students in the classroom (Initial Interview - Anh). She aimed to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, narrowing the gap between herself and her students, thus encouraging students to communicate with her so that she might assess the progress of students and provide appropriate support. Interestingly, this is in contradiction to the perspective of a teacher’s role in a traditional Vietnamese classroom where the teacher is the only authority (e.g. Phelps et al., 2012; Tran, 2012; Viet, 2008). This perspective caused problems for Anh, as she was labelled by her colleagues as being ‘too friendly with students’ (Initial Interview – Anh). She used personal pronouns in the classroom such as ‘bạn’ or ‘các bạn’ (Trans: ‘my friend’ or ‘my friends’) with student/s to create friendly relations between her and her students.

At the same time, Anh set up the classroom as a ‘family’ in which she was an ‘elder sister’ (Initial Interview – Anh) or an ‘aunty’, as she sometimes referred to her students as ‘con’ (Trans: dear) so that students felt confident to depend on her and were willing to ask questions in the classroom. This differs from the common hierarchical teacher-student relationship described by some scholars of Confucian cultures, including in Vietnam (e.g. Phelps et al., 2012; Tran, 2012; Viet, 2008). Teacher-student relationships in those studies were also compared with parent-child relationships where children were submissive, resulting in students’ passiveness in learning and hesitation to ask questions or respond in the classroom. However, in this case, Anh built up a relationship of pedagogic participation where student contributions were encouraged and supported.

In common with Anh, Binh and Chau also identified the necessity of student participation in interactive activities. Both teachers aimed to achieve a friendly and low-anxiety classroom atmosphere where the gap between teacher-student relations was minimized, as an important factor to increase students’ engagement. Although the teachers did not
explicitly express what they thought about the relations between teacher and students, classroom observations demonstrated that they tried to shape a more informal classroom environment. This was observed as Binh and Chau also called their students ‘bạn’/‘các bạn’ (friend/friends) or ‘con’/‘các con’ (dear/dears), as in the way an Aunty would talk to her nieces and nephews. This made students feel as if in a family: ‘protected’, easier to relate to, and ready to interact with teachers and classmates. It is argued that, due to this low-anxiety atmosphere, students were more active and had more autonomy, as they could request activities, such as games or songs (Stimulated Recall Session for Action Research Cycle Two – Binh), and initiated conversations with teachers during lessons. Moving around the classroom to provide support when students worked in pairs and groups, Binh and Chau also shaped their roles as supporters in the classroom rather than authority figures whose positions were always at the class board giving commands.

It is noted, from the perspective of CLT, that learner-centredness is a focus where learners control their own learning patterns, and where the teacher and students have equal roles to contribute to conversations in the classroom. It can be argued, however, that it is unrealistic to expect complete equality between teacher and students in the classroom, as the teacher is the dominant mediator of knowledge and knowledge construction. This is particularly the case in a sociocultural context where Confucian values intersect with teaching and learning, as in the circumstances of the present study. However, the strategies that the teachers of the present study applied, from a sociocultural view, such as positioning themselves as family members, reflect scaffolding strategies to support students’ learning rather than dominate it. The focus, from this perspective, is therefore not on teacher or learner-centredness but on the learning process and how learning might be best achieved.

The notion of choice embedded in group and pair work can be a challenge as students may resist working together, and this was an issue for the teachers in the present study. As Gibbons (2006, p. 110) states, ‘if learners are unable to work collaboratively, even the best designed teaching activities are unable to be successful’. There is no specific focus in CLT on how to construct collaboration between learners. It is an assumption that they will naturally get on well with each other and work collaboratively whenever they are assigned in pairs and groups. SCT, on the other hand, emphasizes that learning, as a higher mental function of development, always takes place in a particular sociocultural context.
mediated by ‘social connections and relations’ and ‘collective forms of behaviour and social cooperation’ (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 41). This orientation aligns with the teachers’ strategies to support their students’ collaboration by assisting them to adjust their behaviours while working together and improving their relationships.

All teachers in the present study revealed that they rarely let students choose their partners themselves. Anh reported that she explained to students how to work in pairs/groups, and encouraged them to assist their peers. It was also argued that, when students learn strategies to work in pairs and groups, they improve their interpersonal relationships, thus improving interpersonal interactions. These interpersonal interactions result in more effective interaction that then contributes to learning. As discussed above, pair and group work activities were considered effective in stimulating interaction among students, and Anh organised a variety of activities for students to work in pairs and groups. Although these activities included drilling activities to practice forms, it is argued that, within the practices of linguistic forms, and while working collaboratively with peers in pairs and groups, students often mediated their own learning without the teacher’s intervention; thus, from the view of sociocultural theory, they negotiated for learning rather than only for meaning (Swain, 2000). Students corrected each other’s mistakes (e.g. see Extract 4.5.1.2-6, Observation 1, 24 Sept 2013 – Anh), provided input (e.g. see Extract 4.5.1.2-7, Observation 1, 24 Sept 2013 – Anh), and learned skills to collaborate and accomplish the tasks assigned (e.g. see Stimulated Recall for Cycle Two – Anh).

Identifying the importance of students’ participation in the learning process, Binh stated that play promoted students’ interaction in the classroom, so language games and songs were used in most of her lessons. However, as Binh revealed in the interviews and stimulated recalls, she was concerned about some students who seemed to sideline themselves from activities. The data from class observations also identified this as an issue that likely resulted from the large number of students, different levels of students’ proficiency, and teachers’ lack of experience in managing class interaction and discipline. Although being concerned about students’ participation in some activities, Binh argued that these students still learned, since they silently observed their peers and repeated words to themselves. This perspective supports Dobao’s (2016) research in which silent learners in a group interaction benefit from group work in terms of vocabulary learning.
Although CLT considers group and pair work as providing potential for students to make individual contributions equally during interaction, the teachers in the present study expected it to be a learning resource in which students of different levels of fluency assisted each other in learning. From a SCT perspective, this is desirable as it reflects the learning process associated with the zone of proximal development (ZPD) where a student can progress if appropriate support is provided (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). Extract 4.5.2.3-1 is an illustration of this perspective, as the student who was in charge of labelling the diagram for the group was enabled to write the word ‘face’ thanks to his peers’ assistance.

Pair and group work in this context has been challenged in some cases due to students’ resistance to working with each other, and this challenged their participation. As Sato and Ballinger (2012) point out, a collaborative environment is important for successful pair and group activities, where teachers’ skills to reconcile students are necessary. While Chau did not explicitly report any problems with this type of activity in terms of students’ resistance, Anh and Binh expressed it as an obstacle. Anh had strategies to assist students in participating and collaborating with their peers; Binh, on the other hand, revealed that she did not find an effective method to solve this problem when it occurred, which was evident from observation data in her class. It was observable that, in some groups, one or two students were dominant and took over most of the groups’ tasks while the other students’ role was limited to that of observers.

While emphasizing the benefits of pair and group work in students’ participation, the teachers in the present study acknowledged they were not the only types of activities suitable for their students in their school settings. In their view, other types of interactions such as teacher-whole class and teacher-individual students were also potential occasions for students’ participation in authentic forms of communication. Extract 4.5.2.2-10 illustrates this argument. The students in this extract were very eager to present the job they wanted to do in the future. It is suggested that, when students were interested in the topics, they were involved in conversations and made use of their own available language resources to communicate in L2, thus authentic moments of learner communication took place (van Compernolle & McGregor, 2016). In this way, the goal of CLT authenticity was extended to learner participation, even though the learners did not work in pair or groups (Sullivan, 2000).
While, in CLT, learner-centredness aims at developing learners’ independence, data from lesson observations and stimulated recall sessions show that the teachers in the present study played an active role in giving support to learners. This aligns with the concept of ZPD in SCT, in which individuals’ development is mediated when they work with an expert or a more capable peer (Donato, 1994; Gibbons, 2006; Ohta, 2000). Teachers acknowledged that, at the early stage of second language learning, with limited language resources, it was difficult for students to work independently. During classroom activities, the teachers moved around the classroom and came to students to support them whenever necessary. According to Anh, this attention and care relaxed students and prevented them from a feeling of ‘losing face’ (Initial Interview – Anh, Field notes). In this way, Anh helped introverted and shy students to become more socially confident and better prepared for later class activities. In Anh’s opinion, moving around the classroom was also necessary to evaluate students’ progress, to assist pair and groups to accomplish their tasks, and to check their engagement in the tasks assigned. Anh, with this perspective, formed her own social theory of language learning.

In summary, although interaction is highlighted in CLT and NfM as an important process of language learning, there was evidence in the classroom showing that it included other types of negotiations and participation, due to the ways the teachers and students authenticated their communications with different types of interaction patterns.

5.3.4. The Role of L1 in both Authenticity and Interaction

It is apparent that L1 is common to both authenticity and interaction in the classrooms. L1 was used as a tool to set up and maintain social relationship between teachers and students and among students (Nazary, 2008; Schweers, 1999). It helped to create trust between students and the teacher and thus improved their interaction with the teacher, as well as creating interaction and collaboration between students with their peers in group and pair work. Evidence from the data showed that students more actively participated in the classroom activities, and were more willing to give their opinions and share experiences, when the teacher provided them with an atmosphere of security and comfort through using L1, for example in encouraging, providing support, or joking.

In addition, the data indicated that L1 was an effective tool for scaffolding. L1 was used to request and provide assistance. It was used to give instructions and grammar or
vocabulary explanations (Nazary, 2008; Tang, 2002). Without it, interaction might be interrupted due to students’ limited L2 understanding and use (Lázaro-Ibarrola & Azpilicueta-Martínez, 2015). From a sociocultural perspective, it is suggested that, thanks to L1 use as a means of communication, scaffold-givers were able to provide efficient support while scaffold-receivers were able to comprehend instruction and explanation, helping them to accomplish their tasks, and thus learning L2.

Data from lesson observations also showed that L1 could be a connection between what students were learning to do in a lesson and how they could use L2 as a dimension of their own identity. This is illustrated by Extract 4.5.2.2-26. When S1 asks, ‘What’s your favourite colour?’, S2 hesitated to answer until he was urged by S1. S2’s response, ‘Tôi đang suy nghĩ (Trans: I’m thinking. It’s red’), in this extract, indicated that he practiced using the forms he was taught to give his truthful answers related to his favourite colour instead of simply providing an answer with any colour assigned by the textbook. Language is a tool to express one’s self to the world (Granger, 2004), and the learners in this extract considered themselves to be doing the task in a bilingual context where they could use L2 to express themselves with L1 as a socially mediated tool (Hall & Cook, 2012).

From observations of classroom activities, two issues related to L1 use in terms of authenticity and interaction are noted. First of all, students learned through language behaviours that drew upon the linguistic and communicative patterns of their first language. Students in the present study learned L2 in a context where it was not used in everyday life; instead, L1 was the dominant language inside as well as outside the classroom. As a result, the cultural values of L1 were frequently present and ‘performed’ during language lessons. For example, Anh shared in a Stimulated Recall Session for Action Research Cycle One that she taught her students to greet older-aged people first when they visited a family. In this case, students did not learn the behaviours of L2 native speakers for the same situations but they learned how to behave appropriately in the wider social-cultural context in which they were living, during the L2 lesson. It is suggested that vocabulary and forms of L2 were authenticated from the perspective of the L1 culture. In the context of globalization where a language, English in this case, is used as a medium of communication between people of any culture and in any place in the world rather than between or to the native speakers of that language in their own cultures or
countries, is it authentic, possible and necessary for a person who uses that language as a second language to use it in exactly the same way in which native speakers use it? It is argued that this is not the case.

Another issue of L1 use in L2 lessons observed in the present study is language transfer. Students learned L2 in part through translation behaviours. They were taught to seek equivalent L1 vocabulary for L2 words, a strategy that some could criticise as interfering with L2 learning. However, translation can be seen as a normal action in real life when a person uses a dictionary to define an unfamiliar L2 word when reading a newspaper, an academic article or travelling to a foreign country. Thus, translation should be considered as a means to mediate L2 learning rather than a ‘bad habit’ that should be avoided.

It is argued that, in the context of the present study, the classroom should be considered to be the place where both L1 and L2 are used rather than becoming a facsimile of a place where L2 is used by native speakers.

5.4. Conclusion

5.4.1. Summary of the Key Points

From the findings presented in the present study, four main points are summarized. The first main point is that, although there has been research into English teaching in Vietnam, most are studies at a secondary school or upper level rather than at elementary school level. The students of the latter level have specific needs that are different from those of older students, thus teaching methods and techniques should be suitable for their needs. On the other hand, training programs that the teachers of the present study experienced at local colleges only focused on secondary level language teaching and learning. In addition, during their teaching, teachers did not have opportunities to participate in professional development programmes for teaching language for the elementary level. This is also the case in other elementary schools in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).

The second main point indicates that the participating teachers initially had limited understandings of CLT. These understandings were influenced by their own experience as language learners, a lack of theoretical knowledge of language learning and teaching during pre-service training, a lack of professional development during the in-service period, and a lack of opportunities to share teaching experiences with other language
teachers. The findings suggest that this limitation in understandings of CLT resulted in limiting the MOET’s curriculum innovation regarding CLT implementation in this context.

The third main point, supported by the evidence of the study, is that the teachers of the study implemented a hybrid of a CLT and non-CLT approach in their teaching practice. Due to their perspectives on language learning and teaching as well as the conditions of their teaching context, the teachers practiced methods and techniques that they believed most appropriate for their students. Aside from applying communicative-oriented activities to improve authenticity and interaction in the classroom, other non-communicative-oriented techniques were maintained to provide and support students’ learning as well as promote processes of authentication. The study thus supports the argument that no particular teaching method is the best in all contexts, and that non-CLT approaches can be used effectively along with a CLT approach, instead of being considered a hindrance to language learning.

The final key point generated from the findings of the present study is that the Action Research Cycles and the focus on CLT stimulated the teachers’ re-examination of their own understandings and practices of second language learning and teaching. Their perspectives and teaching practices did not necessarily reflect a CLT approach but demonstrated a wider view of second language teaching and learning. The introduction of key CLT principles, instead, acted as a catalyst, promoted by the Action Research component of the present study, to encourage them to reflect on their teaching (Pickford, 2016). Action Research was a means whereby language teaching and learning innovations could be introduced in a considered and controlled way as teachers blended their teaching with new ideas. CLT discussions triggered the teachers’ adjustment of their teaching practices, which included a more communicative orientation. The practices of the teachers in the present study were closer to Hymes’s notion of communicative competence than that which is currently attributed to CLT (Leung, 2005). Strategies to improve the communicative environment included: mixing L1 and L2 while gradually increasing the amount of L2; narrowing the social distance between teacher and students through creating a friendly, low-anxiety classroom atmosphere; combining CLT and non-CLT teaching techniques; and adopting a broader definition of communication competence, authenticity and interaction. Students did not merely learn English sentences
but learned how to use the language appropriately in the context of the classroom and topics being taught, and acquired learning-how-to-learn methods as well. They used various forms of authentication and forms of interaction, how to achieve successful communication, as well as learning English.

From the findings of the teachers’ perspectives and their practices, the present study reported in-depth understandings of English teaching and learning in this Vietnamese context in terms of implementation of CLT as a requirement of the MOET’s curriculum innovation. Based on these findings, important recommendations can be made for teacher trainers, teachers and the MOET to take into account.

5.4.2. Implications and Recommendations of the Study

In this section, suggestions for implications and recommendations for research into L2 language teaching in this Vietnamese context will be provided. In addition, this section provides suggestions for teacher trainers, school managers and teachers in relation to L2 teaching in Vietnamese or similar contexts.

5.4.2.1. Implications for Theory

English language teaching and CLT implementation has been a debated topic since CLT was introduced beyond ESL contexts where English is a foreign or international language (Pham, 2007; Whong, 2013). English does not belong to only English native speakers: the majority of English speakers are non-native and they use English as a medium of communication (Crystal, 2003). Their use of English is influenced by their socio-cultural contexts. Teaching and learning English, therefore, is influenced by socio-cultural factors in those contexts.

In terms of teaching methods, the findings of the present study demonstrate that the teachers did not implement a strong version of CLT. Instead, CLT was one of their choices of teaching methods, and they practised a hybrid of both CLT and non-CLT approaches in their teaching. In light of sociocultural theory (SCT), how the teachers implemented CLT in this setting reflected many of the theoretical orientations of SCT, including providing for explicit teacher and peer ‘scaffolding’ support and self-mediation.

In terms of terminology, while CLT emphasizes ‘interaction’ to promote learners’ communicative competence, a CLT view does not address how to set up or conduct
interactions between learners as participants in particular sociocultural contexts. Learners are assumed to interact with each other naturally whenever they are assigned to work in pairs and groups. Meanwhile, interaction between teachers and learners, and learners and learners, is influenced by various factors such as their personal experience, beliefs and values (Donato, 2000). In addition, if the classroom is seen as a social community in which the teacher and students are members of that social community, interaction between these members should be also investigated and accommodated in association with such social settings, as Foster and Ohta (2005, p. 403) state: ‘…knowledge is not owned solely by the learner, but is also a property of social settings and the interface between person and social context’. SCT helps to understand how interaction in the classroom can be set up, maintained and developed, and how it works as a teaching and learning process.

Another significant outcome of the present study in terms of terminology is the contribution made to the concept of ‘authenticity’. As van Compernolle and McGregor (2016) suggest, ‘authenticity’ should be understood and practiced as a unification of both ‘authenticity of correspondence’ and ‘authenticity of genesis’ (Cooper, 1983; MacDonald et al., 2006). Not only is the language used by and for the native speakers of a language, but the language used by and for non-native speakers of that language is also authentic language. Not only the social contexts outside the classroom but also the classroom contexts should be seen as authentic contexts. Not only does communicative competence mean to use the target language appropriately in a sociocultural context where a language is used as a native language, but also to use that language appropriately in a sociocultural context where it is used as an additional authentic form of communication. Not only native speakers of a language but also non-native speakers of that language are to be viewed as authentic speakers.

‘Authenticity’ can be achieved through processes of ‘authentication’. Teachers can authenticate the classroom environment and second language use through the use of available materials and language resources. Familiar objects related to lesson topics, audio-visual materials collected from the Internet, and the use of both L1 and L2, were important materials and language resources for authentication by the teachers in the present study. In addition, the study observed a range of ‘authenticities’ related to: the use and application of situations drawn from textbooks; appropriate use of objects and
realia; and interactive moments between teachers and learners and between learners using L1 and L2.

5.4.2.2. Implications for Research Methodology

The present study involved multiple forms of data collection to research teachers’ views on CLT and second language learning and teaching, as well as implementation in their classrooms. Initial, informal open-ended interviews were taken to seek teachers’ initial understandings of CLT required in the curriculum by the MOET. Open-ended interviews were used and questions were flexible so that the teachers’ perspectives could be revealed. The interviews were conducted in a friendly atmosphere, building mutual trust so that personal information, opinions and viewpoints could be obtained (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003)

A significant contribution of the present study in terms of research methodology was Action Research conducted as a sub-study to investigate how the teachers adapted their teaching to implement the new curriculum required by the MOET. Unlike previous studies conducted in a Vietnamese context, the present study attempted to research how teachers could develop in their teaching and teaching profession. As ‘action research implies change’ (Klein & Palgrave, 2012, p. 5), it provides potential for improvement and development, especially in a context in which teachers needed to adapt their teaching to meet the requirements of a new curriculum. Data collected from lesson observations and stimulated recall sessions during two cycles of this Action Research helped to gain deeper understandings of changes and development in teachers’ perspectives in second language learning and teaching and their related teaching practices. Each classroom was unique, and lesson observations in natural settings of the classrooms helped to catch emergent phenomena during classroom activities (Gall et al., 2003). The study not only focused on specific features of CLT, but lesson observations looked at behaviours influenced by sociocultural factors.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, although CLT had been introduced in Vietnam, it was reportedly not well implemented in classrooms due to the influence of sociocultural factors. Moreover, the teachers of the present study were novice teachers and did not have opportunities to participate in professional development courses supported by the MOET. Since the undergraduate training courses they took at the local teachers’ training college
did not provide them with sufficient theoretical knowledge and practical skills for teaching a second language as well as teaching a second language for elementary students, collaboration was an effective way for these teachers to develop relevant teaching approaches. Collaboration between teachers is also encouraged and suggested in the guide for the new curriculum provided by the MOET (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010a). However, there is no detailed guidance from the MOET on how teachers should work collaboratively. Working collaboratively was the teachers’ opportunity to share their experience and opinions and to learn from colleagues how to solve problems and improve teaching. The teacher participants found solutions to their classroom problems through discussions with colleagues in groups. In addition, since Action Research does not require overly formal techniques or designs, it is appropriate for all teachers, both experienced and novice. Thus, collaborative Action Research can potentially help teachers, especially novice teachers and those who do not have opportunities to participate in professional development programs, to improve their professional knowledge. Observations of lessons found that teachers changed and developed teaching practices during the Action Research cycles due to assistance and experience shared between the teachers, both inside and outside the group meetings.

Stimulated recall sessions were conducted to gain in-depth understandings of the teachers’ observed teaching practices. Stimulated recall is an effective method to obtain participants’ perspectives and interpretation of events (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Through these stimulated recall sessions, the teachers did not merely interpret the events recalled, they also suggested modifications for other classrooms in the same situations, showing changes in their perspectives on CLT and language learning and teaching.

5.4.2.3. Implications for Teacher Educators, Teachers and the MOET

In terms of implications for teacher educators, the evidence in the present study indicates that theoretical knowledge and practical training are crucial for teachers’ professional practice. On the one hand, the findings of the present study demonstrate that lack of a theoretical foundation of language learning and teaching and insufficient training for teaching skills affected their understandings of CLT and implementation of the MOET’s curriculum. This finding aligns with findings of recent studies of the Vietnamese context (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013; Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015). On the other hand, when CLT was implemented within the Action Research cycles focusing on ‘authenticity’ and
‘interaction’, evidence from observations and stimulated recall sessions indicated that CLT principles could not provide an adequate pedagogical guide to address the implementation and process issues that the teachers in Vietnam, a non-native English language context, had to deal with. While emphasizing ‘authenticity’ and meaningful ‘interaction’, CLT theory does not pay attention to cultural and social factors that influence teachers’ understandings of these terms and their implementation. This approach does not provide teachers with instructions of how to create and obtain L2 authenticity as well as how to construct and promote interaction effectively. It does not address the bicultural and bilingual nature of a L2 classroom in a L1 setting.

The evidence also showed that there is no one best teaching method or approach for all teaching and learning contexts. Each teaching and learning setting has its own characteristics, and any teaching method or approach considering these characteristics can be adapted when being practiced in a particular setting at particular time. On the one hand, the teacher participants in the present study made changes to their pedagogy to align it more closely with CLT, and these changes led to improvement in learning opportunities and learner engagement. On the other hand, a hybrid of CLT and non-CLT approaches in their practices suggests that CLT should be modified appropriately to this context. Furthermore, while CLT failed to support the teachers to deal with issues related to its implementation in a specific sociocultural context, SCT suggests theoretical orientations supporting effective and efficient teaching and learning. The teacher participants in the present study practiced strategies drawing upon social and cultural values to support their students’ learning, adapting their teaching accordingly. Thus, it is recommended that provision of theoretical knowledge of different views of language learning and teaching and more explicit practical teaching techniques is necessary for undergraduate training, and should be reviewed and updated through professional development programmes.

The MOET programme the present study investigated is for teaching English for elementary and primary students, while all teachers in the present study were trained to teach secondary level and adults. This is also a reality in many other primary schools. Teaching language for primary students is different from teaching language for students of other age groups, due to their specific features of psychological and physical development (Pinter, 2011). Therefore, teachers need training programmes and support to better understand students of this age and improve practical teaching skills.
An important implication of the present study for teachers’ professional development is action research. Action research can be an effective means of professional growth and development (Johnson, 2012; Mertler, 2012) within all levels of the teaching profession. There was evidence in the present study that teacher education programmes did not provide sufficient preparation for the teachers to deal with the teaching reality after graduating. However, it is impossible to have guidance for every single problem a teacher may have to cope with in their career. Thus, action research can be introduced as a means for problem solving to pre-service teachers in their last years. In terms of implications for in-service teachers’ professional development, action research can support both novice and experienced teachers. Teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their own practice through conducting action research (Mertler, 2012), to better understand the curriculum, contexts of learning and teaching, and their students. Since teachers as practitioners can implement their understandings of theories in their own classrooms, critically examine the effectiveness of that implementation, find the gaps between theories and teaching practices if they occur, and creatively undertake experimentation to reduce those gaps, action research is considered as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practices (Gall et al., 2003; Mertler, 2012). Teachers can conduct action either individually or collaboratively with colleagues. Besides the benefits discussed above, through collaboration and collaborative action research teachers in a school build up and strengthen their relationships, so empowering their school. Therefore, teacher educators should provide action research as an important part of professional development programmes and training courses for in-service teachers.

From the perspective of SCT, teachers should be introduced to theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to focus their Action Research on the ZPD in the learning of second language. Teachers should be able to identify specific indicators that a ZPD exists to organize appropriate activities, model and support students to work with each other. They should be able to scaffold (mediate) learning through creating a positive learning community in the classroom where students learn forms of dialogue, so they can speak with themselves and speak with others in ways which develop a shared understanding and assist each other’s performance. For instance, they can ask each other ‘What do you think this means?’ and compare understandings to arrive at a correct or the best view.
In terms of implications for teachers, findings of the study indicate that teachers could apply CLT flexibly and creatively to make it appropriate within the sociocultural context of their teaching practices. Authenticity and meaningful interaction, for example, could be gained in the classrooms by authentication processes. It is suggested that features considered as non CLT features, such as L1 use and various IRF classroom discourse patterns, should be re-examined as means for authentication and used elaborately for effective language learning and teaching. Teachers need to learn more about students’ interactional styles and develop ways to encourage students to initiate talk and self-regulate. Teachers in the present study, for example, were generally able to do this using Vietnamese, so they then need to bridge to English. One way to do this is to build better contexts in which L2 is learned through increasingly complex L1 contexts. For example, rather than holding up a ruler and only asking “What is this?”, the teacher could ask when, why and how it is used, where it is kept, etc. and gradually move the expanded conversation to English (L2). Teachers can learn to better use all language modes, not just speaking and listening, but also reading, writing, games, music, performance and visual modes, in addition to building a bicultural and bilingual learner identity. So, all this means teachers need to be good at task design, linking tasks, sequencing lessons, promoting participation and building L1 and L2 cultural knowledge.

As no teaching method or approach can be the best and the only one appropriate for all contexts, teachers should enlarge their knowledge of language learning and teaching and appropriate their teaching practices to achieve the overarching aim: effective language learning and teaching.

In addition, collaborative work, as discussed in the previous sections, should be practiced among teachers as a method of professional development. Collaboration gives teachers opportunities to improve their profession, through talking and working with colleagues, by being supported, and by sharing experiences. Teachers with different teaching experiences can work collaboratively to assist each other. Novice and inexperienced teachers can be supported by experienced mentors, and experienced teachers can also learn from their less experienced colleagues’ ideas and skills. The teachers in the present study were all novice teachers, and opportunities to take part in professional development workshops organised by the MOET were limited for them; thus, collaborative work was an opportunity to develop their own teaching practices (Mertler, 2012). Collaboration is
not only able to be built up between teachers of a school but also between those working in different schools. It will increase opportunities for teachers of different experience levels to improve their professional skills through participating in language teaching networks. The case of Chau in the present study is an example. While talking and sharing experiences with her only school colleague was very limited, she learned a lot from the other two teacher participants in the present study. Teachers of different schools may cope with different issues, but they also share similar problems when they implement the same curriculum and teach students of the same age, as is the case of the teachers in the present study. Due to differences in teaching contexts, Chau’s school was not as well-equipped as Anh and Binh’s school, and she had less opportunities to work with and share teaching experiences with more experienced colleagues. Working with Anh and Binh in the present study was a good chance for Chau to develop her professional skills. She did not simply copy those two teachers’ ways of teaching but critically and creatively modified techniques she had learned to make them appropriate for her teaching context, classrooms and students.

Finally, in terms of recommendations for the MOET, it is suggested that continuing professional development of teachers is a crucial factor deciding the effectiveness of their language teaching. They need a theoretical and practical foundation to be able to adapt theories of language learning and teaching in their practices, and appropriate them in the specific contexts in which they are working. Unlike teachers in previous studies conducted in Vietnamese contexts, whose implementation was influenced by examination-oriented teaching, the teachers in the present study were not under the pressure of student examination results, since English was not counted for academic evaluation at the end of each semester and school year. As mentioned above, evidence from the study reveals that one of the major factors influencing these teachers’ perspectives on second language learning and teaching as well as their teaching practices was a lack of related pedagogical knowledge, either in theory or in practice. Although the MOET organised professional development workshops for teachers who participated in the programmes for English teaching for primary school students, they served selected senior teachers only. These workshops were organised in universities in major cities such as Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City, and teachers from other cities had to travel to these cities for the workshops. Senior teachers participating in the MOET’s workshops were expected to convey the knowledge they obtained to their colleagues when they came back
to their home towns. The effectiveness of this should be examined, as in reality, as shared by the teachers in the present study, in the subsequent workshops organised by local Departments of Education and Training for these senior teachers to share experiences that they had learned from the MOET workshops, they just performed model lessons using some teaching techniques that could be questionable as being CLT. Thus, it is recommended that the MOET and teacher educators in local educational institutions should cooperate in providing professional development programmes for all teachers, including novices, to be engaged. These programmes should not only provide them with theoretical and practical knowledge of language learning and teaching that addresses issues of learner anxiety, use of L1, learner participation structures, and forms of supportive classroom discourse, but should also provide productive opportunities to make professional networks.

5.4.3. Limitations of the Research

Aside from the contributions of the study in understanding teachers’ perspectives and practices in adapting CLT in their sociocultural context, limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The first limitation is in regard to research methodology. Firstly, due to the nature of a case study, this research is limited by the boundaries of the cases and might be criticised for its lack of capability for generalisation. For example, the study was conducted in two primary schools in a small city, which may not represent other schools in big cities with better equipped classrooms and facilities. The teachers were young novice teachers with less than two-years’ experience of teaching in a primary school and aged under twenty-five. Lack of teaching experience may have resulted in their views and the way they practiced.

Secondly, the teachers’ time constraints meant a limited time for group meetings, which resulted in teachers not being able to share all their ideas and opinions. Their opinions were however noted in other personal meetings. Teachers’ time constraint was also a problem for the scheduled stimulated recall sessions. According to Mackey and Gass (2016), stimulated recall sessions should be carried out as soon as possible after observations. However, while some sessions were conducted immediately after lessons, most of them were delayed until the end of a cycle of the action research. This might have influenced the teachers’ memories related to incidents recalled in the lessons, and they might have provided a more favourable answer instead of accurate reasons for their
actions. Furthermore, busy schedules affected the teachers’ collaboration, since they could not arrange some of the mutual class observations as intended before the action research. Instead, they saw videos of each other’s lessons and discussed these lessons with the researcher in another meeting.

Thirdly, while the role of the researcher as a lecturer in the local teacher training college where the teacher participants studied brought advantages such as mutual trust, it also appeared to constrain the teachers when being observed, especially in the first lesson observations. Informal talks with teachers and students outside classrooms and after lessons helped to build closer relationships between the researcher and the participants. However, this also made students familiar with the presence of the researcher in their classrooms, and they did not see her as an outsider.

Finally, if it was possible, there should have been more time to see more significant changes in the teachers’ understandings of CLT as well as the nature of language learning and teaching in their practices. Due to time limitations, the theoretical knowledge of CLT provided in the first group meeting and discussions about the features of CLT during action research was also limited. The teachers needed more time for more ‘experimentation’ and for evaluating the effectiveness of new ways in teaching to see how the changes worked. In fact, after the fieldwork, the researcher kept in touch with the teacher participants, and found that they had more significant changes in their views and practices of language teaching. Chau, for example, shared her new ways to engage students in interaction and using English authentically in the classroom activities. The teachers also needed more careful training for action research so that they themselves could conduct it systematically. Due to time limitations, the researcher could not provide a further training session for the teachers. In the present study, they learned while conducting the action research and conducted the action research to learn from it.

5.4.4. Suggestions for Future Research

From the findings and limitations of the present study, some suggestions are made for future research. Firstly, as the study investigated teachers’ understandings and adaptation of CLT for primary school students in the small scale of a case study in a specific context, there should be further investigation of teachers’ perspectives and practices for this level in other contexts and on a larger scale across multiple cases. In addition, the learners in
the present study were all in grade three and at a beginning stage of English learning, so their proficiency influenced the teachers’ teaching practices. An investigation of grades four and five language teaching and learning would be necessary for deeper understanding of teachers’ implementation. The teachers’ professional experience is another issue to be considered; thus, future research should investigate how teachers of various levels of teaching experience adapt their practices in implementing the language curriculum for primary students.

Not only the present study but also previous studies of CLT and TBLT in Vietnam and similar contexts found that CLT and TBLT were not successfully implemented in these contexts (e.g. Tran, 2015; Nguyen, 2013; Littlewood, 2007). Is there an approach or a combination of language teaching approaches to maximize learners’ ability and achieve efficiency and effectiveness of teaching? The findings of the present study reveal how non-CLT techniques underpinned by SCT could be used to support various forms of authentication and interaction in a language classroom, to improve language use in the classroom. Holliday (1994), Bax (2003) and Nishino (2009) suggest a more context-sensitive communicative approach. Further research on teachers’ adaptation of language teaching methodologies based on their contexts should be considered in the future.
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Dear Principal,

My name is Khuong Thi Bich Diep. I am currently carrying out PhD research titled *An Investigation of the English Teaching Program at Primary School in Vietnam in Relation to Implementing a Curriculum Innovation* at the University of Wollongong, Australia. I am working with my supervisors, Dr Barbra McKenzie and Dr Steven Pickford.

**Why am I doing this research?**

A move from traditional methodologies to Communicative Language Teaching approaches (CLT) in English teaching is necessary to improve Vietnamese students’ communicative competence. Thereby, CLT is required in the teaching English program at primary schools of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). This innovation, however, has raised issues in implementation due to Vietnamese sociocultural features. This project will focus on the applicability of CLT and its adaptation in a Vietnamese context, especially in primary schools.

**How can you be involved?**

I will invite two English teachers, two classroom teachers and their two classes of grade three students as participants. The procedures of data collection at your school for this project will take place within 15 weeks and include:

- **Document collection:** Documents relevant to the MOET’s program and the implementation of this program in relation to teaching and learning activities will be gathered.

- **Teacher interviews:** The teachers will be interviewed about their understandings of CLT.

- **Classroom observations:** An observation for an English lesson at each class per week; the class activities will be photographed and/or digital recorded.

- **Action research:** An action research project will be conducted at your school to investigate how the MOET’s program is implemented in terms of using CLT in English teaching and contributing to teachers’ professional development.

**What would teacher involvement mean?**

The teacher participants will be supported in their work by me and my supervisors:

- Two English teachers of your school will take part in this research project as co-researchers. They will conduct an action research project under my guidance to find solutions for the issues of their teaching in their classes. They will collaborate and work in a group with two classroom teachers from your school,
two other English teachers and two class teachers from another primary school in the area.

- Two class teachers will help the English teachers with the information about their students and participate in discussions with the English teachers about these students.

**How will the teacher’s and the school’s rights be observed?**

Ethical aspects of this project have been approved by the University of Wollongong, and as such will adhere to strict ethical guidelines. For example, schools, teachers, students and their families will not be identified in any reports or publications; participants’ interests are respected, and raw data will be kept strictly confidential and destroyed after five years. If you have any concerns regarding the conducting of this research, please contact the Complaints Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong on (+61) 2 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

**What will happen to the findings of this project?**

The data collected in this project will be used in my PhD thesis and related publications. Findings, particularly those related to your school, may be of interest to you and your staff. If you would like to know the outcomes of my research, I would be very happy to share them with you and your staff.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors if you require further details about the project.

Dr Barbra McKenzie (Supervisor) Dr Steven Pickford (Supervisor) Khuong Thi Bich Diep, MA (Research student)
Faculty of Education Faculty of Education Faculty of Education
(+61) 242 21 38083 (+61) 2 42215854
bmckenz@uow.edu.au spickfor@uow.edu.au tdk996@uowmail.edu.au

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

PROJECT TITLE: An Investigation of the English Teaching Program at Primary School in Vietnam in Relation to Implementing a Curriculum Innovation

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This is an invitation to participate in Doctoral research undertaken at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of the research is to investigate the applicability of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and its adaptation in the Vietnam context in the implementation of the MOET program of teaching English at primary school level. This study will contribute insights related to English teaching and learning in Vietnam at primary level, and the adaptation of CLT in the Vietnamese context. This study will also contribute to participating teachers’ professional development, which is encouraged by the MOET, as it includes reflective collaborations between teacher participants and the researcher aimed at understanding and improving their English teaching through Action Research. The research will last for 15 weeks, from August to December 2013.

RESEARCHER: Khuong Thi Bich Diep

METHOD AND DEMANDS ON PARTICIPANTS

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to participate in the following:

- A two-hour orientation to collaborative Action Research principles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on classroom teaching; and you will be provided with a module explaining how it is used in this research project;
- Three one-hour interviews with the researcher, one at the commencement, one in the middle, and one at the end of the research. Each interview will be audio-taped. The first interview will focus on details related to your teaching experience, teaching qualifications and preparations, including your beliefs and opinions about Communicative Language Teaching. The second and third interviews will explore details of the teaching strategies that you think were effective and those that you think were not effective, as well as matters or issues that supported or constrained the implementation of the MOET program in your classroom. Typical interview questions for interview one will include: How long have you been teaching? What English language teaching classes have you taught? What kinds of preparations have you had for CLT?; and for interviews two and three will include: What do you understand about CLT? Why do you think CLT is required in the MOET’s project? What are some of the benefits of CLT? What difficulties have you had implementing CLT?

- Observations of your classroom teaching for 35 minutes once a week during 10 weeks of this project. Classroom observations will be videotaped to ensure the accuracy of observations. These recordings will be made available to you for review and comment.
• Three 90-minute reflect and review meetings over the 15 weeks of the research with other teacher colleagues participating in this research. The focus of these meetings will be to discuss and share specific teaching strategies and actions being implemented in your classroom. Your approval will be requested to share samples of student work and self-selected video extracts from lessons that reflect successes and challenges being faced.

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS

In relation to the times and procedures outlined above, no other inconveniences or risks to you are foreseen. Your involvement in the research is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time and withdraw any data that you have provided to that point. Refusal to participate in the research will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

FUNDING AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

This study is part of a Doctoral program and not a funded study. It will contribute insights into the use of CLT in English in Vietnam. Findings from the study will contribute to the Doctoral study and possibly be published in educational journals and in conference presentations. Confidentiality is assured, and the school, yourself and students will not be identified in any part of the research.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

This study has been reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

For more details of this project, please feel free to contact me at:
Khuong Thi Bich Diep
Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Education

tbdk996@uowmail.edu.au

Or contact my supervisors

Dr Barbra McKenzie
(Supervisor)
Faculty of Education
(+61) 242 21 38083
bmckenz@uow.edu.au

Dr Steven Pickford
(Supervisor)
Faculty of Education
(+61) 2 42215854
spickfor@uow.edu.au
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

Research Title: An Investigation of the English Teaching Program at Primary School in Vietnam in Relation to Implementing a Curriculum Innovation

Researcher: Khuong Thi Bich Diep

I have been provided with information about this research project and my involvement, and have had opportunity to discuss the project with the researcher, Khuong Thi Bich Diep. I understand the researcher is conducting this study as part of her PhD project undertaken at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time required to be a research participant and orientate to Action Research, the videotaping of my classroom teaching, and discussion of that teaching with other teacher research participants. I have had an opportunity to ask Khuong Thi Bich Diep any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my standing with my school or relationship with the University of Wollongong.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher or her supervisors, Dr Barbra McKenzie (+61) 2 4221 3808 and Dr Steven Pickford (+61) 2 4221 5854 in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong, at any time. I understand that my contribution will be confidential and that there will be no personal identification in the data that I agree to allow to be used in the study. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for Khuong Thi Bich Diep’s PhD thesis and possible journal publications and conference presentations, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I understand that the ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the UOW Human Research Ethics Committee. If I have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, I understand that I can contact the UOW Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong on (+61) 2 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@edu.au.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to:

- participate in the research as outlined in the Information Sheet;
- be interviewed about my understanding and implementation of Communicative Language Teaching;
- have my classroom teaching observed, photographed and/or videoed;
- participate in group review meetings and share examples of own teaching; and
- make available selected lessons, student assignments and reflective meeting reports for triangulation.

Signed .................................................. Date……/....../......
Name (please print)........................................
Email address...........................................
APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

My name is Khuong Thi Bich Diep. I am currently doing a PhD at the University of Wollongong, Australia, under the supervision of Dr Barbra McKenzie and Dr Steven Pickford.

I would like to ask your permission for your child to participate in our research project titled, *An Investigation of the English Teaching Program at Primary School in Vietnam in Relation to Implementing a Curriculum Innovation*. The aims of this project are to understand the applicability of Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and its adaptation in the Vietnamese context.

In this project, I will observe your child’s English class once per week, and photograph and video record the class activities, from August to December 2013. It is not expected that this will cause any disruption to the running of the classroom. You are free to refuse my invitation or withdraw your child’s participation at any time of the project.

Ethical aspects of this project have been approved and reviewed by the University of Wollongong, and as such will adhere to strict ethical guidelines. If you have any concerns regarding the conducting of this research, please contact the Complaints Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong on (+61) 2 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

For more details of this project, please feel free to contact me at:

Khuong Thi Bich Diep dtbk996@uowmail.edu.au.

Or contact my supervisors at:

Dr Barbra McKenzie bmckenz@uow.edu.au

Dr Steven Pickford spickfor@uow.edu.au

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Research Title: An Investigation of the English Teaching Program at Primary School in Vietnam in Relation to Implementing a Curriculum Innovation

Researcher: Khuong Thi Bich Diep

Parent Consent

I have been given information about this research study and have had the opportunity to discuss the research with Khuong Thi Bich Diep who is a PhD student at the University of Wollongong. I understand the research is part of a PhD degree supervised by Dr Barbra McKenzie and Dr Steven Pickford from the School of Education at the University of Wollongong. I am aware that the project will last 15 weeks, from August to December 2013.

I consent to my child being observed and videotaped in class as part of the research, and that the videotape will only be used for review by the class teachers in this study and for data analysis in the PhD study.

I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary and confidential and that there will be no personal identification in the data used in the study. I understand that I can cease my child’s participation at any time and that withdrawal from the study will not affect my relationship with my child’s school. I understand that there are no potential risks or burdens associated with this study.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher or her supervisors at any time at the contact details provided to me in the Information Sheet.

I understand that the ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the UOW Human Research Ethics Committee. If I have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, I understand that I can contact the UOW Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong on (+61) 2 4221 3386 or email rse-ethics@edu.au.

By signing below I am indicating my consent for my child’s participation in this research project, as it has been described to me in the Information Sheet and discussion with Khuong Thi Bich Diep. I understand that these data will be used in a PhD thesis, journal publications and conference presentations, and I consent to it being used in that manner.

Parent’s/ Guardian’s signature: ______________________________
Parent’s/ Guardian’s name: ______________________________
Date: ______________________
APPENDIX F: PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR THE INITIAL INTERVIEWS

1. What’s your name?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. How long have you been teaching in the project of the MOET?
4. What class are you teaching?
5. What do you understand about CLT?
6. Why do you think CLT is required in the MOET’s project?
7. What do you think the teacher should do? (What is the teacher’s role?)
8. What do you really do in a CLT classes? (If there are differences between what the teacher thinks they SHOULD do and what they REALLY do, encourage them to explain).
9. What are the activities do you assign for the students? (What do the students do in CLT classes?)
10. Can the students do it well?
11. What do you expect the students can do after a lesson?
12. What do you do in case they cannot meet the requirements of the lessons?
13. How do you manage their activities?
14. How do you know that they can follow the activities/ your instructions?
15. How can you evaluate their work?
16. What are difficulties do you deal with when implementing the MOET’s project/ CLT?
17. What do you gain from implementing the MOET’s project/ CLT?
18. What do you think the differences between CLT and the language teaching methods you have practiced previously?
19. Do the students enjoy studying English in your classes? Why or why not?
20. How do you prepare for the lessons before a class?
21. Do you think you can improve your lesson plan? How can you do that?
22. What do you think you should do before a class?
23. What do you usually do to deal with the problems in your teaching?
24. Can you give me a situation you have faced with?
25. How can you solve that problem?
26. What else do you think you can do in that situation?
27. What do you do to get assistance from your colleagues?
28. Do you usually talk to other teachers about your work?
29. How often do you attend the professional development courses conducted by the MOET?
30. What benefits do you think you can get from those courses?
31. What have those courses provided you?
APPENDIX G: AN EXAMPLE OF INITIAL CODING

English translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s answer</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have a new vice-principal. This is her first year. She also said that group work should be encouraged. English subject is always like that. Last year I was the only teacher who was complained because of noisy classes. “Why aren’t other classes noisy but your class is noisy?” Because there are more activities. I was teaching for a language centre at the time and I liked pair and group work. I organized pair and group work activities for every structure practice. But I have to change the SS seats frequently because they might get bored to work with the same partner. And when they change their seats, they make noise. And two vice-principals, Mrs Mai and Mrs Nhi. Mrs Mai said “Anh’s class is very noisy”. Mrs Nhi said “It’s a feature of English subject”. One vice-principal understands and one doesn’t. Then she complained in the school meeting that my class was noisy. So I closed the door and the windows to keep the noise inside. It was inconvenient though. It is so good if every school has a room for English language teaching only with air-conditioning and we can close the door. But the school doesn’t. I think these activities are good. I teach a structure. It’ll be very time-consuming if I practice with every student. But if I model it, then call some students to model it, then let students to do the activity (in pair or group), they’ll have more opportunities to speak. But it’s very difficult to get a vice-principal’s support because the vice-principal sometimes doesn’t understand. And I was blamed to be “too friendly with students”. Because I don’t just give them exercises like other classroom teachers. I come to students’ seats and assist them. I should be friendly with students. But it’s considered as a sin: “Too friendly with students”. I can’t understand that. But the vice-principal was reasonable to say, “We teachers must be friendly with students so that they like our subjects,”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10. New vice-principal  
11. Encouraging group work  
12. Being blamed for noise  
13. Activities causing noise  
14. Preferring pair & group work  
15. Pair & group work for every grammar structure  
16. Changing SS’s seating for activities  
17. Same partner causing SS to be bored  
18. Activities causing noise  
19. Different perspectives from two vice-principals  
20. Closing the doors to prevent noise going out  
21. Insufficient facilities  
22. Positive opinion on pair and group work  
23. Saving time with pair and group work  
24. Modelling after form instructions  
25. SS have more opportunities to practice and use language  
26. Difficult to get sympathy from managers  
27. Being friendly with SS is a “sin”  
28. Different perspectives of teacher’s role  
29. Being close to SS is necessary  
30. Agreeing with a vice principal  
31. Being friendly with SS encourages SS to learn |
otherwise if we are so serious, just read-copy, read-copy in English subject like others, student won’t like it. They won’t be active and just stay still.”
APPENDIX H: AN EXAMPLE OF SECOND CODING PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Focused codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Lesson plans vs actual class activities</td>
<td>FA1. Using flexible teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Lesson plans strictly follow a format</td>
<td>• A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Actual activities are flexible</td>
<td>• A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Example of changing order of activities in class</td>
<td>• A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Teaching grammar first</td>
<td>• A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Understanding grammar</td>
<td>• A72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7. Video recording at language centre</td>
<td>• A73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8. Managers’ observations &amp; suggestions</td>
<td>• A74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9. Benefiting from the recordings</td>
<td>• A113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10. New vice-principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11. Encouraging group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12. Being blamed for noise</td>
<td>FA2. Teaching forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13. Activities causing noise</td>
<td>• A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14. Preferring pair &amp; group work</td>
<td>• A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15. Pair &amp; group work for every grammar structure</td>
<td>• A15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16. Changing students’ seating for activities</td>
<td>• A65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A17. Same partner causing students to be bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18. Activities causing noise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A20. Closing the doors to prevent noise going out</td>
<td>• A10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21. Insufficient facilities.</td>
<td>• A11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A22. Positive opinion on pair and group work</td>
<td>• A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A23. Insufficient time to work with every S</td>
<td>• A19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A24. Modelling after form instructions</td>
<td>• A26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A25. SS have more opportunities to practice and use language in pairs and groups</td>
<td>• A30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A26. Sympathy from managers</td>
<td>• A31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A27. Being friendly with SS is a “sin”</td>
<td>• A32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A28. Different perspectives of teacher’s role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A29. Being close to SS is necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A30. Agreeing with a vice principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A31. Being friendly with SS encourages SS to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A32. Encouragement from managers motivates T</td>
<td></td>
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## APPENDIX I: AN EXAMPLE OF THEME IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open codes</th>
<th>Focused codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Lesson plans vs actual class activities</td>
<td>FA1. Using flexible teaching techniques</td>
<td>TA1. Understanding of CLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Lesson plans strictly follow a format</td>
<td>• A1</td>
<td>➢ TA1.1. Unsure about CLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Actual activities are flexible</td>
<td>• A3</td>
<td>➢ TA1.2. Lacking of training at the college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Example of changing order of activities in class</td>
<td>• A4</td>
<td>• FA26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Teaching grammar first</td>
<td>• A5</td>
<td>• FA27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Understanding grammar</td>
<td>• A72</td>
<td>• FA44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7. Video recording at language centre</td>
<td>• A73</td>
<td>• FA55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8. Managers’ observation &amp; suggestions</td>
<td>• A74</td>
<td>➢ TA1.3. Learning teaching techniques from different sources</td>
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<td>A9. Benefiting from the recordings</td>
<td>• A11</td>
<td>• FA4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10. New vice-principal</td>
<td>FA2. Teaching forms</td>
<td>• FA54</td>
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<tr>
<td>A11. Encouraging group work</td>
<td>• A15</td>
<td>➢ TA2. Perspectives on language teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>A12. Being blamed for noise</td>
<td>• A16</td>
<td>➢ TA2.1. Using flexible teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13. Activities causing noise</td>
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<td>• FA1</td>
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<tr>
<td>A14. Preferring pair &amp; group work</td>
<td>• A18</td>
<td>• FA11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15. Pair &amp; group work for every grammar structure</td>
<td>• A26</td>
<td>• FA12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16. Changing SS’s seating for activities</td>
<td>• A30</td>
<td>• FA66</td>
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<td>A17. Same partner causing SS to be bored</td>
<td>• A31</td>
<td>➢ TA2.2. Perspectives on teaching forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18. Activities causing noise</td>
<td>• A32</td>
<td>• FA2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A19. Different perspectives of two vice-principals</td>
<td>FA3. Support from schools</td>
<td>• FA56</td>
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<tr>
<td>A20. Closing the doors to prevent noise going out</td>
<td>• A10</td>
<td>➢ TA2.3. Perspectives on mistakes</td>
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</table>

  • FA1
  • FA5

  • FA2
  • FA6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A21. Insufficient facilities.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A22. Positive opinion on pair and group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>A23. Insufficient time to work with every S</td>
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<tr>
<td>A24. Modelling after form instructions</td>
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<td>A25. SS have more opportunities to practice and use language in pairs and groups</td>
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<td>A30. Agreeing with a vice principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>A31. Being friendly with SS encourages SS to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A32. Encouragement from managers motivates T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A33. No activities causing ineffective lessons</td>
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<td>A34. T’s experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>A35. First year of the MOET’s project</td>
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<tr>
<td>A36. Teaching Let’s Go</td>
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<tr>
<td>A37. FF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A38. Family &amp; Friends (FF) are better than Let’s Go (LG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A39. FF has more activities</td>
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<td>A40. Activities in FF</td>
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<td>A41. Group work – role playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A42. Remembering stories for role playing</td>
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<tr>
<td>A43. T’s assistance in activities</td>
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<td>A44. SS like activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>A45. Remembering stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>A46. Listening &amp; reading aloud</td>
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<td>• A20</td>
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<td>FA7. Perspectives on pair and group work</td>
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<td>• A41</td>
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<tr>
<td>FA8. Changing SS’s seating</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A16</td>
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<td>• A17</td>
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<td>FA9. Facility constraint</td>
</tr>
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<td>FA11. Teacher modelling</td>
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<td>• A48</td>
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<tr>
<td>FA12. SS modelling</td>
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<td>• A25</td>
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<tr>
<td>FA13. Being friendly with SS encouraging learning</td>
</tr>
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<td>• A29</td>
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<td>• A31</td>
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- TA2.4. Perspectives on pair & group work/ classroom activities
  - FA6
  - FA7
  - FA8
  - FA14
  - FA17
  - FA19
  - FA22

- TA2.5. Connecting language taught in classroom with real life
  - FA23
  - FA64
  - FA65

- TA2.6. Perspectives on L1 & L2 use
  - FA57
  - FA63

- TA2.7. Dependent on textbook
  - FA30

- TA2.8. Modelling
  - FA69
  - FA11
  - FA12

- TA2.9. SS’ outcomes
  - FA39
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A47. Practicing with book</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A48. Modelling role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playing</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX J: AN EXAMPLE OF CLASS OBSERVATION

### TRANSCRIPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Now class, this is Emma. This is Emma. And she has some school things. Hãy là bạn Emma và bạn Emma có một số đồ dùng học tập (Trans: This is Emma and Emma has some school things). Now look at the picture. What school things can you see? Các con xem các con nhìn thấy学校 things nào? (Trans: What school things can you see?). You please.</td>
<td>L2-L1 transfer in instruction IRF Narrow her relationship with SS by calling them ‘các con’, ‘các bạn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Thưa cô, em thấy là pencil, rubber (Trans: Teacher, I see pencil, rubber)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Rồi, lặp đó lại cô nghe nào. (Trans: Class, repeat it) SS: pen, rubber, bag, ruler. T: Where? Where’s ruler? SS: A rubber, pencil case, bag. Some SS: (Shouted) Bag... Bag... Bag</td>
<td>L1 use for request Drilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Now, look at your book. Look at your book and listen. (Turns on the CD) T: Rồi, bây giờ chúng ta cùng nghe, cùng chỉ vào và cùng đọc theo nhe. (Trans: Well. Now let’s listen, point and repeat) (T and SS repeat after CD)</td>
<td>L1 use for instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Rồi, bây giờ chúng ta cùng thực làm bạn Emma nhé (Trans: Well. Now let’s play the role of Emma). My name’s Emma.</td>
<td>L1 use for instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SS: My name’s Emma.
T: This is my school bag.
SS: This is my school bag.
T: This is my pencil case. Bạn nào có pencil case, hãy ra (Trans: Take your pencil out if you have it here)
T & SS: This is my pencil case.
T: Green? Ai có green pencil case? Bạn nào có green pencil case? (Trans: Who has green pencil case? Who has green pencil case?)

| T : Rồi, OK. Bây giờ chúng ta đóng vai bạn Emma trước, sau đó chúng ta sẽ đổi (vai) (Trans: Well, OK. We’ll play the role of Emma first, then we’ll change (the role)). Ok. This is my pencil case.  
SS: This is my pencil case.  
T: It’s green.  
SS: It’s green.  
T: And this is my pencil.  
SS: And this is my pencil.  
T: Rồi, tiếp theo (Trans: Well. Next). This is my blue pen.  
SS: This is my blue pen.  
T: This is my blue pen.  
SS: This is my blue pen.  
T: Bạn nào có bút bi chúng ta dùng bút bi (Trans: Use a ballpoint pen if you have it). And this is my pink pen.  
SS: And this is my pink pen.  
T: Ok. Look at this.  
SS: Look at this.  
T: This is a rubber.  
SS: This is a rubber.  

| Drilling Using real objects to demonstrate the lesson |
| L1 used to negotiate meaning of an L2 word |
| L1 use for instruction Drilling |

T: Hello. My name’s Emma. This is my school bag. This is my pencil case. It’s green. And this is my pencil. This is my blue pen. And this is my pink pen. Look at this. It’s a rubber. Can I see your bag?  
SS: Yeah.
APPENDIX K. ANH – CLASS OBSERVATION 1
Lesson Three Song

1. Listen, point and repeat.  
   - kite
   - bike
   - train

2. Listen and sing.  
   **Toys, toys, toys, toys!**
   Toys, toys, toys, toys,  
   Toys, toys, toys, toys,  
   This is my big red kite,  
   My big red kite,  
   My big red kite.  
   This is my big red kite,  
   I love toys!  
   Toys, toys, toys, toys, ...  
   This is my big blue bike, ...  
   Toys, toys, toys, toys, ...  
   This is my big, green train, ...

3. Sing and do.
Lesson Five
Skills Time!

Reading

1. Point to parts of the body. Say the words.
2. Listen and read.

Hi, I'm Tom.
Let's make a paper lion!

Colour the face, the body and the legs. Then colour the paws and tail too.

Cut out the body. Now cut the face.

Fold the tail. Fold the face.

Cut out the four legs and paws. Fold the legs.

Stick the paws on the legs. Stick the legs on the body.

Look! It's a lion.

3. Read again. Number the pictures in the correct order.
Lesson Five
Skills Time!

Reading
1. Point to an animal and a toy. Say the words.
2. Read and listen to the poem.

My Favourite...

What’s my favourite toy?
My favourite one of all?
Is it my train? Is it my car?
No, it’s my yellow ball.

What’s my favourite colour?
You may like it too.
Is it green? Is it red?
No, it’s the colour blue.

What’s my favourite animal?
It’s furry and it’s fat.
Is it a dog? Is it a goat?
No, it’s a lovely cat.

Tom, age 7

3. Read again and write.

My favourite toy is a ball.
My favourite colour is _______.
My favourite animal is a _______.

18 Unit 2 Reading: a poem