English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis/project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Thi Hong Nguyen

24 August 2015
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALM</td>
<td>Audiolingual Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Communicative Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEFR</td>
<td>Common European Framework for Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
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<td>CHEAN</td>
<td>College Human Ethics Advisory Network</td>
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<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>GTM</td>
<td>Grammar-Translation Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUTECH</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree by Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOET</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages</td>
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<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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Abstract

Nowadays, English is known as a global language. A great deal of research in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) has been carried out. However there has been little research in this area conducted in higher education institutions in Vietnam. This study aimed to address this knowledge gap. It focused on English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH). A mixed methods case study design was used in this study. Data collected quantitatively from students’ questionnaires were utilized to analyze students’ perspectives towards English teaching and learning in HUTECH. 272 students in HUTECH were involved. Eight classroom observations were done to construct a snapshot of English teaching practices in HUTECH. Qualitative interviews with 12 EFL teachers and two managers were conducted to understand the perspectives of the teachers and managers about English teaching and learning in HUTECH. Data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Both positive and negative factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH have been presented.

The study adds meaningful contributions to the knowledge of EFL teaching and learning at HUTECH. The research will help to improve English training in HUTECH particularly and in Vietnamese higher education generally. It will also encourage other researchers in Vietnam to conduct more studies in this field in order to steadily improve English teaching and learning in Vietnam.
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0. Introduction

In the new global era where countries all over the world are connected and closer to each other, English as an international language is becoming an essential tool for communication and integration. The activity of English teaching and learning as a second or foreign language has attracted much concern and discussion from many international scholars, researchers, and educators. This study aims to contribute to this research and knowledge by investigating English teaching and learning at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), a private university in Vietnam. It is anticipated that the results of this study will provide significant contributions to the improvement of English teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Vietnam.

This chapter outlines an introduction to the thesis. The first three sections of this chapter describe the background, research problems and the purpose of this research. The following sections define the research question and state the sub-research questions, explore the scope of the study and provide a brief introduction of the research methodology. The significance of this study is then addressed, before finally, presenting an outline of the thesis structure.

1.1. Background and Context

The 21st century has brought many new opportunities to Vietnam. However, it has also brought many new challenges. One of the challenges which Vietnam is facing is how to build a strong and modern education system, to keep up with the changes in the knowledge economy which are developing rapidly in the global sphere. In this context, during the 2006 10th conference of the Vietnamese Communist Party, one of the key
objectives of education discussed was the development of high quality human resources, and to bring about a change in Vietnamese education and training so as to make education become a leading national policy, along with the application of science and technology (Văn kiện Đại hội Đại biểu Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam lần thứ 10, 2006). In 2010, at the 11th conference of the Vietnamese Communist Party, education remained as an important policy objective for the Vietnamese Government (Văn kiện Đại hội Đại biểu Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam lần thứ 11, 2011).

In the report of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Minister Nguyễn Thienes Nhan focused on the development of the higher education system and the recommendations to assure and improve the quality of education training. In this report, some main solutions were suggested. First, it was recommended that the discussions for the topic “What should be done to assure and improve the training quality?” need to be held widely in all education institutions and in all society. In addition, the renewal of the management of higher education was mentioned. It was pointed out that the quality of higher education can also be improved by setting out the standard for the input of higher education system. Moreover, it was suggested that international cooperation should be focused, so that higher education in Vietnam can be improved as other developed countries (Nguyen, 2010).

Due to this report, it is obvious that MOET has paid much attention to finding solutions for improving the higher education system. One of the solutions mentioned above is developing activities in international education. However, in order to carry out this solution successfully, an international language is required, and English is the most widely used international language. So, English education is vital to achieve this aim.

English is not only a means for international communication but also an effective means to improve people’s knowledge, to enable cultural exchanges and increase
international cooperation. Since Vietnam became the 150th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007, English has become more and more important as a key to unlocking new opportunities. Therefore, the activity of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been recognized by the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Vietnamese Government as important in national development and integration. The view of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Vietnamese Government is that education in Vietnam must be developed both in quantity and quality, one aspect of which is to gradually help learners achieve the English competency to participate in international training programs (Nguyen, 2009).

The Vietnamese Government has also made great efforts in improving the quality of English training in the Vietnam’s education system in general and in the higher education in particular through a number of policies, decisions and projects about educational renovation. The Decision No. 5201/BGĐĐT-GĐĐH set the guidelines for the assessment of English ability of lecturers teaching majors in English in higher education. The Decision No. 5091/BGĐĐT-DANN provided instructions for professional development for English teachers in secondary schools and high schools. In addition, the Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg about the approval for the national foreign languages project in the period 2008 - 2020 marked the great efforts and considerations of the government for the quality of national foreign languages programs. In the Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg, in order to assure a common quality standard, it is required to have the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) applied in teaching and testing foreign languages proficiency in the Vietnamese education system (Nguyen, 2008).
1.2. Research Problem and Reasons for Choosing the Research Topic

The activity of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language has been developing rapidly on a global scale. Many countries, such as South Korea, Indonesia, China and Thailand have implemented policies to improve the quality of English teaching (Richards, 2010). In Vietnam, English teaching and learning is also becoming more and more popular. English is taught widely in public and private schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam as a compulsory subject. In Vietnamese higher education, English teaching and learning is divided into two programs, the elective English major program and the non-major English program (called general English), which is a mandatory subject for all students. However, it is reported that the activity of teaching and learning non-major English in Vietnam, especially in colleges and universities has not been as effective as expected (Ngan, 2004). As Ngan points out, the English level of Vietnamese students at higher education is about 360-370 TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), or 3.5 IELTS (International English Language Testing System). After higher education, the English level of students is about 400 TOEFL, 4.0 IELTS. Ngan explains that this level is very low compared to the world standard. In addition, Ngan reports that more than 50% of Vietnamese students in higher education still have to study English outside class time at private English centers. As Ngan states, this is an alarming number as it indicates that the English teaching and learning at higher education does not meet the needs and requirements of students. The low English level of Vietnamese students at higher education is also confirmed by Chi (2014) who points out that the English skills of most Vietnamese students are at rudimentary levels. It is revealed that 70% of students at a university cannot meet the third grade level of the six grades in national language project, which is equivalent to TOEIC 450.
One issue is that teachers mainly focus on transferring knowledge, using traditional teaching methods: focusing on grammar and vocabulary. These teaching methods require students to learn by heart in a passive way, and fail to arouse students’ interests. Furthermore, much higher education management activity is not effectively organized, and the teaching equipment and facilities are often inadequate. In summary, there are many problems that need to be addressed regarding the teaching and learning of non-major English in Vietnamese higher education.

According to Ha (2008), at the 2008 Conference of English Training for Vietnamese Higher Education, held by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Dr. Tran Thi Ha – Head of the Vietnamese Department of Education and Training – pointed out that 51.7% of university graduates were not proficient enough to meet the requirements of a job that included English use. In this conference, Professor Banh Tien Long – Deputy Minister of Vietnamese MOET - said that in order to gain great improvements in English training, we need to find common strategies for universities and apply new and effective teaching techniques.

At the conference, a number of key strategies and solutions for the improvement of English teaching have been suggested: applying English placement tests to group students into appropriate levels and classes and setting out certain English proficiency standards for graduation requirement (Ha, 2008). However, English teaching and learning is yet to reach a satisfactory level. According to Nhat (2010), feedback from companies and enterprises reveals that English proficiencies of graduate students are still low, with most graduate students unable to use English for communication with foreign partners.

Many activities, programs, seminars, and conferences about English teaching and learning have been conducted with the purpose that they will help to improve the quality of
English training. For example, international conferences regarding Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) are held every year in Korea (KoTESOL), and Cambodia (CamTESOL). In addition, there have been many newspapers, magazines and journal articles discussing English teaching and learning. There are also international journals dedicated specifically to English teaching being published every year, such as: 

There has been a great deal of research relating to English training being conducted in many countries in the world. Studies on Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) have been carried out in many different contexts. Some researchers focus on exploring the application of English teaching methods (Chang, 2011; Clarke, 2010; Mondal, 2011; Savignon, 1991). However, other researchers have been interested in investigating the use of technology or instructional materials in English teaching (Guilloteaux, 2013; Kong & Wang, 2006), or examining the roles of teachers and learners in English language classrooms (Huijie, 2012; Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011).

In Vietnam, there have also been a variety of studies conducted to investigate the activity of English teaching and learning. As a Vietnamese teacher of English, the researcher has experienced the difficulty of teaching English at university level. From 2007 to 2010, the researcher taught English at HUTECH University, and during this time, recognized that there are many factors that influence English teaching and learning at universities, and that these factors are often complicated and interrelated. In terms of research at HUTECH, many studies have been limited to quick surveys to get students’ feedback at the end of the courses, without exploring teachers’ perspectives and managers’ perspectives. Therefore, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of English
teaching and learning at HUTECH, it was important to investigate these issues in more depth. In the new school year meeting day 2009-2010, one of the leaders in the management board of HUTECH University, expressed his desire to make HUTECH one of the top universities in Vietnam, and one of his main strategies would be to find the right solutions for improving students’ English ability in HUTECH. In order to apply the right solutions, it is necessary to investigate and identify factors affecting the activity of English teaching and learning at HUTECH.

The recognition of the need to improve EFL teaching and learning by the Vietnamese Government and HUTECH leaders (the leadership of HUTECH University) has encouraged the researcher to carry out this investigation. This PhD research aimed to go beyond some of the limitations of past studies, which focused on certain aspects of English teaching and learning, or particular participant groups. Using HUTECH as an in-depth case study, this research aimed to investigate various aspects of English teaching and learning through perspectives of various participant groups and various data resources.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study was to examine the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH, Vietnam, and determine factors which affected the English proficiency of HUTECH students. In addition, it aimed to understand the complex relationships and institutional contexts behind these factors. Based on findings of this research and the identifications of these factors, recommendations have been suggested which will contribute to the improvement of English teaching and learning at HUTECH.
1.4. Research Questions

In order to have a full understanding of the factors affecting English teaching and learning at HUTECH, it is important to explore these factors through the viewpoints of students, teachers and managers. In addition, it is also important to observe what is actually happening in the classrooms. Therefore, the study consisted of one central research question, followed by four sub-research questions.

The central research question was: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH?”. This central research question was complemented by the following sub-questions:

1. What are students’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?
2. What are teachers’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?
3. What are managers’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?
4. How is English being taught in classrooms in HUTECH?

1.5. Scope of the Study

The focus of this study was to understand in detail the factors that affect English teaching and learning by looking closely at one university. By choosing HUTECH as the focus, instead of a number of private universities, the researcher can deeply explore many aspects of English teaching and learning, through different data sources, in order to gain an in-depth understanding. This understanding will help to provide significant recommendations to the improvement of English teaching and learning at HUTECH.

In HUTECH, at the time this research was being conducted, there were about 20,000 students enrolled in all programs and levels. In HUTECH curriculum, non-major English is taught in the first and the second year. The research conducted with the students
and teachers in their second year was believed to be more effective than being undertaken with the students and teachers in their first year. This assumption is based on the belief that participants could only express their perspectives after they had experienced the non-major English program in their first year. Therefore, when describing the scope of this study, it can be summarized as follows: The study was confined to students, teachers, and managers in HUTECH, Vietnam. The students were at the second year. They were non-major English students from ten different disciplines in HUTECH. The teachers involved in the study had at least two years’ experience teaching a non-major English course in HUTECH, and had recently taught a non-major English course. The managers participated in the study had dealt with and had responsibility and influence in the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. They were managers of HUTECH English centers. The interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations were conducted in HUTECH campuses.

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Mixed methods research. In order to address the research questions and explore comprehensively the activity of English teaching and learning at HUTECH, it was necessary to approach a variety of stakeholders using a range of research techniques. In order to gather reliable data, each of these different participant groups (students, teachers and managers), needed to be investigated using the most appropriate methods. Therefore, a mixed methods case study approach was chosen for this study. According to Creswell (2009), mixed methods research is an approach which allows researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in one study. Bryman (2006), believes that because the mixed methods approach encourages researchers to employ a multi method matrix, it
can help to exploit the strengths and overcome the weaknesses of using only quantitative or qualitative approaches.

In this study, a concurrent embedded design was chosen by the researcher. This design enabled the researcher to use “one data collection phase, during which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). This method was selected as it is time efficient, but still allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Also, this design allowed the researcher to use different methods to assess different research questions and study different groups or levels in an organization (Creswell, 2009).

1.6.2. Case study. This research only focused on English training in HUTECH University, Vietnam. As such, case study was considered as a strategy of inquiry, as it focuses on exploring in-depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals or organizations (Creswell, 2009). The case study approach also allows researchers to use multiple methods of data collection (Denscombe, 2007). According to Merriam (1998),

Case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. Educational processes, problems and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy. (p. 41)

Therefore, approaching HUTECH as a case study was appropriate for this thesis, as it allowed the researcher to use a variety of research methods in order to acquire a rich and in-depth understanding of English teaching and learning activities from the participants’ perspectives.
1.6.3. Research methods. This study aimed to investigate perspectives of different participant groups regarding the activity of English teaching and learning, through various research methods.

1.6.3.1. Quantitative methods. In order to understand the students’ perspective, a questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was the only method used for student survey because the number of student participants was large, and it was hard for interviews to be conducted. This questionnaire aimed to obtain students’ responses regarding most aspects of English teaching and learning at HUTECH, including: syllabus, curriculum, class sizes, facilities and equipment, teachers’ teaching style and methods, students’ English levels, students’ attitudes and students’ expectations.

The data collected were then coded, and the software program SPSS was used to analyze the data (Pallant, 2010). After analysis, the data were presented and displayed by charts, tables, and figures. Furthermore, written interpretations of the statistical findings about English training in HUTECH were also constructed.

1.6.3.2. Qualitative methods. In order to understand the viewpoints and opinions of teachers and managers about English training in HUTECH, individual face-to-face interviews were conducted. The interviews were designed to cover: syllabus, curriculum, facilities and equipment, class sizes, HUTECH leadership, teachers’ teaching styles and methods, students’ English levels, students’ attitudes and motivation. The responses obtained through the interviews served to address the research question relating to what factors affect English teaching and learning in HUTECH from the perspectives of teachers and managers. As the number of teacher and manager participants was small, it was not necessary to conduct a questionnaire to collect data from these participants. Therefore, interviews were the only method used.
In addition, in order to investigate how English is being taught in classrooms at HUTECH, class observations were conducted. The class observations were chosen as observation helps to gain understandings of the context with specific incidents and behaviors (Merriam, 1998).

After the data were collected from the interviews and observations, the data were prepared for analysis. The researcher mainly applied the procedure for the qualitative data analysis introduced by Creswell (2009) for this thesis: organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding the data, grouping data into themes, interrelating themes, interpreting the meaning of themes. The responses from teachers and managers in the interviews were transcribed, then were coded and grouped into themes. After that, narrative passages were used to make interpretations and convey the findings of the analysis. Similarly, the interactions and activities observed in the classrooms were also coded and then grouped into themes. Based on the grouped themes, descriptions and interpretations were made and findings were presented in narrative passages.

1.7. Significance of the Study

It is believed that this study will provide a powerful contribution to HUTECH leaders’ strategies in education quality improvement. As mentioned earlier, HUTECH leaders have expressed a strong desire to determine appropriate strategies for improving the quality of education and training in the university. This is exemplified by the mission of HUTECH: to provide high quality human resources in the short term and long term for industrialization and modernization in South of Vietnam in particular and in the whole country in general. In order to achieve this mission, HUTECH leaders understand that they need to focus on a range of improvements. One of the aspects which will help to create high quality human resources is the English proficiency level of employees.
In addition, this study will provide HUTECH teachers with a comprehensive picture of English teaching and learning in HUTECH so that they can adjust their teaching to help students improve their English. This is particularly important as most teachers at HUTECH are very busy complying with their working conditions. Due to a new policy implemented at HUTECH, each teacher is required to fulfill at least 480 teaching hours per year. This creates a heavy work-load for teachers and prevents them from other activities like self assessment and career improvement. This study will provide teachers with a chance to reflect upon their teaching, and it is hoped that it will improve their teaching quality.

Furthermore, it is also believed that this study will encourage other researchers, especially HUTECH researchers to conduct more research in education improvement in general and in English teaching and learning in particular. In Vietnam, research activity is also considered and encouraged but as many teachers and lecturers are quite busy with teaching, they do not have much time to invest in research. Thus, this study is believed to be a facilitator and motivation for the research activity among teachers and lecturers in HUTECH University. In addition, this study is particularly significant as it is one of the first big research projects regarding English teaching and learning at HUTECH, which is believed to set a starting point for research activity in this field for the future.

1.8. Outline of Thesis Structure

**Chapter 1. Introduction.** This chapter describes a short contextualization of the PhD research project.

**Chapter 2. Background and Context.** This chapter provides a description of the political and social status of Vietnam which affects the Vietnamese education system. A brief history of language and education in Vietnam is presented, followed by an overview
of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) policies which have a
great impact on English teaching and learning in Vietnam in general, and in HUTECH in
particular. A brief description of HUTECH is provided, indicating how HUTECH follows
MOET policy.

**Chapter 3. Literature Review.** This chapter highlights issues related to foreign
language teaching and learning, including general theories of language teaching and
learning, as well as major methods in foreign language teaching. Then, there is a section
covering research studies about English language teaching and learning.

**Chapter 4. Research Design.** This chapter details the research design,
methodology, data collection techniques and data analysis used in the study. This chapter
also addresses the issue of validity and reliability in this research project. This chapter
outlines the ethics of this research, and the steps taken to ensure this research was collected
in accordance with the ethics procedures for RMIT University.

**Chapter 5. Students’ Perspective of English Teaching and Learning in
HUTECH.** This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of the students’
questionnaire, revealing the students’ perspectives on English teaching and learning in
HUTECH. Both positive aspects and negative aspects from the students’ viewpoint have
been presented.

**Chapter 6. Teachers’ Perspectives of English Teaching and Learning in
HUTECH.** This chapter describes the results of data analysis of the teacher interviews
which revealed the teachers’ perspectives on English teaching and learning in HUTECH.
Both negative and positive aspects relating to the activity of English teaching and learning
in HUTECH have been explored and presented.

**Chapter 7. Managers’ Perspectives of English Teaching and Learning in
HUTECH.** This chapter details the results of the data analysis of the manager interviews
which revealed the managers’ perspectives on English teaching and learning in HUTECH. Both positive aspects and negative aspects from the managers’ viewpoint have been presented.

**Chapter 8. English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH through the Observation of Classroom Practices.** This chapter describes the activity of English teaching and learning in classrooms in HUTECH based on the data analysis of class observations. Both positive and negative aspects have been explored.

**Chapter 9. Discussions, Recommendations and Conclusions.** This chapter presents discussions about the results of the study which are also compared with the previous literature. The chapter documents limitations of the research and suggestions for further research in this area. Recommendations for related key stakeholders have been incorporated into the discussion. Conclusions of the whole thesis are presented in the last section.
Chapter 2. Background and Context

2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides a snapshot of the Vietnamese political and social context which has had an influence on Vietnamese education. A brief history of Language and Education in Vietnam is described, followed by an overview of Vietnamese higher education under the management of Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). In this chapter, a brief description of HUTECH is also presented, which sets the particular background context in which the study is conducted.

2.1. Brief History of Language and Education in Vietnam

2.1.1. History of language in Vietnam. In order to consider English teaching and learning in contemporary Vietnam, it is important to understand the history of language in Vietnam, and how this history has influenced Vietnamese politics, culture, and the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

“Vietnam’s linguistic history exemplifies the close relationship between language and politics” (Denham, 1992, p. 61). For more than 1000 years, from 111 BC to 938 AD, Vietnam was under the rule of the Chinese. Therefore, during that period, Vietnam’s politics, education, culture, and language were affected by China. The education was in classical Chinese and followed the Chinese model based on Confucian philosophy (S. Wright, 2002).

In 939 AD, Vietnam gained independence from China, but “Chinese was still the most influential language in the society. Therefore, for centuries the teaching and learning of foreign languages was restricted to classical Chinese” (Hoa & Tuan, 2007, p. 163). In the period after independence, a new Vietnamese language emerged, called “chu Nom”,...
and “chu Nom” came into practice in the late thirteenth century (Thinh, 2006). Chinese and “chu Nom” were both used at that time, “chu Nom” was primarily a spoken language, and classical Chinese was used for official documentation purposes (Wright, 2002).

In the seventeenth century, in order to facilitate the introduction of Catholicism to Vietnam, the Catholic missionaries from the West developed a new language system for Vietnamese people, based on the Latin letter system and the sounds of the languages spoken at that time (Chinese and “chu Nom”). In the nineteenth century, this language was named “chu Quoc ngu” (National Language), and became the third language in Vietnam. These three languages, “chu Quoc ngu”, “chu Nom” and Chinese all co-existed in Vietnam at that time.

In the period 1861-1945, Vietnam was colonized by France, and was under French control. During this period, French became the dominant language, but “chu Quoc ngu” was also used. French colonization also saw the gradual decrease of Chinese language and “chu Nom” (Wright, 2002).

The Revolution led by the Vietnamese Communist Party in August 1945 helped Vietnam gain independence from France. The new Vietnamese Government declared “chu Quoc ngu” the official national language of Vietnam. It remains the official Vietnamese language to this day (Thinh, 2006).

The Revolution was defeated later that same year, 1945, with the French colonists returning to power, and controlling Vietnam for nine more years. After the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the Geneva Agreement was signed, dividing Vietnam into the North and the South until nationwide elections were held. However, the division period lasted much longer than expected because the government of Ngo Dinh Diem in the South refused to hold elections. The resulting guerilla war between the North and the South escalated into the Vietnam War. During the war, the South received great assistance
from the USA and her allies, while the North received great supports from the USSR and China. This assistance, from both sides, included military and civilian aid (Denham, 1992; Hoa & Tuan, 2007).

This support from America in the South and the USSR and China in the North resulted in changes to foreign languages teaching during this period. In the North of Vietnam, Russian and Chinese were taught widely in secondary schools and tertiary colleges. English and French were also taught, but on a smaller scale. In the South of Vietnam, English and French were taught at schools, mostly in major cities. Chinese was also taught, but on a small scale (Denham, 1992).

In 1975, under the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the war was ended. The American forces withdrew and the North and the South were reunited. After the reunification, English and French language teaching decreased, due to anti-American and anti-French sentiment. In 1979, another war broke out along the border between Vietnam and China, worsening diplomatic relations between the two countries. Therefore, Chinese language use decreased, and Russian became the most popular foreign language in the education system (Hoa & Tuan, 2007).

In 1986, the Vietnamese Government proposed the “Doi Moi” policy. The aim of this policy was the Economic Renovation of Vietnam, and a key aspect was the open door policy. The need for information exchange, international trade as well as foreign investments into Vietnam increased. In order to capitalize on these opportunities, it became clear that the use of English in Vietnam also increased, and English became the most widely used language for international exchanges (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Thinh, 2006).

2.1.2. Current status of English in Vietnam. Although English was taught in schools and tertiary colleges after the Vietnam War ended in 1975, the practice of English was very limited, because most people did not have the opportunity to contact and
communicate with foreigners. However, the situation has changed considerably since 1989, especially in the two major cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (formerly known as Saigon), as more English speaking foreigners come to Vietnam for tourism and business. This influx of English speakers provides many Vietnamese people with the opportunity to practise their English skills. English is used by a variety of groups within Vietnam: between foreigners from around the world as a shared language, between Vietnamese people and English speaking foreigners, and amongst Vietnamese people (Denham, 1992). Since 1989, English has grown in popularity throughout Vietnam, replacing Russian as the most preferred foreign language.

After Vietnam became a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995 and joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007, the role of English became especially important, because English was decided to be the official communication language among nations (To, 2010). English proficiency is also required in many life aspects, from technology literacy to business, career and social life (Denham, 1992; Hoa & Tuan, 2007; Nguyen, 2004).

According to Nguyen (2004), the government fully recognizes that English, as an international language, is playing an important role in Vietnamese society. In Vietnam, English is used in daily life, in education, science, technology and commerce. Therefore, the government has set out many policies in order to improve English teaching and learning in Vietnam. Decision No. 5201/BGDĐT-GDDH addressed the assessment of English ability of lecturers teaching majors in English in higher education by setting out a set of guidelines to determine English proficiency when appointing and evaluating English teaching staff. Decision No. 5091/BGDĐT-DANN aims to improve teaching in junior and senior secondary schools by providing instructions for the professional development of English teachers in junior and senior secondary schools. Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg
requires that the Common European Framework for Reference of Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR) is applied in teaching and testing foreign language proficiency in the Vietnamese education system, in order to assure a common quality standard (Nguyen, 2008). However, the most important is Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg, regarding the approval for national foreign languages project, set to run from 2008 – 2020, which marks a great effort and considerable commitment from the government to the quality of the national foreign languages program.

Nguyen (2004) points out that English is believed to be an efficient and useful tool for information access and exchange, embraced alongside information technologies as vital to success by Vietnamese youth. As Nguyen explains, this has important ramifications for English teaching:

- English has really become increasingly popular and important for Vietnamese.
- Young people in Vietnam now consider the mastery of English and the acquisition of computer skills as their passports to a good career, particularly in multinational organizations. In this context, it is undoubtedly obvious that ELT in Vietnam will naturally witness further and more wide-ranging developments (2004, p. 453).

2.1.3. English as an important subject. Because of these perceived benefits, English has become widely taught in Vietnam. Currently, it is being taught as an optional subject in primary schools and as a compulsory subject in most junior secondary schools, senior secondary schools and tertiary colleges. According to Loc (2005), 99% of all junior secondary schools teach English, while the number of schools teaching French, Russian and Chinese account for 0.6%, 0.2%, and 0.1% respectively. Nguyen (2004) also points out that 98% of students at all school levels study English as a foreign language. These statistics show how widely throughout the Vietnamese education system English is taught, and the perceived value of English as a foreign language.
As mentioned earlier, in a large project approved by the government in 2008 about ‘Teaching and learning foreign languages in national education system in the period 2008 – 2020’, the importance attached to English as a foreign language is clear in the statement that “the foreign languages being taught at educational institutions in the national education system are English and some other languages” (Nguyen, 2008). While recognizing that other languages are being taught, the specific mention of English sets it aside as the most notable foreign language. The total proposed budget for this project is VND 9,378 billion (AU $581 million), and places responsibilities upon many institutions and ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), but also involving the Ministries of Planning and Investment, Finance, Home Affairs, Information and Media, as well as many other institutions.

English is not only being taught formally at schools and colleges but also in private foreign language centers. Private language centers are growing rapidly in Vietnam to meet the increasing demand of the population to learn a foreign language. These centers are attended by a range of learners, including children, school students, office staff and businessmen and women. These private language centers also employ a range of different teachers, and different teaching styles. English teachers in these centers may be Vietnamese, but they also come from many different nations, including the Philippines, India, England, America and Australia. These centers set their own syllabuses and the quality of teaching and support varies enormously. One major factor in this variance is the cost of lessons. Generally, private language centers charge higher fees to provide smaller class sizes, modern teaching and learning facilities, and both local and foreign teachers, if not only foreign teachers. As fees get lower, class sizes increase, facilities become more limited, and lessons are taught only by local teachers. However, there is a common perception in Vietnam that because the learners have to pay higher fees, the quality of
English teaching in foreign language centers is considered to be better than the English program taught in government schools and colleges (Le, 2011).

In addition, English students in Vietnam highly value the opportunity to study with foreign teachers because they believe that this will help them improve their English speaking and listening skills. However, the fact that many local teachers are in charge of English teaching in English classrooms in Vietnam means that many students do not have the opportunities to study with foreign teachers.

2.1.4. Common pedagogical practices of teaching English in Vietnamese classrooms.

Teaching English in Vietnam, like most East Asian countries, is predominantly teacher-centered, book-centered, examination-oriented and grammar-and-vocabulary based (Huijie, 2012; Liu & Littlewood, 1997). In Vietnamese classrooms, teachers play the role of controllers and knowledge providers, while students assume quite a passive role (Nhan & Lai, 2012; Tin Tan, 2010). Further supporting this point, Le (1999) explains that:

Central to pedagogical practices in Vietnam is the traditional view of the teacher-student relationship. This view supports teacher-centered methods and a structured curriculum. The teacher is supposed to be the only provider of knowledge and therefore she/he is highly respected by the students, students’ parents, and the society as a whole. What the teacher or the textbook says is unquestionably standard norm (p. 3).

Thus, the Vietnamese classroom holds true to what Medgyes (1986) observed, where teachers maintain a very high profile in their functions as the norm of knowledge, wisdom, and behavior. The shift towards more learner-centered models upsets this hierarchy, which may explain current difficulties in teachers’ acceptance of their new role as instruments to see that learning takes place. New teaching and learning approaches also face difficulties in Vietnam because of the influence of Confucianism. (Le, 1999; Pham,
It is considered rude for students to interrupt to raise questions, or argue with their teacher, and this leads to the situation that students are not active in initiating interaction with their teacher and with each other. Their normal activities in classes are listening to teacher, writing and following the teacher’s instructions. They are expected to sit in silence unless the teacher calls their names and asks them to do the tasks or activities. This pedagogical culture makes it difficult for students to fully understand their lessons, especially as few of them are brave enough to ask for clarification or explanation (Le, 1999).

However, recent studies have revealed that Vietnamese learners are no longer completely passive (Mai & Iwashita, 2012; Nguyen, 2002). Instead of traditional whole-class settings, they prefer to participate in activities such as pair work and group work, which help them use language and enable them to explore problems themselves as well as co-operate with their friends to acquire knowledge effectively (Mai & Iwashita, 2012). In classroom communication activities, many students have the desire to express their thoughts orally, provide discussion topics and share their experiences with the class (Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). In addition, Tin Tan (2010) has observed that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students are said to be more open-minded than the students in other majors because they study, read and discuss about the language whose culture is believed to be more ‘flexible’ than their own culture. Thus, they are not completely passive learners, and their change in identity may have been promoted through learning activities. “Many of them are supposed to be rooted in traditional rote learning methods, but that cannot always stop them from being active and striving for managing their learning processes more effectively” (Tin Tan, 2010, p. 2).

Tomlinson and Dat (2004) also point out that there are discrepancies between teacher and learner perceptions about the role of teachers and learners in classroom
interactions in Vietnam. “Teachers tend to underestimate learner competence” (p. 210) and believe that their students are quite passive in classroom activities because of their limited oral competence in English, and these reasons make them keep to their classroom routine and lecturing style. However, many students indicate that such routines make them “tiresome and uninspiring for oral communication” (p. 217).

2.2. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)

2.2.1. An overview of the Ministry of Education and Training. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has an important system-wide responsibility to manage the entire Vietnamese education system and higher education in particular. MOET is responsible for allocating the enrolment quotas that determine how many enrolments a university can accept for regular, full-time study programs. Quotas apply to both the overall number of students in an educational institution and the number of students within individual study programs. This quota system then influences the number of graduates from each university and each program in Vietnam. This gives MOET the ability to put quotas in place to respond to specific occupational and skills shortages in the workplace.

MOET represents the Vietnamese Government in all issues relating to Vietnamese education, from primary schools to higher education. MOET reports to the government about changing or introducing national education policies. MOET is also responsible for planning national projects to improve education quality and seeking the government’s approval before the projects are implemented.

MOET also determines the curriculum frameworks for all study programs across the higher education system. The curriculum frameworks dictate the knowledge content, the total subjects, total credits of subjects to be fulfilled for each study program. The
curriculum frameworks also dictate the mode of teaching and types of assessment for each study program. Besides this, MOET also sets the maximum levels for tuition-fees. The tuition-fee levels for private universities or colleges are generally twice that for public universities and colleges (Harman, Hayden, & Pham, 2010).

According to MOET report (2010), higher education in Vietnam has achieved a great deal since 1987, producing a large number of highly skilled graduates to facilitate the nation’s modernization and industrialization. In 1987, there were no privately owned higher education institutions, with 133,136 students enrolled in 101 public universities and colleges. In 2004, MOET established the Institute of Testing and Quality Assessment to ensure the quality of assessment across the education sector. By 2009, the number of higher education institutions in Vietnam had increased to 376, including 81 private institutions. In 2009, the total number of students was 1,719,499. Of the 63 provinces, 62 have at least one higher education institution, however, most universities and colleges were concentrated in cities such as Hanoi (83), Ho Chi Minh City (67) and Danang (19).

Despite these achievements, in 2006, only 1.6% of the Vietnamese population had completed a Certificate, a Diploma, or a Degree at the higher education level, and in 2009, this percentage increased to 1.95% (MOET, 2010, p. 31). By comparison, in 2005, Thailand had 3.74%, Japan had 3.16%, France had 3.59%, Australia had 5.04%, the United States had 5.76%, and South Korea had 6.74% (MOET, 2010, p. 31). In order to compete internationally, the Vietnamese Government has set a goal to increase this percentage to 4.5% by 2020. In order to reach this goal, more higher education institutions are needed, to provide the number of places necessary for graduate percentages to increase. Rather than relying solely on the growth of public universities and institutions, the Vietnamese Government has identified the private sector as a provider of higher education,
and is allowing investors to open many more private higher education institutions (Harman et al., 2010; Pham, 2006).

2.2.2. Challenges facing the higher education sector in Vietnam. While the rapid growth of the private sector will provide more graduates over the following years, the growing commercialization of Vietnamese higher education raises many challenges for individuals, and also at institutional and governmental levels. These challenges include historical and cultural factors, class sizes, quality of teaching assurance, staff quality and retention, and the standardization of programs across the higher education sector.

The effects of war have set back the development of Vietnamese higher education, as Pham notes, “the history of long-lasting and continuous wars has put a great burden on the development of Vietnamese higher education. Serious consequences, such as poverty and illiteracy, left behind by these wars have prevented the country from investing in education” (2006, p. 43). While the government is now investing heavily in higher education, there is much work to do to catch up to the international higher education sector.

In addition, the profound effect of Confucianism on cultural values in Vietnamese society has also presented a difficulty in the process of developing Vietnamese education. These values emphasize top down decision making, making it difficult to achieve improvements in society and in the education system. The education system in Vietnam is described as a closed, hierarchical system, divided into three distinct levels. The highest level is the Ministry of Education and Training, which decides all the activities of the whole education system. The second level is schools and universities where staff status and power are determined by age, seniority, and academic or political standing. The lowest level is the classroom, where teachers manage and control the students (Pham, 2006).
These values slow development of Vietnamese education. Decisions are mainly made by seniors, institutions of higher education are “overly dominated by a small number of senior male leaders” (Tran et al., 2014, p. 19), and feedback from lower levels is not appreciated. Therefore, there is a lack of two-way interaction which is a facilitating factor for the development process.

There are also a range of difficulties that arise institutionally, due to the new government initiatives. The rapid growth of the sector has consequences for teaching and learning. As Pham points out, “[w]ith such a dramatic increase in quantity, it is becoming much harder for the sector to provide all students with qualified places” (2006, p. 42). That is to say, it becomes more difficult to ensure that students within courses are provided with all the necessary staff time and materials required to help them learn.

One of the clearest problems facing Vietnamese higher education is staff to student ratios. Currently, the staff to student ratio is approximately 1:30 and this is believed to be too high (Harman et al., 2010, p. 3). The variance in the quality of teaching by academic staff is also a concern, as there is no formal teaching and learning induction program for new academic staff. The salaries are also low, and consequently, staffs often seek other casual or part-time jobs after hours. There are inadequate management training programs for senior academic managers, and quality of learning is also hindered in many universities and colleges due to insufficient facilities.

Quality assurance of higher education institutions and programs is also a concern. There are no formal processes to control the quality of programs and teaching performance. In most public institutions, academic staff rarely asks for students’ feedback about programs and teaching performance. In comparison, private institutions pay more attention to student satisfaction. Staffs are offered short-term contracts which are not renewed if teaching performance is unsatisfactory. They also respond to the education
market by providing training programs which suit students’ demand, such as: business, finance and information technology. However, as previously noted, this rapid private growth and development has made it difficult to assure quality of education across the sector.

2.2.3. Recent legislation and vision for Vietnamese higher education. The Ministry of Education and Training, in its 2010 report, acknowledges many of these issues in its summary of the Vietnamese higher education system:

In brief, the training quality is still low, and has not achieved changes in large scale. There has not been a unity in benefits and concerns for training quality between teachers, learners, education investors, employers and society. In reality, over the last 30 years, the quality of higher education has not been managed well due to the lack of output standard for universities and colleges (ability standard for graduates), the inconsistency of input standard (teachers, curriculum, syllabus, facilities), no organization specializing in education quality management, no annual formal evaluation and report about the training quality of the whole education system, including higher education. (MOET, 2010, p. 36)

Recognizing the necessity of higher education in national development, the Vietnamese Government has put much effort into improving the quality of higher education in Vietnam. A program for the reformation of higher education management has been implemented. To increase the quality of training and to standardize the higher education system, the government has implemented the following eight key strategies.

1. increasing the quality of teaching by providing professional development for staff.

2. re-designing the national frame curriculum using the curricula of successful international universities as a point of reference, and to standardize and
improve the quality of the delivery of this curriculum across all training institutions.

3. standardizing the syllabus.¹

4. standardizing university management through training courses designed for rectors and vice rectors.

5. building student dormitories so that by 2020, there will be accommodation for at least 60% of students.²

6. applying robust testing and assessment systems.

7. commencing a project to establish an e-library system for all institutions to access.

8. having seminars or conferences to provide colleges and universities with information and instructions of how to implement a credit training system for education.³

Of these eight strategies, improving the quality of teaching staff has been identified as the top priority. From 2000 to 2009, MOET has implemented a professional development program for lecturers on a large scale. In this period, 7,039 academics attended overseas training programs, supported by the national budget. 2,029 academics undertook PhD programs, 1,598 undertook Master programs, 626 undertook Post doctoral programs, and 2,786 undertook a Bachelor program. In recent years, the number of lecturers sent to foreign universities has increased. Since 2010, every year, about 1,000 lecturers are sent to complete PhD and Master programs in foreign countries. In addition, 1,000 lecturers have been supported to take up domestic PhD programs every year. The

¹Textbooks and resources for each subject.
² MOET report does not specify if dormitories are for full-time students or for all students.
³ The semester training system calculates the student total study time based on the number of subjects arranged for them each semester, and the total number of semesters is fixed for each study level. The credit training system calculates the student total study time based on the total credits they complete.
target of MOET is that by 2020, there will be 20,000 lecturers with a PhD degree teaching in colleges and universities, a target of at least 30% of all lecturers (MOET, 2010).

2.3. An overview of HUTECH

Within this rich context of the history of education as well as teaching and learning English in Vietnam, there are many variations of English study. Increasingly, a number of primary schools are teaching English as an additional subject, most secondary schools and high schools are teaching English as a compulsory subject, and many universities across the country are grappling with how to teach English effectively, as a compulsory subject. The current study focused on one of these many universities, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), and explored the current practices of English teaching and learning as well as the main factors that influenced the efficacy of how people in this particular university learned a foreign language.

HUTECH’s research portfolio is focused predominantly on the fields of information technology, electricity, mechanical, and biotechnology. As HUTECH is a university specializing in technology, it follows that most research studies are only about technology. Although it cannot be denied that English is an important and compulsory subject, until now, there has been no major research about the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. There have been only small scale surveys within the faculties in order to serve assessment or reform purposes.

The next section covers the history and background information, education policy and curriculum of HUTECH. An introduction of the English programs in HUTECH is also included, followed by a brief description of professional development programs for English teachers.
2.3.1. **History and background information.** HUTECH was established on 26 April 1995 in accordance with Decision No. 235/TTg signed by the Prime Minister and officially operated in accordance with Decision No. 2128/GD-DT signed by the Minister of Ministry of Education and Training on 24 June 1995 (HUTECH, 2011). HUTECH was one of the first private universities established, in a period when public universities were popular in Vietnam, and since its opening, HUTECH has faced many challenges.

In the early years of development, HUTECH had to rent rooms for teaching and learning across Ho Chi Minh City, but after five years of development, HUTECH was able to build its own campus at 144/24 Dien Bien Phu St., Ward 25, Binh Thanh District. Although HUTECH still had to rent one campus at No. 422 Dao Duy Anh St., Phu Nhuan District, HUTECH developed a reputation as a well-equipped private university.

After 15 years, in 2010, HUTECH finished building its new campus in Ung Van Khiem Street, marking an important point in its development. This became the third HUTECH campus, the others being Dien Bien Phu Campus and Dao Duy Anh Campus. In addition to physical teaching spaces, HUTECH has also invested in teaching equipment and facilities. Across these campuses, there are 1,500 computers connected to the Internet, wifi systems for wireless Internet connection, more than 30 laboratories and workshops, and an e-library connected with national and international universities, which makes it convenient for students to study, practice and access information.

Over 20 years, HUTECH has become more popular amongst students in the South of Vietnam. The number of students studying at HUTECH has increased steadily, reaching around 20,000 in 2012. The number of training and administration staff has also risen. At the time of this study, HUTECH employed about 350 full-time staff, including 200 lecturers. Among these lecturers, there are 33 lecturers at the doctoral level, 17 Associate Professors and Professors, and 94 lecturers with Master degrees. Moreover, every year,
HUTECH also invites more than 300 visiting lecturers, and most of them are Professors, Associate Professors, experienced lecturers with doctoral or master degrees.

HUTECH has developed relationships with many companies, institutes and universities around the world. These relationships include cooperation in scientific research, training and technology exchange. The HUTECH Institute of International Education & Training has coordinated many joint-training programs from college to graduate levels with many prestigious partners such as Marie-Victorin College (Canada), Lincoln University (USA), Libre de Bruxelles University (Belgium), Open University of Malaysia, and Bristol University (UK).

The breadth of degrees and disciplines at HUTECH has also been expanded. When founded, HUTECH only had three major disciplines. The number has risen up gradually to 17 major disciplines, with 5 training levels (Master, Bachelor, Advanced Diploma, Diploma, Vocational Certificate), and in various training forms (mainstream, in-service, second bachelor degree, top up program). The mainstream training form is for students who have graduated high schools and pass the national university entrance exam held once a year. The in-service program is for people who have worked, or are working, without appropriate qualifications and want to study to get a degree in their field or to improve their knowledge for future promotion. The second Bachelor degree program is for people who have their first Bachelor degree in one major and who wish to study in another major to get second Bachelor degree. The top up program is for students who have finished Advanced Diploma and wish to convert this, with further study, to a Bachelor degree.

2.3.2. HUTECH’s mission and vision. HUTECH’s mission is to provide high quality human resources in the short term and long term for industrialization and modernization in South Vietnam and in the whole country. HUTECH pays attention to the training of talent, improving people’s knowledge, and meeting the learning demands of all
people who are working in operational positions of the national economy and society throughout the country. HUTECH is planned to become a Knowledgeable-Cultural Center, a multi-discipline and multi-level training institution, reaching international standard by 2015, complying with the principle “KNOWLEDGE-MORALITY-CREATIVITY” (HUTECH, 2011). This principle means that HUTECH aims to train students to aspire to greater knowledge, have strong personal morals and become creative learners and workers.

HUTECH will be a Center for scientific research, applying science-technology to support production, business and technology transfer, creating economic effectiveness to the University, organizations, and individuals in society. HUTECH’s brand will be recognized as the leading quality university in Vietnamese educational system, and will gradually keep up with leading universities in Asia South East area.

2.3.3. The administration organization and academic faculty of HUTECH.

![Political organization](source: HUTECH (2011, p. 9))

*Figure 2.1. Political organization*.
Figure 2.2. Administration organization. Source: HUTECH (2011, p. 9)
2.3.4. **Education policy and curriculum at HUTECH.** On 15 August 2007, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued Regulation 43 which set out detailed guidelines and instructions for higher education institutions to change from traditional training systems into credit training systems. In the school year 2008-2009, the credit training system was officially applied in HUTECH. The policy and curriculum was mainly based on Regulation 43.

At HUTECH, for each level of accreditation, the normal training period and the total credit points are set as follows: 2 years and 90 credit points for a Master program, 4 years and 120 credit points for a Bachelor program, 3 years and 90 credit points for an Advanced Diploma program, 2 years and 60 credit points for a Diploma program, and 1-2 years and 30-60 credit points for a Vocational program. Each program has a number of core subjects as well as selective subjects that students may choose to make up the requisite number of credits. Each subject is equivalent to 2-4 credits. To qualify for graduation, students have to achieve the minimum credits for their study programs, in addition to their grade point average being above 2.00.

There are two main semesters and one additional teaching period. The first semester usually commences in February and ends in May. The second semester is often from the end of August to December. The additional teaching period is usually in summer time, from June to August.

2.3.5. **Procedures and qualifications for admission to HUTECH.** The procedures for admission to HUTECH strictly follow the regulations of MOET. For the entrance to mainstream Bachelor and Advanced Diploma programs, all students must have a high school graduation certificate and pass the national university entrance exam held by MOET once a year. The minimum scores for passing are decided each year by MOET. If students meet the standard entrance scores of their preferred university, they are offered a position.
at that university. If they are not successful, they still have two more opportunities to pursue their higher education aspirations by nominating a second and third preference at other universities which require lower standard entrance scores.

2.3.6. Evaluation and grading system. The evaluation and grading system at HUTECH is managed by the Office of Testing and Quality Assurance of HUTECH. Basically, students have one or two progress tests and one final exam for each subject. The progress tests are usually decided by the lecturer of the class, but the final tests are managed by the Office of Testing and Quality Assurance. At the end of each semester, the faculties have to design and submit three test packages for each major discipline to the Office of Testing and Quality Assurance. The Office of Testing and Quality Assurance will select one out of three tests randomly and use it for the final exam.

For teacher evaluation, at the end of each term, students are often required to give feedback about their subjects and their teachers via an online survey. The feedback is kept by the Office of Testing and Quality Assurance and is used as one of the criteria for teachers’ assessment.

2.3.7. English programs in HUTECH

2.3.7.1. English major and non-major English teaching in HUTECH. HUTECH has two English programs, a major program and a non-major program. The English major program is managed by the English faculty. According to the enrolment data from the Training Department of HUTECH, the number of students in English major programs has increased significantly. Between 1995 and 2009, the number of new students enrolled to study English as their major discipline at HUTECH was around 50-100 annually. Recently, however, these numbers have increased sharply, from about 250 in 2010 to about 600 in 2011, and about 900 in 2012, increasing the total number of major English students to
around 1850. It is believed that the numbers will continuously rise over the next few years. This rise may be due to the various career opportunities that English major graduates may pursue. Graduates can become English teachers in schools or language centers, work as translators or interpreters, find jobs in administration positions, and become tourist guides.

There are two training levels for the major English program: the four-year Bachelor program, and the three-year Advanced Diploma program. Students finishing the Advanced Diploma program can sit an entrance exam held by HUTECH and then study for two more years to get a Bachelor degree.

The non-major English program is managed by the English center. The English center is responsible for teaching general English to students at all levels of all faculties in HUTECH. All students study English as a compulsory subject in the first and second year. The English subject is taught once a week for 135 minutes (equivalent to three periods). Bachelor students have to achieve 12 credit points for the English subject, and the subject is delivered over four semesters (three credit points for each semester). Advanced Diploma students have to achieve nine credit points for the English subject in three semesters.

### 2.3.7.2. English teaching staff

The minimum qualification requirement for English teaching staff in all training levels in HUTECH is that they must hold a Bachelor degree with an English major. However, preference is given to teachers who hold a Master or PhD degree.

Officially, the English major teaching staff is managed by the English faculty, and non-major English teaching staff is managed by the English center. However, in reality, they can be swapped sometimes to meet the individual needs of the staff, the requirements of the program or the university schedule. At the time of this study, in the English faculty, there were seven full-time teachers and more than 30 part-time teachers. In the English center, there were 20 full-time teachers and about 50 part-time teachers.
2.3.7.3. **Syllabus.** The syllabus for the English major program is decided by the Dean and a group of experienced teachers in the English faculty. They are responsible for choosing the textbooks for all levels. English major students have to study a variety of textbooks during their program.

The syllabus for the non-major English program is decided by the Manager of the English center. The textbook for the non-major English program for Bachelor and Advanced Diploma students is *American Headway 2 (2nd edition)*, equivalent to Pre-intermediate level (Soars & Soars, 2009), and *American Headway 3 (2nd edition)*, equivalent to Intermediate level (Soars & Soars, 2009). Bachelor students have to finish both levels of the textbook, whereas Advanced Diploma students are only required to finish the Pre-intermediate and the half of the Intermediate level.

2.3.8. **Professional development for English teachers.** HUTECH has made some effort to provide professional development for English teachers. It does this by providing financial support for teachers who successfully complete their courses to get MA or PhD degrees, assisting MOET in choosing qualified candidates for government scholarships for overseas training programs in developed countries, and providing seminars or workshops for English teachers. Recently, in 2013, a workshop held by the English Faculty, “Teaching English at HUTECH with Reference to the CEFR (Common European Framework for Reference)” aimed to introduce to all English training staff the requirements, procedures, targets, and instructions of the CEFR. The CEFR was developed to create a common international standard in designing syllabus, curriculum, assessment in teaching and testing modern European languages. According to the CEFR, learners’ language abilities are categorized in six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. In the workshop, lecturers at HUTECH were also informed of effective English teaching methods required by MOET, such as Communicative Language Teaching, to meet the education
reform and national foreign languages project of the government. In the workshop, the lecturers had the opportunity to discuss the objectives and activities for the coming years, especially the changes in teaching methods, how to improve students’ English ability to meet the communication requirement as well as the further study needs of the students after graduation (Thoa, 2013).

In brief, Vietnamese education in general, and HUTECH in particular has been affected deeply by Vietnamese Government policy. Some initiatives set out by MOET to improve the quality of language training in Vietnamese education have been implemented widely by most educational institutions. However, if these initiatives have faced any challenges, and if they have been successfully implemented is still questionable.

2.4. Summary

Through this chapter, a range of historical, governmental and social considerations have been introduced, alongside a range of previous studies relating to the teaching and learning of English. To begin, the history of language in Vietnam was covered, showing how politics influences the development and change of language teaching and learning in Vietnam. Then, the growing importance of English for Vietnamese society was also highlighted. The chapter then addressed common pedagogical practices in Vietnam, and the dominance of traditional teaching methods.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was then discussed, showing the structure and influences on education in Vietnam. The role of MOET in the management of Vietnamese education system was addressed. In addition, an overview of higher education in Vietnam in general and of English teaching in Vietnam in particular has indicated that there are still many obstacles challenging the quality of English teaching and
learning in Vietnam. The last section contains an overview of HUTECH, thus providing a clear picture of the institution that forms the case study for this thesis.
Chapter 3. Literature Review

3.0. Introduction

This chapter outlines a review of literature related to the thesis topic. First, an introduction of some major concepts and issues relating to foreign language teaching and learning is provided. Some major methods in foreign language teaching are briefly described. Then, previous research studies relating to the thesis are discussed, focusing on English teaching and learning in countries where English is a foreign language, especially in Vietnam.

3.1. Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

3.1.1. General theories of teaching and learning. “Teaching” can be understood as a particular activity undertaken by teachers at schools in order to provide learners with knowledge and experience of human society, that aids the formation of personality and psychological development. It is necessary to distinguish between different types of knowledge in teaching and learning, in this case, between “school knowledge” and “action knowledge” (Barnes, 1976; Little, 2007; Nhan & Lai, 2012). Barnes (1976) states:

School knowledge is the knowledge which someone else presents to us. We grasp it, enough to answer teacher’s questions, to do exercises, or to answer examination questions, but it remains someone else’s knowledge, not ours. If we never use this knowledge we probably forget it. In so far as we use knowledge for our own purposes however we begin to incorporate it into our view of the world, and to use parts of it to cope with the exigencies of living. Once the knowledge becomes incorporated into that view of the world on which our actions are based I would say that it has become “action knowledge”. (p. 81)
Learning, as defined by Slavin, is “a change in an individual caused by experience” (2009, p. 138). Effective learning is not simply memorizing lessons, but also using this knowledge. Effective learning is taking “school knowledge” and gradually transforming it into “action knowledge” (Little, 2007; Nhan & Lai, 2012).

There is an intrinsic relationship between teaching and learning, as teaching cannot be defined separately from learning. Teaching may take the form of guiding, facilitating learning, and encouraging the learner and setting the conditions for learning. Having a good understanding of how learner learns will help teachers determine their philosophy of education, their teaching style, methods, and classroom techniques (Brown, 2007a).

According to Cook (2001), “the proof of teaching is in the learning” (p. 9), and “all successful teaching depends upon learning” (p. 9). What Cook recognizes is that successful teaching cannot be measured by technique, method or preparation – although these are all important – but ultimately, successful teaching results in learning. There is no point in providing interesting, well-prepared language lessons if students do not learn from them.

3.1.2. Goals of language teaching and learning. Acquiring or learning a language requires much time and effort from not only the learner, but also from the teacher as well. It is pointed out that one of the main goals of language teaching is to develop learners’ communicative competence (Liu, 2003; Rivers, 1978). As advised in Rivers (1978), “when selecting learning activities, we must always remember that our goal is for the students to be able to interact freely with others: to understand what others wish to communicate in the broadest sense, and to be able to convey to others what they themselves wish to share” (Rivers, 1978, pp. 3-4). Following this point, Liu (2003) believes that the ultimate goal of language instruction is to equip learners with the ability to use the language for communication. There are two main ways to communicate in a language, hence the two main categories: vocal and written communication, that make up the four macro language
skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and speaking are the most important forms of vocal communication, whereas reading and writing are the most important forms of written communication.

3.1.3. **Student-centered approach.** According to Lochana and Deb (2006), teachers recently have realized the importance of applying a student-centered approach to their teaching. By using this approach, teachers can help students learn the target language in real world contexts, so that students can apply it outside the language classrooms. Richards and Rodgers (2001) also identify collaborative or cooperative learning as a student-centered approach, in which learners use cooperative activities such as pair work or group work to express their viewpoints and opinions, to share their ideas, information and experience, to discuss and debate with each other. Jacobs and Hall (2002) point out that when applying cooperative learning activities in language classrooms, teacher talk should be reduced and student talk should be increased with a focus on the negotiation of meaning. In addition, a relaxed classroom atmosphere and great motivation for learning should also be emphasized. Collaborative learning with interactive tasks is believed to help students develop communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Student-centered collaborative approaches require teachers and learners to play roles which are different from the traditional approaches. According to Brown (2007b), teachers perform five main tasks when conducting collaborative activities such as pair work and group work for students in language classrooms. Teachers should help students build up enough classroom language so that they can understand teachers’ instructions, should choose group techniques appropriate for students, plan group work, monitor the tasks, and help debrief students to start the activity. Littlewood (1981) advises that while students are involved in communicative activities such as pair work or group work, teachers should play roles as observers, walking around the class, giving students some
guiding ideas to start their discussions, giving advice when necessary, and helping students to solve disagreements within pairs or groups. However, before learner-centered activities are conducted, teachers should make sure that all the students are clear about the tasks and instructions so that the students can start their work independently and confidently.

Besides the teachers’ roles, the learners’ roles in student-centered collaborative learning approaches can be considered in terms of negotiation, as described by Breen and Candlin (1980):

The role of learner as negotiator - between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning – emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he [sic] should contribute as much as he [sic] gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way. (p. 110)

Therefore, students’ interdependence is considered important in student-centered learning approaches. Students are expected to interact mainly with each other, rather than with teachers (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In order to acquire this capacity, students need to be highly motivated, confident and have a positive attitude toward their study (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Therefore, learner autonomy and motivation are important factors for successful teaching and learning.

3.1.4. The use of teaching materials. Teaching materials are an indispensable part of the teaching and learning process. “Language teachers use a variety of teaching aids to make classroom activities interesting and interactive” (Mathew & Alidmat, 2013, p. 86). The selection and use of teaching materials therefore have a great impact on the success of classroom practices. (Harwood, 2010). Among teaching materials, textbooks are regarded as “a central feature in language classrooms worldwide; their quality can, therefore, affect the learning experiences of many students” (Guilloteaux, 2013, p. 231). However,
textbooks should not be used as the sole resource in classroom practices. They should be combined with other curriculum resources to make effective and efficient teaching and learning activities. This requires the teacher not only to make critical evaluation on textbooks but also to use them reasonably to make positive effects on classroom teaching (Kong & Wang, 2006; Kong & Shi, 2009).

Apart from textbooks, audio-visual aids play a significant role in language teaching. The value of visual materials in creating communicative, effective and interesting lessons is indisputable (Wright & Haleem, 1991). Visual aids help to motivate learners to use language for meaningful communication (Abebe & Davidson, 2012). The use of audio-visual mode “goes hand in hand with cognitive-embodied learning” and “allows students to act out and engage in self-presentation in the target language and culture” (Truong & Tran, p. 222). Particularly, the use of film is considered “as a potentially precious resource for language and culture study within the limitations of the foreign language classrooms” (Truong & Tran, p. 221). In language classes, besides artificial materials, the use of authentic materials is also encouraged as they are believed to motivate students, increase their on-task behaviour and concentration (Peacock, 1997). They are more effective in developing students’ communicative competence than textbook materials (Gilmore, 2011). In addition, technological aids also have a positive impact on language classroom practices. They are a supportive element in the creation of collaborative teaching and learning environments (Ranasinghe & Leisher, 2009). However, teachers’ limited technical knowledge, their insufficient time and their satisfaction with current teaching approaches are all factors that prevent them from integrating technical advances into their teaching practices (Capper, 2003)

**3.1.5. Four major methods in foreign language teaching.** In order to uncover factors affecting English language teaching (ELT) in Vietnam, it is important to provide a
brief account of influential methods in foreign language teaching. There have been a variety of methods in foreign language teaching, however, the following section only focuses on four major methods which most influence the English classroom practices in Vietnam, and the challenges of each method for teachers and learners.

3.1.5.1. Grammar-Translation Method. Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) dominated foreign language teaching in Europe from the 1840s to the 1940s, and in modified forms, continues to be widely used in some parts of the world today. Based on the study of Latin (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), GTM is a way of studying a language through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, then applying this knowledge in translation tasks. These tasks require the translation of sentences and texts into and out of the target language. However, GTM has been criticized for being too rule focused, and dependent upon the first or native language. “GTM views language learning as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). “The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language” (Stern, 1983, p. 455). In GTM, reading and writing are the main focus while speaking and listening are not emphasized. Vocabulary is selected only in the reading texts used, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization. “In a typical Grammar-Translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated, a list of vocabulary items is presented with their translation equivalents, and translation exercises are prescribed” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). The sentence is considered as the basic unit of teaching and language practice. “Earlier approaches to foreign language study used grammar as an aid to the study of texts in a foreign language. But this was thought to be too difficult for students in secondary schools, and the focus on the sentence was an attempt to make language learning easier” (Howatt, 1984, p. 131). In
GTM, “accuracy is emphasized. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6) because of “the high priority attached to meticulous standards of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations that grew up during the century” (Howatt, 1984, p. 132). In GMT, Grammar is taught deductively, by introducing and analyzing grammar rules first, and then practising these rules through translation exercises. “In most Grammar-Translation texts, a syllabus was followed for the sequencing of grammar points throughout a text. And there was an attempt to teach grammar in an organized and systematic way” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6). The student’s native language is used as the medium of instruction, “to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student’s native language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6).

The GTM is not too demanding on teachers, as it does not require much effort, preparation and imagination from teachers, as lessons can usually follow the textbook page-by-page, and exercise-by-exercise. Teachers have the option to set a class a written exercise to undertake, rather than more involved engagement. It is also easy for teachers to make tests and mark papers, however, many academics have pointed out that GTM is not successful. The student’s role in class is passive, which makes them feel bored, and they find rule focused foreign language study tedious. The weaknesses of this method have been mentioned by language specialists and scholars (Cook, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rivers, 1968). Its main defects have been described clearly by Rivers (1968):

Little stress is laid on accurate pronunciation and intonation; communication skills are neglected; there is a great deal of stress on knowing rules and exceptions, but little training in using the language actively to express one’s own meaning, even in writing. In an endeavor to practice the application of rules and the use of
exceptional forms, the student is often trained artificial forms of language, some of which are rare, some old-fashioned, many of little practical use. The language learned is mostly literary type, and the vocabulary is detailed and sometimes esoteric. (pp. 17-18)

Despite the disadvantages, this method has been used for many centuries, and even nowadays, in modified forms, in some parts of the world. However, from the mid to late nineteenth century, people who were disillusioned by the lack of success with the method developed alternative methods of teaching a second language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

3.1.5.2. Direct Method. In the early 1850s, due to communication needs, the role of foreign languages was seen to be important in Europe. It was realized that the importance of language was not only in written texts but in speech as well. A central tenet of active classroom methods is the belief that students learn a language by listening to it, and speaking it. According to (Rivers, 1968), foreign language should be learned the way children learn their first language, or like the way children who move to another country acquire a second language naturally without great difficulty. To emulate this natural learning, the foreign language should be taught without translation and without the use of the learner’s native language. Instead, it should be taught through demonstration and action. These natural language learning principles contributed to the foundation of the Direct Method, which was first introduced in France and Germany, and then became widely used in the United States (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Richards and Rodgers (2001) explains the application of the Direct Method principles and procedures as follows:

9. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.

10. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.

11. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and
students in small, intensive classes.

12. Grammar was taught inductively.

13. New teaching points were introduced orally.

14. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.

15. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.

16. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized (p. 12).

Compared with GTM, the Direct Method had some advantages. With this method, verbal language takes priority. It was quite successful in private language schools where paying learners were highly motivated and the use of native speaking teachers was the norm. However, this method still had several drawbacks. It required teachers who were native speakers or who had native-like fluency in the foreign language. It mainly depended on the teacher’s skill, rather than on a textbook, and in reality, not all teachers were proficient enough to meet the strict principles of the method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). There was still a big gap between the authentic language and the classroom language being taught to learners. As a result, in many classrooms, the language being taught was an artificial language, which was not the kind of language which learners needed to absorb (Rivers, 1968).

3.1.5.3. Audiolingual Method. During World War II (1939-1945), with the need to make American soldiers proficient in speaking and understanding the languages of both their allies and their enemies, the U.S military requested that the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) develop intensive language training courses which focused on aural/oral skills. These courses were also known as the “Army Method”. Later, after variations and adaptations, this “Army Method” became known as the Audiolingual
Method (ALM) in the 1950s (Brown, 2007a). Its characteristics were summarized by Brown as follows:

1. New material is presented in dialogue form.
2. There is independence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over-learning.
3. Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time.
4. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive skills.
5. There is little or no grammatical explanation: grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than deductive explanation.
6. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context.
7. There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids.
8. Great importance is attached to pronunciation.
9. Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted.
10. Successful responses are immediately reinforced.
11. There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances.
12. There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content (2007a, p. 111).

The ALM is believed to be successful in developing students’ mastery of all four language skills, especially speaking and listening skills at the very early stage of their foreign language learning. However, beside this strength, there are some drawbacks which teachers need to take into account when applying this method. One of the most noticeable is that when students are trained with mimicry-memorization and pattern-drilling in a mechanical way, they may progress like well-trained parrots. As a result, they are “able to repeat whole utterances perfectly when given a certain stimulus, but are uncertain of the
meaning of what they are saying and unable to use perfectly memorized materials in contexts other than that in which they have learned them” (Rivers, 1968, p. 46). In addition, with the frequent use of memorization and drilling, ALM may make the lessons become tedious and boring for students. Therefore, a successful application of the ALM requires the inventiveness and resourcefulness of the teacher who can vary their presentation of material and create situations which inspire students to use the language they have learned to express their opinions (Rivers, 1968).

3.1.5.4. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). There have been many scholars, linguists and educators writing about the principles and characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Brown, 2007a; Howatt, 1984; Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Central to CLT is the concept of communicative competence (CC). Indeed, in many books and articles concerning CLT, CC is the main focus of scholars, linguists and educators who advocate this foreign language teaching method.

According to Ellis (2000), CC is “the knowledge that users of a language have internalized to enable them to understand and produce messages” (p. 696). Littlewood (1981) suggests that CC can be acquired through interaction, which is a key focus of CLT. It is believed that CLT go beyond the providing of grammatical rules of the target language and encourage learners to use the target language in a meaningful way in order to develop CC. As pointed out by Richards and Rodgers (2001), in CLT classes, the tasks and activities are designed to enable learners to obtain communicative objectives by participating in communicative processes such as exchanging information, negotiation of meaning, and interaction.

In CLT, learner-centered learning is highlighted. Learners are expected to participate as much as possible in classroom procedures or activities, interact as
“negotiators” as Breen and Candlin describe student-centered collaborative learning environments, where students negotiate “between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning” (1980, p. 110). The learners are required to actively take part in discussions, in communicative activities as well as manage their learning in an independent way so as to acquire CC (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The role of the learner in a CLT class is also described by Brown as follows:

> Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with each other. (2001, p. 43)

CLT has also assigned various roles to teachers. According to Brown (2001), a teacher in a CLT class is not only a knowledge provider but also a facilitator and a guide of students’ learning and class activities. Richards and Rodgers (2001) describes the roles of a teacher in a CLT class as having two main components; as a facilitator of communication process, and as an independent participant within the learning and teaching group. The teacher is also expected to perform other roles: as an organizer of resources, and as a resource himself/herself, as a guide within classroom procedures and activities, as a researcher, a learner, as a needs analyst, a counselor, and a group process manager.

In CLT, materials play a primary role in promoting communicative language use. CLT identifies three kinds of materials for use in language teaching: text-based, task-based, and realia. There are a variety of textbooks, games, role playing scenarios, simulations and task-based communication activities designed to support CLT. In addition to this, many different kinds of authentic objects can be used in a CLT class to support communicative activities, from language-based realia such as: signs, magazines,
newspapers, etc. to graphic and visual sources such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, charts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In brief, Brown provides four interconnected characteristics as a definition of CLT:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of CC and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.

2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.

3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.

4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts (2007a, p. 241).

With these above characteristics, CLT is an appropriate method in developing students’ communication skills, and has been widely used all over the world. However, there are several issues of concern in the implementation of CLT. Because the CLT method is derived from Western countries and influenced by Western beliefs, it may be inappropriate for the cultural contexts where teachers’ knowledge is unquestioned, and where accuracy is considered to be more important than fluency (Chang, 2011; Pham, 1999; Thornbury, 2003). In addition, CLT “has come under attack from teachers for being prejudiced in favor of native-speaker teachers by demanding a relatively uncontrolled range of language use on the part of the student, and thus expecting the teacher to be able to respond to any and every language problem which may come up” (Chang, 2011, p. 17). As Chang
identifies, CLT requires a great deal of professional training and skill on behalf of the teachers as well as requiring energy and adaptability, as the teachers need to know when to take part and when to leave students alone. With CLT, the teachers should not follow the textbooks line by line but need to adapt materials creatively (Yinchu & Jinyan, 1992). However, teachers’ inadequate proficiency in English and teaching methods, as well as the traditional testing practice focusing heavily on linguistic competence rather than communicative competence may hinder the implementation of CLT (Le, 1999). Another limitation of CLT is that the practice of allowing students’ speech errors - as long as they do not affect the communicative purposes - may result in the fossilization of learner’s errors (Chang, 2011).

Generally, each teaching method has its own advantages and disadvantages. For different groups of learners, and different teaching purposes, teachers can employ the methods which they think will suit their classes best. Currently, CLT is considered as the most recent and popular method, however, other methods such as: GTM, Direct Method, and Audiolingual Method are still popular and effective in different ways. Therefore, it can be said that teachers are the people who will know and decide which methods will be the most appropriate for their particular classes and particular groups of learners.

3.1.6. English in higher education in Vietnam. In Vietnamese higher education, English is a compulsory subject at most institutions, and it also forms one of the graduation criteria in many colleges and universities. English programs at tertiary levels are divided into two groups: English major and non-major English. English major students have to study about 1000 hours of English subjects including integrated English language skills, literature, linguistics, interpretation, translation, Western culture studies. Non-major English students study approximately 300 hours of English to improve their general English proficiency (To, 2010).
There are, however, some issues with English teaching and learning in Vietnam, and in Vietnamese higher education in particular. According to Linh (2007), the maximum time for English study in higher education is 390 periods, however, this is considered inadequate to improve all four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, many students have to go to foreign languages centers to study English. Linh also points out that more than 50% of higher education students also study English at foreign languages centers. This is an alarming number because it indicates that the current English training program in higher education does not meet the students’ requirements despite attending English classes at their universities regularly, passing all the tests or examinations. Ngan (2004) also points out that only 3% of the students have international EFL certificates. It is also indicated that the English ability of Vietnamese students is at lower level compared with other EFL countries although Vietnam is one of the top countries in the world focusing much on policies for foreign languages improvement.

Linh (2007) highlights a number of factors that hinder the effectiveness of English teaching and learning in Vietnamese higher education, and limit the ability of Vietnamese students to learn English. One factor Linh identifies is that students’ English abilities are unequal. There are students completing seven-year English program in junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools, but there are also students from some rural areas only studying a three-year English program in senior secondary schools. Some students from remote areas do not even have the opportunity to study English in senior secondary schools before undertaking higher education. However, in higher education, these students are often put into large classes (usually above 50), all together, and given the same lessons and the same study period. In addition, the national English curriculum is tedious and repetitive, and English is only taught as a subject, not as a practical skill that students can use for their study and work. In classes, students are mainly taught grammar, vocabulary
and reading comprehension while speaking and listening skills are given less importance. In higher education, the students still have to revisit the basic knowledge which most of them have learned in junior and senior secondary schools, and this is often tedious and unnecessary work, that makes students feel unenthusiastic, and also wastes time, money and energy. It has also been identified by Linh that the insufficient time allocated for the teaching of English is a hindrance. Furthermore, most universities tend to finish compulsory English programs at the end of the second year or the third year, to focus on other subject majors. Therefore, the students do not have opportunities to practise English in classes regularly and they gradually forget the English knowledge they have learned. Another key issue is the testing system in Vietnam. Learning English in higher education in Vietnam is focused mainly on getting high marks and passing examinations, so there is a strong tendency to use class time for exam-oriented teaching, which mainly focuses on reading and grammar rather than on listening and speaking. As a result, the students can do written tasks well and pass exams, but still make mistakes speaking, in pronunciation, and cannot communicate well in English in real life (Le, 1999; Pham, 1999). In addition, it is pointed out that the English curriculum is focused on teaching content, determining the number of study periods, and setting the syllabus, without considering the students’ outcomes. Besides that, the teaching of English in other subject majors is also problematic. Many universities and colleges lack qualified teachers who can use English fluently to deliver major subjects such as finance, biotechnology and environment (Linh, 2007).

Recently, understanding the necessity of increasing the quality of English teaching and learning, many universities and colleges have set out strategies to achieve this purpose. Workshops, seminars, and conferences about English teaching and learning have been held in some Vietnamese educational institutions. According to Hoa (2013), a recent cooperation conference between Vietnam and Australia, “Developing modern teaching
methods at higher education” was held in the University of Foreign Languages, coinciding with the celebration of 40 years of Vietnam – Australia diplomacy. At this conference, English teaching staff from many universities in Vietnam had the opportunity to meet, discuss, exchange experiences and expertise in management programs, teaching methods, the development of research skills, and teacher training programs. At the conference, the English teaching staff and students in Vietnam also had the opportunity to attend and observe model lessons delivered by teachers from Australia, experiencing techniques and methods used by Australian teachers to create a sociable and friendly classroom atmosphere.

3.1.7. Implementation of CLT in Vietnam. The viewpoint of Vietnamese education authorities regarding foreign language learning is that the purpose of learning a language is to be able to use that language in communication. Understanding the importance of communicative English in most life aspects in Vietnamese temporary society, Vietnamese government has set out a number of policies to improve English communicative competence of Vietnamese learners. This has led to a tendency to use Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Vietnam.

The term “CLT” is quite common and popular in many English teaching institutions in Vietnam nowadays. However, many authorities, educators and teachers are keen to assess the implementation of CLT in Vietnam, particularly to see if it has been successful in improving English language teaching and learning.

“In Vietnam, CLT has gained approval since it was first implemented in the early 1990s” (Mai & Iwashita, 2012, p. 26). A new national curriculum, with a new set of textbooks written locally was introduced in 2002. The new national curriculum focused on developing students’ communicative skills, as communicative ability is considered a goal of English teaching (MOET, 2006). As Mai and Iwashita (2012) describe:
This new curriculum was officially approved and implemented nation wide from grades 6 to 12. However, these facts do not allow us to conclude that CLT is being implemented successfully in Vietnam. The truth is that after a long period of learning English, most Vietnamese learners still cannot use it effectively as a means of communication. (2012, p. 27)

Mai and Iwashita also identify some factors affecting the implementation of CLT in Vietnam. Among them, academic curriculum and grammar based examinations are two practical factors inhibiting the effective implementation of CLT in Vietnam. Although “some changes at curriculum level have been made in order to promote CLT, little has been done regarding the nature of examinations at either the national or institutional level” (2012, p. 27). Usually, the tests or the exams are designed to assess only linguistic competence rather than communicative competence. There are no listening and speaking components in many examinations, from the university entrance examinations to the graduation examinations at tertiary level. “Suffering from negative wash-back from such high-stakes exams, English classrooms in Vietnam continue in practice to be more grammar-oriented than communicative” (Mai & Iwashita, 2012, p. 27).

Le (1999) also identifies the issue for teachers with the implementation of CLT, due to the prescriptive curriculum designs. As he explains:

The pre-determined syllabus and prescribed textbook are also frustrating to teachers if they are committed to communicative methods. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training designs the national curriculum and sets the syllabus in schools. The Ministry also monitors the implementation of the syllabus and sets the school final examinations. The syllabus and the textbook, once approved by the Ministry, become laws that must be strictly observed and with the misinterpretation
of the principle of ‘testing only what students have learnt’, test writers confine the test content to what it is covered in the textbook. (pp. 4-5)

At tertiary levels, although each university is given freedom in choosing teaching materials for their students, due to the national examination requirements, the students still study English mostly in written form, with limited time for communication. Thus, English teaching at universities and colleges mainly focuses on vocabulary, grammar structures and reading comprehension skills (Le, 2011).

Furthermore, Le (1999) has also previously drawn attention to the limited learning hours (few hours per week), large class size (45 to 52 students), and class arrangement (in which students sit in long rows of fixed desks facing the front) as factors which further impede the implementation of CLT, as this discourages them from organizing communicative activities like pair work or group work.

These many factors concur with the findings of Kam (2002) who points out that the large class sizes make it difficult for any methodological innovation to be implemented. Kam also notes that the traditional examination system, which requires teachers to adhere closely to the syllabus in order to have students succeed in exams, discourages teachers from applying the new teaching methods.

As a result, traditional teaching methods with lecturing delivery style are still used in many classrooms in Vietnam. Tomlinson and Dat (2004) point out that many teachers do not want to change their grammar-translation teaching method and believe that their students’ passive learning style makes them keep on with their lecturing style methods of teaching. The teachers also express their concern that the interactions in class will inhibit them from finishing the assigned syllabus.

In addition, the implementation of CLT in Vietnam also faces difficulties due to the lack of teaching materials and facilities, as well as the shortage of qualified EFL teachers
In particular, the quality of EFL teachers in Vietnam is a challenging constraint. A recent test that measured the English proficiency of EFL teachers, administered by the Ministry of Education and Training across 24 of the 64 provinces has shown a disheartening result. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Language Learning, the required level of teachers’ language proficiency is B2, which is equivalent to an IELTS score of between 5 and 6. However, the results were surprisingly low, with only one fifth of teachers tested receiving a B2 grade. The results were especially alarming in Ben Tre Province in the Mekong Delta where only one of 684 teachers reached the pass rate (Mai & Iwashita, 2012). In addition, as indicated by Peeraer and Van Petegem (2011), teachers’ skills in applying technical advances, particularly the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in their teaching practice is still limited, which affects the quality of teaching and learning. According to Dang (2011), ICT literacy of some academic staff was very basic. Their common practice of ICT use is limited to only word processing, PowerPoint presentations, Internet searching and downloading materials. Therefore, “ICT skills training for educators remains important” and becomes “ideally part of the continuous professional development of teacher educators” (Peeraer & Van Petegem, 2011, p. 981).

The implementation of CLT in Vietnam also faces a range of cultural issues. As noted earlier in this chapter, CLT techniques originated in Western countries, and when being implemented in non-western contexts, like Vietnam, a range of issues emerge, because the socio-cultural, political, and physical conditions are different from those where CLT has been developed and implemented successfully. In Vietnam, English language students share the same mother tongue (Vietnamese), therefore, they do not have immediate need to use English inside and outside classroom. Thus, the CLT principle of doing tasks in the classroom which can be applied and practiced in the outside world is
questionable, as such outside opportunities rarely arise. Moreover, the use of ‘authentic’ teaching materials is also a problem because what is ‘authentic’ in Western countries may not be ‘authentic’ in the Vietnamese context (Hiep, 2007).

Pham summarizes the many issues that the implementation of CLT in Vietnam has faced as follows:

When it comes to the level of practice, teachers often encounter many difficulties. Their desire to implement CLT, which is manifest through efforts to promote common Western CLT practices such as pair work and group work, conflicts with many contextual factors. These factors range from systematic constraints such as traditional examinations, large class sizes, to cultural constraints characterized by beliefs about teacher and student role, and classroom relationship, to personal constraints such as students’ low motivation and unequal ability to take part in independent active learning practices, and even to teachers’ limited expertise in creating communicative activities like group work (2006, p. 200).

Recognizing the importance of English and the necessity of using communicative English in contemporary Vietnam society, it is important to reiterate that MOET has identified some actions in order to facilitate a more successful implementation of the communicative approach in English teaching programs in Vietnam. In particular, Instruction No.7984/BGDDT-GDTrH, issued on 1st September 2008, addresses the teaching of foreign languages. This instruction emphasizes the maintenance and promotion of foreign language teaching staff both in quantity and quality. Foreign language teachers are required to focus on all four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as the improvement of communication skills. In addition, teachers are required to provide students with greater opportunity to use the target language. Moreover, training institutions must provide adequate teaching aids and quality facilities, especially audio and
video equipment in order to facilitate teaching activity, and to assist in improving the four macro skills. Assessment and evaluation have also been amended to base a greater emphasis on language knowledge, cultural awareness, and the four macro skills.

To summarize this section, it is clear that the activity of English language teaching in Vietnam faces many challenges governmentally, institutionally, geographically and culturally. These issues are not solely specific in Vietnam, but also manifest themselves in other countries where English is being taught as a foreign language. The next section of this literature review will focus on the proliferation of educators, linguists, and researchers discussing and investigating the issues of English teaching and learning in a variety of international contexts.

3.2. Previous Studies about English Teaching and Learning

This section will present a number of previous studies related to the current research, which have certain influences on the researcher’s decision and choice of this thesis topic. It covers a range of factors which affect the activity of English teaching and learning, not only in Vietnam context but also in other contexts where English is taught as a foreign or second language.

3.2.1. Research studies about the roles of teaching aids, about teachers and learners in ELT. In a study conducted to examine the role of visual teaching materials in teaching English vocabulary, Abebe and Davidson (2012) reported interesting findings concerning the use of teaching aids. A total of 120 students and eight teachers from three primary schools were selected for the study through a simple random sampling method in Robe town and its surrounding district in Bale Zone, Ethiopia. Various means were used for data collection, including questionnaires, interviews, observations and document analysis. The results of the study showed that teachers rarely used visual materials such as
cards, charts, ‘real’ objects in teaching vocabulary although the majority of teachers and students admitted that visual materials helped students learn new words effectively. The results also indicated that students were eager to learn vocabulary with the assistance of visual materials, and that the use of visual materials enhanced the students’ ability and opportunity to use language to express their ideas and feelings. In addition, through document analysis and teachers’ interviews, it became apparent that the particular textbook used did not have sufficient visual content to facilitate students’ vocabulary learning.

Based on these findings, Abebe and Davidson developed a range of recommendations for teachers and textbook writers. It was suggested that teachers should spend time preparing and presenting various visual materials to assist students’ vocabulary learning and to motivate them to carry out effective language communication. It was also suggested that the vocabulary section in the textbook should be revised in order to include sufficient and various visual techniques for students’ vocabulary learning.

The usefulness of audio-visual aids in EFL classrooms was also investigated by Mathew and Alidmat (2013). The participants of their study were 15 undergraduate students at Aljouf University in Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire, comprised of mostly open-ended questions was used to collect data. The results indicated that most of the students (73.3%) recognized the necessity of using audio-visual aids in English language classroom, and 66.6% of the students found audio-visual aids useful for English language learning. It was stated that the teacher’s use of audio-visual aids made by native speakers helped students to better understand the lessons, and improve their English language skills such as pronunciation or conversational skills. In addition, the use of audio-visual aids also helped to make the classroom activities more interesting and make lessons more memorable, improving students’ knowledge retention. The screen based images were believed to be easier to comprehend and remember than the written texts in the reading materials.
Mathew and Alidmat also investigated the frequency of using audio-visual aids in EFL classrooms, and found that 60% of the students indicated that audio-visual aids were used in EFL classroom, while 40% of the students did not think so. It was revealed that a number of teachers used audio-visual to support their teaching while other teachers did not use audio-visual aids in their lesson delivery. It was also revealed that few teachers used PowerPoint presentations to make the classroom activities lively. Moreover, it was indicated by the students that teachers should be trained in the use of technical aids, including how to operate audio-visual equipment, and the skills to select appropriate audio-visual resources for the classroom activities.

In a study in Korea by Barnes and Lock (2010) investigated the attributes of effective lecturers of English as a foreign language, as perceived by higher education students. 105 participants were recruited from 2170 first year students, from three different English levels: pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced. Each student was asked to use free writing to express their opinions about the attributes of effective EFL lecturers. The main focus of students was rapport attributes, as students believed that anxiety about English interaction may discourage students from effective English learning. The rapport attributes that students found effective were listed as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Rapport Attributes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 being friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 developing interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 sharing personal life experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 caring about students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 patience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 listening to students
7 having a positive attitudes in general
8 having charisma
9 understanding the students’ educational background
10 understanding the different students’ levels
11 having a sense of humor

Source: Adapted from Barnes and Lock (2010, p. 143)

The reasons given by students as to why they perceived rapport as the most important category were that it helped to reduce student fear: fear of making mistakes, fear of talking to foreigners. Rapport also made students feel valued, understood, and encouraged them to study. A second key focus important to students was delivery attributes. Students identified the delivery attributes they found most effective were:

Table 3.2

*Teachers’ Delivery Attributes*

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>enthusiasm about EFL lecturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>giving clear explanations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>using good examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>using a variety of lecturing methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>using Korean selectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>correcting all writing errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>correcting all speaking errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>providing grammar instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The delivery attributes were considered to be useful by students because they helped to maintain students’ interest, to get the message across, to most benefit students’ improvement, and to encourage students’ participation. In addition, students also identified other necessary attributes including: teacher’s fairness, teacher’s knowledge and credibility, teacher’s organization and preparation. These findings highlight the significance of teachers’ attributes for effective teaching and learning.

An interesting counterpoint to the study of student perceptions of efficacy is the study conducted by Yilmaz (2011), that investigated teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, English proficiency and instructional strategies. Data were collected with the participation of 54 teachers in Turkey. The teachers were selected randomly from 12 primary and eight high schools in the city of Canakkale. A questionnaire was employed to collect the data. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100%. The results showed that the teachers rated themselves to be more efficacious in instructional strategies than in class management or student engagement. It was also reported that the teachers did not judge themselves to be good at enabling students to benefit from learning English but they were confident of their
ability to provide alternative explanations to students when students were confused or to control disruptive behavior from students. The teachers also indicated that their reading and speaking skills were better than their writing and listening skills. In addition, it was shown that the teachers tended to use communication-oriented strategies more than grammar-oriented strategies. The teachers often employed communication strategies such as group discussions and problem solving activities, providing students with real life situations and inviting them to respond appropriately in English. However, it was also reported that the audio-video activities focusing on communication development, such as playing English films and videotapes in class and asking students to discuss the material in groups or pairs were the least frequently used activities. Generally, the results from the survey indicated that the more proficient the teachers believed themselves to be in the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), the more efficacious they felt. The results emphasized the importance of training programs and professional development for EFL teachers, so that the teachers can improve their proficiency in the four macro skills, resulting in a stronger sense of efficacy.

Another relevant study is that of Pan and Block (2011), who studied the university teachers’ and students’ opinions of English in China, such as: the status of English, the learners’ expectations of English and the focus of English teaching and learning. The participants of the study were 636 university students and 53 English teaching professionals across six universities in Beijing. Data were collected using a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire was designed to be filled out simultaneously with the interviews and the questions on the questionnaire were very similar to the questions asked in the interviews. The findings showed that English was considered a useful language for the nation and for individuals in China, and that it was important in light of the effects of globalization. The study found that the top three reasons that
motivated students to learn English were: 1) English provides students with more career opportunities, 2) English “opens a window to the world” for students, 3) English improves students’ status and makes them feel more “modern”, “international” and “connected with the world” (Pan & Block, 2011, p. 396). However, the study also showed that the focus on teaching and learning English in China was still examination-oriented, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, may be a barrier to the students’ improvement in English communication skill. As Vietnam also shares a Confucian tradition and a written exam based assessment, this study highlights the need to consider motivations for learning English, and if the curriculum and teaching methods appeal to these motivations.

In light of the many recommendations for the professional development of English teaching staff, it is relevant to consider Alkhawaldeh’s findings from his 2011 research into the expectations of English language teachers in regard to professional development. Participants for this study were randomly selected from 125 English language teachers who taught at the Amman First and Second Directorates of Education in Jordan. A questionnaire was used to investigate EFL teachers’ professional needs. The findings pointed out the most common professional needs of EFL teachers. First, effective curriculum needs to be created that includes teachers’ remarks and contributions. Effective instructional media and facilities for English teaching and learning should be provided. In addition, learners’ ability in using English as well as their motivation and attitudes toward English should be developed. Training courses to mix with native English speaking communities should be conducted, and appropriate teaching methods should be applied. Moreover, teacher’s new roles as a facilitator, a counselor and a director in language classroom should be fully understood and implemented by EFL teachers. In addition, findings also show that effective in-service training programs for teachers should be
conducted frequently which will enhance the improvement of English teaching in the classrooms.

The study also emphasized the need to get teachers involved in collaborative learning and critical evaluation to improve their teaching, and through greater investment, motivation. In addition, the study also identified the following expectations. First, teaching labs should be equipped to create a natural language learning environment. In addition, class size should be reduced, and curriculum which respects the learners’ actual needs, as well as their societal and cultural beliefs should be built. The study also points out the need to contact learners’ parents to understand their attitudes towards the learners’ English learning. In addition, the need to abandon traditional teaching methods and apply various and updated teaching methods to meet learners’ different needs and learning styles are also mentioned in the study.

The findings of this study emphasize not only the need for professional development, but the specific needs that teachers identified as important to their professional development

3.2.2. Research studies about English teaching methods and policies for TEFL

Mondal (2011) conducted a study to evaluate the English language teaching methods used in higher education in Bangladesh. In this study 100 teachers from different colleges in three districts were selected with a random sampling method. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings showed that CLT, which was the teaching method used in higher secondary education in Bangladesh was not appropriate for the English textbook being used. The study also indicated that there was a lack of interaction between the teachers and the students, that there was not a focus on teaching speaking and listening skills, and CLT was not used wholeheartedly by the teachers.
A study conducted by Chang (2011) aimed to compare the effectiveness and feasibility of Grammar-Translation Method and Communicative Approach to determine which method is more suitable in teaching grammar in Taiwan. Two classes with similar level of overall English proficiency were selected. Over one semester, one class was taught using the Grammar-Translation Method and the other using the Communicative Approach. The results showed that for college students, the Grammar-Translation Method is a suitable approach for teaching grammar. The students taught using the Grammar-Translation Method became more interested in Grammar lessons, and made more progress in grammar than those in the class being taught with the Communicative Approach. The results also indicated that compared with the Communicative Approach, the Grammar-Translation Method was more effective in meeting students’ needs, improving students’ confidence and motivation for learning. However, Chang recommended that a combination of both methods is beneficial in teaching and learning English accuracy and fluency, as the Grammar-Translation Method emphasizes accuracy and the Communicative Approach focuses on fluency.

In a study about educational policy, Gao (2012) investigated the tensions between policy and the views of teachers, administrators and policy makers about digital technologies and English instruction in China’s higher education system. In this study, a mixed method was used, involving a document review, a survey conducted with 510 academics (293 responses), and individual interviews with 19 teachers, six administrators and three policies makers selected from six universities across China. The results revealed that policy makers advocated the application of technology in English language teaching, although they recognized the challenges facing the teachers and textbooks developers. Most teachers, however, showed a lack of confidence in adopting the changes set out in the new teaching model. In addition, it was also revealed that even though some teachers were
willing to adopt a student-centered approach, they did not have enough understanding about this approach and how it might work. Due to the lack of teacher confidence, training and the perception that English teaching at tertiary levels should be textbook and exam oriented, the Grammar-Translation Method remained more frequently used than other methods.

The study of Byun et al. (2010) focused on the investigation of the effectiveness of English medium instruction (EMI) policy in Korean higher education. English medium instruction is the use of English language for teaching subjects other than English. An in-depth case study was conducted with Korea University (KU), a major university in Korea. Data were collected through student surveys and interviews with academic staff and students. The results indicated that the EMI policy had produced some positive outcomes, including a significant increase in the number of English medium courses, the number of international students and foreign professors in KU, and the number of articles published by KU academic staff in international academic journals. The results also indicated the students perceived that EMI was useful in improving their English proficiency. However, the study also revealed a number of side effects. The most challenging issued was the recruitment of instructors who were capable of delivering courses entirely in English. Other problems included the compulsory enforcement of EMI without regard for the English proficiency of students and instructors, and the limited individualized assistance to students and instructors with limited English competency, who struggled to perform adequately in an academic setting. In addition, the study also pointed out that the students from different academic disciplines had different attitudes towards EMI classes. Students from the business school showed the most favorable impression of EMI and believed that English proficiency would be helpful for them after graduating and entering the job market. Students in the colleges of science, engineering, and nursing, however, had the
lowest ratings regarding the satisfaction with EMI classes and did not perceive English proficiency as a necessity in their field of study and for their future career, and therefore did not invest much time and effort in EMI classes. Furthermore, it was reported that large class sizes were also a problem, hindering the effective implementation of EMI. The large classes made it difficult for instructors to grasp the academic needs of individual students and provide feedback to individual students as needed. Large class sizes also made it difficult for all students to engage in discussions, limiting opportunities for practice and the development of English proficiency.

3.2.3. Research studies about factors affecting English teaching and learning.

There have been a range of studies exploring factors that influence the activity of English teaching and learning. One such study is that of Chen and Goh (2011), who explored the teachers’ difficulties in teaching oral English as a foreign language in higher education. The data were collected through open-ended question surveys and semi-structured interviews. 331 EFL teachers from 44 universities in 22 cities across China participated in the question surveys. The interviews were conducted with 30 teachers. The findings identified constraints and challenges the teachers had to face teaching oral English. 208 out of 331 teachers indicated that their difficulties were due to “their deficient language competence and inadequate pedagogical knowledge to plan and implement effective oral activities” (Chen & Goh, 2011, p. 337). This hindered them in attracting students’ participation, and balancing students’ various development needs. The teachers also faced other problems including: students’ reluctance to participate, students’ low proficiency and students’ unequal English proficiency levels. Half of the respondents said that their students were reluctant to participate in speaking activities because they were shy to express ideas in front of class or afraid of making mistakes. It was also found that because it was not required in the exams, most students attached little importance to English
speaking and were not enthusiastic about English speaking activities in class. It was also reported that many students could not express ideas in English due to their limited vocabulary and grammar, and that students from developed regions were often better at oral English than those from less developed regions. In addition, more than half of the teachers interviewed responded that some contextual constraints also hindered them from implementing effective oral English teaching. Those constraints included: the lack of an authentic language environment, as there was little need for using English in daily communication, the insufficient teaching time for oral English, the testing system without English speaking tests, the lack of resources such as outdated textbooks, inadequate facilities and multimedia equipment, the large class sizes of 40 to 60 students.

In a study in Nigeria, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) were interested in investigating the factors affecting the quality of English language teaching and learning in public secondary schools. The participants of this study were senior secondary school students in public secondary schools from across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Participants were drawn through a random sampling technique. The country was stratified along the six geopolitical zones and five schools were randomly selected from each zone, therefore, making a total of 30 schools. 3000 students were selected randomly from these 30 schools for the study. Data were collected mainly through the use of a questionnaire and observation. The questionnaire was given to students to ascertain their experience with English teaching and learning as well as the conduciveness of their school environment to effective learning. Astonishingly, the questionnaire had a 100% return rate, meaning all 3000 copies of the questionnaire were returned, and properly filled out. The results revealed that textbooks, workbooks, dictionaries, chalkboards and posters are dominant in English classrooms in secondary schools in Nigeria, whereas modern media such as audio and video tape, programmed texts, language laboratories, flashcards, computers, magazines
and newspapers are rarely used. The study also showed that teachers continue to use the traditional lecture method. In addition, most schools were found to be harsh learning environments, with issues such as: noise, crowded classes, poor facilities (leaking roofs and cracked walls, inadequate staff rooms and offices, no electricity, no libraries). Based on the findings, recommendations were made for English teachers as well as state and federal governments in Nigeria to enhance the quality of English teaching and learning. The factors this study identifies show that to improve English language teaching and learning, it is important to consider both personal and local factors as well as state and federal governmental factors.

A study conducted by Ming and Jaya (2011) aimed to find out what Taiwanese teachers perceived as factors affecting the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in tertiary English classes. Eight teachers from two universities in southern Taiwan were invited to participate in the study. The data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The findings identified both positive and negative factors affecting the implementation of CLT. It was indicated by all respondents that professional training was an important factor facilitating the implementation of CLT, because it helped the teachers gain a theoretical understanding of CLT, which aided them in choosing appropriate teaching techniques. The fact that CLT workshops were offered by the government and textbook publishers was a great advantage of CLT implementation, as was the requirements and support from the teachers’ institutions to encourage them to attend teaching methodology conferences and workshops. In addition, it was also found that CLT implementation was supported by teachers’ persistence and willingness in applying CLT, students’ willingness to participate in class and the need for students to use English for communication. Sufficient teaching resources, with authentic materials, school support which encouraged the development of students’ communicative ability and critical
thinking skills, and the appropriate curriculum which emphasized not only reading and
grammar but also listening, speaking, writing and communication skills in English all had
positive impacts on the implementing of CLT. However, the teachers also revealed factors
hindering the implementation of CLT. Some teachers reported that inadequate teacher
training, and a lack of teaching knowledge and skill hindered CLT implementation.
Student resistance to class participation, as well as students’ low English proficiency and
students’ unfamiliarity with a student-center approach were also reported as obstacles for
CLT implementation. Some educational factors were also barriers to the implementing of
CLT, such as test-oriented teaching, large classes with more than 50 students, limited
teaching hours with only three to four hours per week, the lack of real-world English
scenarios and the lack of efficient assessment instruments. Based on the findings, some
practical recommendations were made, such as: smaller class size, creating a more
authentic English environment, grouping students by English proficiency levels in classes
and modifying tests and exams to help to assess all English skills.

Furthermore, the influence of teachers on second language learners’ motivation is
also an important factor in language learning, and was examined in a recent study by
Matsumoto (2011). The subjects of the study were 119 non-university students at an
English language center adjoined to Bond University, Australia. A questionnaire was
employed to collect data. The results confirmed that the teacher was an important factor
affecting learners’ motivation in their English language learning. The students in the
survey indicated that their teachers’ motivation had a significant effect on their motivation.
The study also pointed out that as learners become more proficient, their perception about
the influence of their teachers’ personality changes. The effectiveness of motivation
strategies used by teachers was also affected by the difference in learners’ English
proficiency. Learners who had a lower level of proficiency tended to be more dependent on
their teacher for successful participation in class and focus more on teachers’ personality, while learners at intermediate level or advanced level were more likely to pay attention to teaching-related factors such as teachers’ teaching skills and techniques. It was also revealed that on the way to develop proficiency, learners may shift their perception of their teachers from personality-related factors to teaching-related factors.

3.2.4. Research studies relating to English teaching and learning in Vietnamese context. To date, a variety of research studies about English teaching and learning in Vietnam have been conducted. Almost all aspects in ELT have been explored and discussed. (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013; Hoa & Tuan, 2007; Le, 1999; Nguyen, 2002; Pham, 1999; Tuan, 2011; Tuan & Doan, 2010; Tuan & Neomy, 2007).

A particular focus of much of the research was on CLT implementation in Vietnam. A study conducted by Mai and Iwashita (2012) aimed to compare learners’ and teachers’ attitudes toward CLT at two universities in Vietnam. The participants of this study were 88 first-year learners and 37 in-service teachers from two universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. The participating teachers were all current Vietnamese teachers of English, recruited from two Vietnamese universities. The participating learners were around 18 years of age, with English proficiency levels ranging from pre-intermediate to intermediate. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire with 16 items, categorized in four sub-groups of CLT related factors: the importance of grammar, the quantity and quality of error correction, the use of group and pair work, and the role of the language teacher. After the questionnaire was administered, the data were analyzed, and the results showed that both groups of participants held favorable attitudes towards CLT. However, there were still discrepancies between teacher and learner attitudes. Teacher participants had more positive attitudes than learner participants for all the factors, except group work and pair work. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made. In order to implement CLT
successfully, there is a need to have better communication between teachers and learners, to establish more closely matching attitudes. Because both teachers and learners are the main stakeholders in CLT implementation, learners’ voices need to be respected and considered in order to achieve successful pedagogical practice. It was also recommended that to implement CLT effectively, some macro-changes should be made, most significantly, to reform the testing system. In addition, it was also noted that support for teachers and learners was important when implementing CLT, particularly the support and cooperation of administrators, parents and society.

Research has also been undertaken on the learner-centered approach which is considered an effective approach in many countries, including Vietnam. In Vietnam, this approach has been used in several educational institutions, and in particular for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). A case study conducted by Dang (2006) aimed to investigate how this approach was adopted in a teacher training college in Vietnam. The participants of this study were the teacher and students of an advanced level class. A classroom observation and a group discussion involving six students were conducted. Besides that, in-depth interviews with the teacher and document reviews were also carried out. The data were analyzed qualitatively and the results indicated that a learner-centered approach was employed successfully, as students were involved actively in learning. It was also explained that the successful application of this approach was due to four important elements: the context, the task, the teacher and the learner. First, the national education renovation policies and the universities’ policies, together with the universities’ investment in proving quality resources and equipment and reducing class size, created the context; a supportive environment for the implementation of the learner-centered approach. Second, the curriculum, together with learning materials and learning activities designed with contributions of teachers and learners made the tasks relevant to the learners’ needs,
interests and ability. Third, the approach was implemented with the participation of qualified and experienced teachers who were confident in choosing the appropriate methods and performing their roles in accordance with the learner-center approach perspectives. Finally, the personal qualities and awareness of the learners about their roles in the language learning process also contributed to the success of this new approach.

These findings show that effective teaching methods are very important for successful education in ELT classrooms. Alongside effective teaching methods, there are many other important factors that play an essential role in the success of ELT. One such factor is management policy for education and for teachers’ professional development investigated in studies by Vo and Nguyen (2010), Nguyen (2001) and Nguyen (2011). One such management policy is staff appraisal, a process which has been considered necessary in motivating staff. The case study conducted by Nguyen (2001) in the University of Pedagogy in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam explored staff and teachers’ attitudes towards appraisal policies. 140 administrators and teachers in 14 departments were selected randomly. The data were collected by postal questionnaires and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were also conducted with eight of the 16 department heads. The results showed that most teachers were not satisfied with the current appraisal policies, and it was believed that if those appraisal policies could be improved, the teaching quality would also be improved.

Teacher training and teacher professional development was also an important factor which needed to be taken into considerations because “teachers play a key role in changes to teaching methodology and contribute to improvements in the quality of education, especially EFL teachers who have to meet the needs and standards of English as an international language” (Vo & Nguyen, 2010, p. 205). A study conducted by Vo and Nguyen (2010) explored the experiences of Vietnamese teachers regarding the use of the
Critical Friend Group (CFG) technique, which was one of the models for professional development. The purpose of the study was to find out whether this model would be appropriate in an Asian context like Vietnam, where teachers did not have the habit of working together. A small group of four EFL teachers were invited to participate in the research during one semester. The teachers were asked to implement a full CFG process. Data were collected through interviews and observations. At the end of the semester, each teacher observed their colleagues’ classes, and had their class observed by their colleagues, and attended three feedback meetings. In the feedback meetings, the teachers were encouraged to discuss about their colleagues’ teaching performance, to point out what they learned from each other, and what could be improved. The researcher observed the discussions and played the role of a facilitator to help them get involved in the reflection and discussion. After the completion of the CFG process, each teacher was interviewed individually about their experiences with this model. The results showed that all teachers were happy and satisfied with their CFG experience, that it provided them with the opportunity to exchange their opinions, professional experiences, to learn from each other and improve their career knowledge in a relaxed manner. It also helped them establish good relationships with their colleagues during the time they worked together. The teachers also expressed that this model of professional development motivated them, and improved their teaching, their confidence and willingness to engage in group discussion. When asked if they wanted the CFG to be applied in the future for teacher professional development, all the teachers responded ‘Yes’ and believed this model would help to improve teacher performance and student outcomes, indicating that CFG had achieved some success in professional development in a Vietnamese context. Regarding the implementation of CFG in Vietnamese education in the future, some recommendations were also made: a CFG should consist of four to five teachers, should be composed of
colleagues who know each other well so that they feel comfortable to work together, and if
the CFG is introduced to a faculty for the first time, initially, it should be done with first-
year teachers who are willing and happy to work in groups, then gradually expanded to
other teachers.

The perspectives of teachers and learners regarding issues in English teaching and
learning were also explored (Kim Anh Hang, 2010; Phan Le, 2004; Ton & Pham, 2010). A
study conducted by Ton and Pham (2010) investigated Vietnamese teachers and students’
views about the types of English they prefer in their teaching and learning. 250 English
major students and 80 English teachers from universities in central Vietnam participated in
this study. Random sampling was applied in relation the student participants, and both
qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. Questionnaires containing both
open-ended and closed questions were sent to the participants, asking about the kind of
English they prefer in terms of pronunciation and grammar. In-depth interviews were used
with focus group of students and teachers. After data collection, quantitative data were
analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 16 for Windows,
and qualitative data were grouped in themes. The results presented a paradox: the teachers
and students believed students use English with non-native speakers more than with native
speakers outside the classroom, yet despite this, British English and American English are
still preferred in the classrooms. Most students admitted that they wanted to learn to
pronounce like a native speaker because this could help them pass tests or exams, which
were usually modeled on native speakers. Teachers also understood the importance of
teaching students varieties of English, but they still adopted the native speakers’ model in
the classroom because of time constraints, the lack of teaching materials using different
kinds of English, and a lack of tests using non-native speakers. Based on the findings,
several recommendations for classroom teachers were suggested. Because the teaching of
British English and American English is believed to be useful in the classroom, it was recommended that teachers should focus on teaching these varieties. However, teachers should also encourage students to learn and communicate flexibly with varieties of English in the real life environment outside their class time.

In a study conducted by Tomlinson and Dat (2004), the researchers aimed to explore the contributions of Vietnamese learners of English to ELT methodology. The participants of the study were 319 EFL adult learners at various ages between 16 and 50. These learners were from eight lower-intermediate classes and seven upper-intermediate classes in the Foreign Languages Center at the National University of Vietnam. In addition, 15 teachers who worked with these classes were also invited to listen to the students’ ideas and to express their viewpoints. Various instruments were used for data collection: interviews with teachers and students, questionnaires for students, class observations, field notes and diaries. The findings of the study showed that many learners came to the classrooms not only for English improvement but also for social relationships. 74% of the learners stated that they enjoy interacting with their classmates, but it was revealed that this aspect of learning seemed to be neglected by the teachers. The learners also reported some factors which discouraged them from speaking in English, and made the English classroom a stressful environment. The factors included difficulty in listening comprehension, fear of making mistakes, fear of teacher criticism, and unfamiliarity in using English for communication. Many students shared the view that they were afraid of losing face when studying in the same class with better students. Students were not confident due to their low proficiency in English, and also felt inferior when their potential was not recognized and developed by the teacher. Some weak students contended that the lack of communication practice in the past frustrated them and made it hard to continue with the course and participate in the class activities. The study also revealed an interesting
result regarding the opinions of teachers and students about students’ abilities. While seven out of 15 teachers interviewed did not think their students were willing to participate in communication activities, due to the limited English competence, the students in the questionnaire survey indicated that they wished to have discussions and express their opinions with friends and in classes through oral communication. 69.7% of the students reported that they liked to work in groups and 87% contended that they liked to learn from friends.

Learner motivation, autonomy and identity in Vietnam have also been investigated by a number of researchers (Luu Trong, 2011; Nhan & Lai, 2012; Tin Tan, 2010; Tran, 2007). Tran (2007) studied the motivation and identity of learners in an EFL writing classroom in Vietnam. The participation in this study was on a voluntary basis. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was sent to 100 third-year English major students in a four-year Bachelor program at a university in Central Vietnam. The focus of the questionnaire was to explore the students’ motivation and personal values in learning to write in a foreign language. In addition, the questionnaire also sought to identify cultural factors affecting students’ writing and which types of writing they felt were interesting and useful for them at present and in the future. After two weeks, thirty students completed and returned the questionnaire. In data analysis, the emerging themes relating to learners’ attitudes and motivations were categorized into a number of main groups. The results of this study appear to contradict the common belief that in an examination-driven context (such as the Vietnamese context), students’ main motivation in writing is to achieve good marks. The study revealed that students are not only concerned with extrinsic motivation like institutional needs (marks), linguistic needs, or social needs, but also affected by intrinsic motivations such as their interests, passions, and inspirations, which are closely related to their personal and cultural needs in writing. The study also revealed that students
can write independently and creatively and passionately if they are really motivated. These findings therefore imply that teachers in EFL writing classes should not only focus on teaching methods, but also they should concentrate on understanding students’ perceived needs and unrecognized needs.

In another study relating to learners’ motivation, Luu Trong (2011) investigated de-motivating factors, particularly those which had the most negative influence on EFL learners in their learning. The study was conducted with the participation of 147 EFL learners from various departments in Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities. A survey questionnaire with 27 items was used to collect data. The results highlighted a range of de-motivating factors, some of which were student-related, some were teacher-related. The factors identified as de-motivating are documented in Table 3.3. Teacher-related factors which contributed to the de-motivation were also identified. The five top factors are documented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.3

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<th>De-motivating Factors</th>
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Source: Adapted from Luu Trong (2011, p. 1265)
Table 3.4

*Teacher-Related De-motivating Factors*

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>test outside lessons</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>repetitive activities</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>teacher’s poor skills</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>useless shared knowledge in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>teacher’s apathy toward students</td>
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Source: Adapted from Luu Trong (2011, p. 1269)

The findings of the de-motivating factors for EFL students are significant to the activity of English teaching and learning, as it helps EFL teachers implement appropriate techniques to increase students’ motivation. The findings of Luu Trong’s study therefore contribute useful ideas to the study at HUTECH, in which the researcher also investigated student motivation as an important factor affecting the activity of English teaching and learning.

3.3. Summary

Through this literature review, concepts, practices and research studies related to the thesis topic have been discussed. To begin with, theoretical understandings of teaching and learning were considered before focusing on the goals of language teaching and learning and student-centered approaches. Then, four major language teaching methods which have had the most influence in Vietnamese education were introduced, and the key characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of each method were discussed. A description of English in higher education in Vietnam was presented, alongside the complications of implementing CLT in Vietnam. The literature review also provided a broad overview of research relating to English teaching and learning, both in Vietnam and
other contexts where English is a second or foreign language. This included studies relating to the use of teaching material and aids, the role of teachers and learners, English teaching methods and policies, factors effecting English teaching and learning, and contexts specific to Vietnamese higher education. Common issues identified in the literature are mainly related to inadequate facilities and equipment, students’ unequal English levels, large class size, lack of speaking component in tests and examinations, application of traditional teaching methods and teaching styles.

The review of literature demonstrates that there are still some gaps to be investigated. Some studies only focused on some particular aspects of English teaching and learning, such as: Chen and Goh (2011) exploring teachers’ difficulties in teaching oral English, Luu Trong (2011) studying student motivation, Abebe and Davidson (2012) investigating the role of visual teaching aids. Some other studies addressed various aspects of English teaching and learning, but were only limited to a particular participant group. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) studied factors affecting English teaching and learning, but the participants were only limited to students. Ming and Jaya (2011) investigated factors affecting the implementation of CLT, but the participants were only limited to teachers, and interviews were the only method used. If the above studies were conducted with various participant groups, such as: teachers and students, and through multiple research techniques, the data would be richer, and the results would be more robust. There have not been any studies found by the researcher about English teaching and learning in one particular higher education institution which covered various aspects, with different participant groups, through different data collection techniques, in order to provide a complete picture of English teaching and learning. By recognizing the gaps of the previous studies, this current study attempts to investigate ELT in HUTECH, by
addressing various aspects of English teaching and learning, with various participant
groups, through multiple research techniques.

This study will provide a snapshot of EFL training at HUTECH. Based on this, and the subsequent findings and recommendations, the teachers can adjust their teaching activity, and HUTECH leaders can have appropriate improvement strategies to make the activity of English teaching and learning more effective. If the findings of this study reveal significant areas for improvement, the next challenge for future research studies will be to consider how staff, both teaching and managerial may be able to introduce new practices or modify existing ones to enhance the success of students’ English language learning.
Chapter 4. Research Design

4.0. Introduction

Research involves many choices - topic, specific research questions, location, participants, how many, how to choose them, methodology and method. As a novice researcher, these choices present many challenges. However, in this research design, the chosen methodology is mixed methods because the research questions demand both quantitative and qualitative data, and also it allows the researcher to get the added value from qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this chapter, reliability, validity and ethics were also informed by an understanding of insider research, as the researcher was a former teaching staff member at HUTECH.

4.1. RMIT Research Processes

The research proposal followed the protocols of Higher Degrees By Research (HDR) at RMIT by first presenting at the HDR research conference in November 2011 of School of Education, RMIT and passing the Confirmation of Candidature stage (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The research project also received ethics approval from RMIT in January 2012 (see Appendix C).

4.2. Research Questions

This study sought to investigate factors that affect English teaching and learning in HUTECH, particularly the motivating and de-motivating factors. In order to identify and understand these factors, this research investigated a range of key stakeholders, including students, teachers and managers, as well as observations of the classroom practices at HUTECH.
In order to address the central research question in this study: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH?”, a series of sub-research questions were constructed. First, what are students’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH? This question was explored using quantitative research methods, involving HUTECH students only. Second, this thesis investigated teachers’ and managers’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH, using qualitative research methods, involving teachers and management staff at HUTECH. Finally, this research also used qualitative methods to observe and describe the activity that took place in English language classrooms at HUTECH, in order to ascertain how English is being taught at HUTECH. The use of mixed methods (Creswell, 2009) is a key feature of this research which distinguishes it from previous research into English teaching and learning in Vietnam. Another distinctive feature of this research design is that it gives a holistic view of one specific institution within the context of the Vietnamese education system.

The sub-research questions are defined by quantitative and qualitative methods in the table below.

Table 4.1

Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative research questions (involving HUTECH students only)</th>
<th>Qualitative research questions (involving HUTECH students, teachers and managers)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What are students’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?</td>
<td>- What are teachers’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What are managers’ perspectives of English teaching and learning in HUTECH?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- How is English being taught in classrooms in HUTECH?</td>
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4.3. Philosophical Worldview: Pragmatism

The many challenges associated with research about the teaching of English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFL) in a Vietnamese private university requires robust methodological instruments, able to respond and adapt to the research situation. To meet this challenge, a pragmatic methodological approach was proposed. “Pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (Creswell, 2009, p. 10). With a pragmatic worldview, researchers pay attention to the research problem and use all approaches and techniques available to gain a sound understanding of the issues involved. Pragmatism is considered “as a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies” (Creswell, 2009, p. 10) and “represents an advance in thinking about social research – a new paradigm that is replacing the earlier paradigms based on positivism and interpretivism” (Denscombe, 2007, pp. 117-118).

According to Denscombe, in a research context, pragmatism tends to revolve around the following core ideas:

5. Knowledge is based on practical outcomes and ‘what works’. The key criterion for judging knowledge is how useful it is perceived to be and how well it works when applied to some practical problem.

6. Research should test what works through empirical inquiry.

7. There is no single, best ‘scientific method’ that can lead the way to indisputable knowledge.

8. Knowledge is provisional. What we understand as truth today may not be seen as such in the future. Knowledge is seen as a product of our times. It can never be absolute or perfect because it is inevitably a product of the historical era and the cultural context within which it is produced. The quest for absolute ‘Truth’ is consequently seen as hopeless cause.
9. Traditional dualisms in the field of philosophy and science are regarded as not helpful. In particular, there is scepticism about the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research, but there is also a rejection of distinctions like facts/values, objectivism/subjectivism and rationalism/empiricism (2007, pp. 116-117).

As indicated by Creswell (2009), a pragmatic approach allows individual researchers to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. A pragmatic approach also allows the researchers to combine different approaches for data collection and analysis.

Due to these characteristics, a pragmatic research philosophy was chosen as the most appropriate for this study. This allowed the researcher to use the most effective and flexible methodological procedures, including multiple methods and different forms of data collection and analysis, in order to understand the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH.

4.4. Mixed Methods Case Study Approach

4.4.1. Mixed methods research. According to Creswell (2009), mixed methods research is a new approach which allows researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in one study. It enables researchers to employ a research design which integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular question or a set of questions. Mixed methods research involves the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative data and qualitative data in a single or multiphase study (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2010). Teddlie (2009) also points out that mixed methods research uses a pragmatic world view, allowing researchers to integrate multiple approaches and apply a variety of research techniques as long as they are
appropriate to address the research questions. Bryman (2006), suggests that researchers using a mixed methods approach should employ a combination of methods, as it can help to utilize the strengths and overcome the weaknesses of using solely quantitative or qualitative approaches. Furthermore, Morse (2009) believes that “[i]t enables the completion of a single research project more expeditiously and efficiently than conducting a multiple methods design that entails a series of related research projects conducted over time” (pp. 14-15).

Following this point, Denscombe (2007) agrees that by using different methods to investigate the same subject, researchers can improve their confidence in the accuracy of findings. What is more, the use of more than one method can also help to enhance findings by providing a more complete picture of the situation being studied.

In this study, the researcher considered a concurrent embedded strategy which involves only “one data collection phase, during which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). It helps researchers to save time but still gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This strategy also allows researchers to use different methods to assess different research questions and study different groups or levels in the organization under investigation (Creswell, 2009). In these regards, the concurrent embedded strategy was identified as suitable for this study, as it allowed the researcher to use her time efficiently in one in-country data collection phase. It also allowed the researcher to use different research questions as mentioned above, and also assess different people and different levels in HUTECH (students, teachers, managers) through different research methods (questionnaires, interviews, observations) so as to gain more insights into English teaching and learning in HUTECH.

4.4.2. Case study. As this research focused solely on English teaching and learning in HUTECH University, a case study approach was chosen. The case study was
determined to be a particularly suitable strategy of inquiry for a range of reasons. As Creswell (2009) notes, case study allows a researcher to focus on exploring in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals or organizations. In addition, a case study also allows the researcher to use multiple sources, multiple types of data and multiple methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe, 2007). According to Merriam (1998),

Case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. Educational processes, problems and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy. (p. 14)

Because case studies have proved to be so effective, especially in educational research, it is not surprising that “educational research, evaluation research, and organizational research have made extensive use of case studies to foster their development” (De Vaus, 2001, p. 219). Because of the suitability of the research, the ability to use multiple methods, and the history of effective research in education, the case study has been chosen as the approach for this research.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the case study, and the scope of this research project. Discussing the descriptive case study, De Vaus (2001) notes that “a case study deals with the whole case but this cannot possibly mean that the case study consists of everything about the case. To describe everything is impossible: there must be a focus” (p. 225). In this study, the researcher focused on understanding non-major English teaching and learning of teachers and students at the second year of the Bachelor program at HUTECH. Therefore, HUTECH is the case to study in this thesis. The case study approach was particularly appropriate for this study to capture a sense of the
complexity of the educational ecosystem of one institution in which the researcher used a variety of research methods to construct a more complete and deep understanding of non-major English teaching and learning in a Vietnamese tertiary education.

4.5. Sampling and Selection of Participants

4.5.1. Sampling. A consideration of the sampling of participants in this study was how to determine the most appropriate sample size for quantitative data collection and qualitative data collection. Discussing sample size, Hoinville (1978) points out that “in practice, the complexity of the competing factors of resources and accuracy means that the decision on sample size tends to be based on experience and good judgment rather than relying on a strict mathematical formula” (p. 73). Indeed, as Hoinville notes, a balance must be struck between the resources and time at the researchers’ disposal, and sampling a large enough population to ensure greater accuracy in quantitative data, and a range of voices and opinions in qualitative data. Therefore, the sample size chosen in this study was based on the researcher’s experience of HUTECH, and the Vietnamese context. The study was conducted at HUTECH, with the participation of managers, teachers and students. The total proposed sample was 330 students for the quantitative questionnaires (30 students in the pilot questionnaires, and 300 students in the main questionnaires), twelve Vietnamese teachers of English and two managers for the qualitative interviews.

In 2012 in HUTECH, the total number of students from all years, all levels and all training forms was around 20,000. But this study aimed to focus on non-major English teaching and learning for Bachelor students, so the target population was only the second year Bachelor students. There were about 40 Bachelor classes from all major disciplines, and there were about 50 students in each class, so the total number of the second year Bachelor students was about 2000. So, with the target population of 2,000, was the sample
population of 300 enough? To make sure, the researcher contacted the statistics consultants at RMIT. It was confirmed that statistically, the number of 300 was large enough for quantitative analysis. This matches the viewpoint of Denscombe (2007) who indicates,

The use of surveys in social research does not necessarily have to involve samples of 1,000 or 2,000 people or events. Whatever the theoretical issues, the simple fact is that surveys and sampling are frequently used in small-scale research involving between 30 and 250 cases (p. 28).

In addition, Fowler (2009) also points out that

The size of the population from which a sample of a particular size is drawn has virtually no impact on how well that sample is likely to describe the population. A sample of 150 people will describe a population of 15,000 or 15 million with virtually the same degree of accuracy, assuming that all other aspects of the sample design and sampling procedures are the same (p. 44).

As a result of the discussion, it was concluded that this research did not aim to focus on testing any specific statistical hypothesis, but it mainly focused on exploring people’s perspectives and opinions. This study is more descriptive in nature. Therefore, a 300 sample population would be reasonable and enough to understand student perceptions.

Non-probability sampling was considered for this study because “the research process is one of ‘discovery’ rather than the testing of hypotheses” (Denscombe, 2007, p. 29). In addition, May and Cantley (2001) also point out that in some cases, the criterion of ‘fit for purpose’ is more important than the statistical accuracy of probability sampling (p. 95).

Non-probability sampling consists of purposive or purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009; Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). Purposive sampling “is considered to be the most useful type
of non-probability sampling” (Wagner et al., 2012, p. 93). For this study, purposive sampling was used because:

With *purposive sampling* the sample is ‘hand picked’ for the research. The term is applied to those situations where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. In effect, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation (Denscombe, 2007, p. 17).

The advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to choose the people or events believed to be critical for the research (Denscombe, 2007), typical for the population being studied (Davies, 2007), and may illustrate features or processes which are of interest to the researcher (Silverman, 2000).

Instead of going for the typical instances, a cross-section or a balanced choice, the researcher can concentrate on instances which will display a wide variety – possibly even a focus on extreme cases – to illuminate the research question at hand. In this sense it might not only be economical but might also be informative in a way that conventional probability sampling cannot be (Denscombe, 2007, p. 17).

In this study, the researcher was also an ‘insider’ as she has been a teacher at HUTECH and was familiar with the education system and environment, therefore purposive sampling was chosen in the belief that it would provide the most valuable data.

**4.5.2. Selection of participants.** The focus of this study was the investigation of non-major English teaching and learning, non-major English was taught in the first and the second year. It was believed that second year students would provide more useful data than first year students, as students could only express their perspectives after they had
experienced the non-major English program in their first year. Thus, student participants selected were full-time students in the second year of a four-year Bachelor program. Student participants were selected from ten typical major disciplines: Electricity, Interior Decoration, Information Technology, Food Science, Fashion Design, Business Administration, Finance, Environment, Biotechnology, Civil Engineering and Accounting. Their English levels range from pre-intermediate to intermediate.

The teacher participants selected were full-time and part-time teachers who had at least two years experience teaching a non-major English course in HUTECH and who were recently teaching a non-major English course in HUTECH. Both male and female teachers were selected, and their ages ranged from 28 to 64 years.

The two manager participants were selected from the English center. They were chosen due to their responsibility and influence in non-major English teaching and learning in HUTECH.

4.6. Research Methods

4.6.1. Data collection.

4.6.1.1. Pilot questionnaire. As this research project canvasses a large student population, it was important to consider the most effective method for collecting data. A questionnaire was chosen because it is “a useful tool for collecting data from large groups of subjects” (Seliger, 1989, p. 126). The questionnaire also “offers greater anonymity” because participants are not identified in the data collection, nor are their answers easily identifiable, which means that “when sensitive questions are asked, it helps to increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate information” (Kumar, 2011, p. 149). In this research project, students would be asked questions about teachers and teaching styles, and due to the respect and authority teachers hold in the Vietnamese education system, the assumption
was that students would feel more comfortable answering the questionnaire items rather than through interviews. So, a questionnaire was employed to help the researcher get broad based and accurate statistical data.

However, before undertaking a large scale questionnaire, it was important to conduct a pilot questionnaire to find out and eliminate questions which were ambiguous or difficult for participants to complete (Bell, 1999). The pilot questionnaire was also used to refine the questions, arrange the order of questions, and reduce the non response rate (Wallace, 1998). Punch (2003) also mentions that the whole questionnaire needs to be tested for length, the time taken to complete, and the difficulty of the questions. “Care taken during this stage is likely to help increase response rate” (p. 35).

Before conducting the pilot questionnaire, a pre-pilot questionnaire with 33 questions was sent to the researcher’s supervisor, and the researcher’s colleagues and friends who were also English teachers to ask for their opinions and advice. The researcher then received their feedback about the content as well as the layout of the questionnaire. In relation to the layout, the pre-pilot participants suggested that instead of numbering the questions for the whole questionnaire, the researcher was advised to number the questions for each section. This would make it easy for readers to see quickly the exact number of questions in each section and also make the layout of the questionnaire more appealing. In relation to the content, the experienced colleagues offered good advice, especially as they were quite familiar with English teaching practices at HUTECH. After receiving this feedback, the original questionnaire (Appendix E1) was modified and then used as the pilot questionnaire (Appendix E2).

The questionnaire design was influenced by one interesting research study conducted by Barnes and Lock (2010), and a subsequent discussion about this study with the supervisor of this research project. The study was conducted with 2170 students. In that
study, the students were asked to use free writing to express their opinions about the attributes of effective lecturers of English as a foreign language. It was realized that in order to explore various opinions from students, this method was interesting and useful. Therefore, it was decided to include two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire so as to explore students’ expectations about the English language program in HUTECH. However, in order to focus students’ writing, keep the time taken to complete the questionnaire down, and to make the data analysis less complicated, students were asked to list only five attributes, or factors, for each question, rather than write freely.

It was also essential that participants were given clear instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire. As the researcher was familiar with HUTECH, it was recognized that students were familiar with questionnaires, as at HUTECH, students often have to take multiple choice tests, and fill out survey questionnaires at the end of each semester. So, rather than detailed instructions for each section of the questionnaire, sections in the questionnaire that were familiar to students were not laboriously explained. However, sections that may have been unfamiliar or complicated for students were given further explanation and clear instruction.

The pilot questionnaire was sent to 30 students in their second year, who had finished non-major English in the first year and were studying non-major English in the second year, alongside their major disciplines. At HUTECH, students had an English speaking club. The English speaking club was held for all students in HUTECH every two months. The researcher was an English teacher at HUTECH and had often attended the students’ English club, and participants at the English club were identified as suitable to undertake the pilot questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered to the students by the students’ representative in the break time of the English speaking club, rather than the class study time, so as not to affect the students’ studies. Although there were many students
from different years and different levels at the English speaking club, the questionnaire was delivered only to students in their second year. The students had 20-25 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and then the questionnaire was collected by the students’ representative. Of the 30 questionnaires handed out, 28 were returned. This high return rate can be attributed to the representative and the researcher observing and collecting the questionnaire immediately after the students had finished. The questionnaire papers were then checked by the researcher. The students answered most of the questions, which were multiple choice and Yes/No questions. Some students did not provide full answers for the open-ended questions (Appendix E2, Section 5, question 1 and 2). For example, question 1 in Section 5 asked students to list five attributes of an effective English teacher, but some students only gave two or three attributes. However, these responses were still considered acceptable and valid responses to an open-ended question, as students answered the question to the best of their ability. Students were also asked to evaluate the questionnaire, and in relation to the questionnaire “Were there any ambiguous or unclear questions which you found difficult to complete?”, all answers were “No”.

Due to the success of the pilot questionnaire, no major changes or modifications were made to the content of the main questionnaire (Appendix É3). Only some minor changes were made to some questions regarding the use of words which are more familiar to students so that they can understand easily (Appendix E3, Section 3, question 2, question 6, question 12, question 13, question 14; Section 4, question 4). It was realized that one of the key reasons the pilot questionnaire was so successful was the feedback and development from the pre-pilot questionnaire. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that a pre-pilot questionnaire should be undertaken, as the feedback and advice from colleagues and researchers with expertise is very valuable.
4.6.1.2. Main questionnaire. After the pilot questionnaire, the main questionnaire was conducted with a larger population (Appendix E3). There are different ways of administering a questionnaire: mailed questionnaire, collective administration, administration in a public place (Kumar, 2011). In this study, collective administration was used because it was believed it was the quickest way of collecting data and ensured a high response rate.

To conduct the main questionnaire, the researcher contacted one of the students’ representatives in the HUTECH Students’ Union. The researcher selected ten major disciplines and the student representative helped the researcher contact a monitor from a second year class from each of the ten major disciplines. Due to previous experience as an English teacher at HUTECH, the researcher was aware that the English ability of the students from the various major disciplines varied. In general, at HUTECH, the English of students in majors like business, finance, accounting was better than the English of students from other majors like engineering, textile and design.

As discussed earlier, the research aimed to gather voices and opinions from a range of students from different major disciplines. To this end, ten class monitors, one from each of the major disciplines chosen, were asked to give the questionnaire to their classmates. A meeting between the researcher and the ten monitors was arranged by the representatives from the HUTECH Students’ Union. This was to explain the research to the monitors. The monitors were all advised that the purpose of the research was to investigate the factors affecting non-major English teaching and learning in HUTECH, so as to help identify how the University might improve the quality of English teaching and learning. The questionnaire was given to the monitors to read, and the monitors were also given the opportunity to raise any questions they had. Finally, the monitors were also instructed about how to distribute the questionnaires. At the end of the meeting, all the monitors were
clear about the purpose of the survey, the questionnaire content as well as the way to distribute the questionnaires.

After the meeting, the researcher gave each monitor 30 copies of the questionnaire to deliver to the students in their classes. While class sizes averaged around 50 students, only 30 students in each class would be asked to complete the questionnaire. This number was chosen so as to be able to gather and work with data from students from a wider variety of major disciplines. The time and labor limitations of this research project meant that a sample population of greater than 300 students would be unachievable. If the questionnaire was delivered to all the students (50 students) in each class, the researcher would only have the resources to collect data from students across six disciplines, preventing the researcher from getting data from the other four major disciplines. Thus, only 30 students in each class were asked to complete the questionnaire. However, in order to have as valid and reliable data as possible, the researcher asked the monitors to give copies of the questionnaire to various students in their class, and not to focus on any particular groups of students.

At HUTECH, students are required to attend a class meeting once a week to exchange information and discuss issues, and the questionnaires were conducted during this class meeting time, so as not to affect the students’ study time. The researcher let each monitor decide which week would be the most convenient time for him/her to conduct the questionnaire in his/her class. The main questionnaire was delivered to the students in ten classes, one from each of the ten major disciplines. The students had 20-25 minutes to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaire was then collected directly by the monitors. There were 272 copies of questionnaire returned, which equates to a response rate of 91.7%. This high response rate can be attributed to a range of factors. The use of ‘on the spot’ questionnaire collection, having each monitor responsible for only 30 copies of the
questionnaire made it convenient for each monitor to observe and collect the questionnaire. The monitors were also advised clearly before distributing the questionnaires, and the researcher’s familiarity with HUTECH’s teaching and learning system helped identify the most appropriate time to administer the questionnaires. In addition, the questionnaire was not too long, or too difficult, for students to answer.

4.6.1.3. Teachers’ interviews. When a researcher needs to gain insights into individuals’ opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, personal in-depth interviews are believed to provide a more suitable data gathering method (Denscombe, 2007). Face-to-face interviews can help researchers obtain more detailed and rich data, and, as Denscombe suggests, “the face-to-face contact offers some immediate means of validating the data” (2007, p. 10). For these reasons, it was decided that the most effective method to gather data that captured the opinions and experiences of English teachers at HUTECH were individual face-to-face interviews (see Appendix G for Interview schedule).

In this study, the researcher had to determine the most appropriate type of interview for this research. There are three types of interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview (Denscombe, 2007; Merriam, 1998). In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews use predetermined questions to inform the main content of the interviews, but allow the interviewer to include more in-depth questions raised naturally at the time of the interviews so as to elicit more comprehensive information and explore unexpected issues that arise. The predetermined questions in semi-structured interviews also help to keep interviews ‘on track’, but the flexibility of the structure allows the interviews to flow like natural conversations, creating a comfortable and friendly atmosphere for participants.

The researcher contacted the teachers individually by email and by phone to invite them to participate in the interviews. The phone numbers of the teachers were obtained via
the administration department (with permission from the University Vice-Rector – Appendix B). There was a list of contact information of all the English teachers recorded in English Faculty and English Language Center, and the researcher used this list to contact the teachers to invite them for the interviews. At the time of this research, there were 15 full-time and more than 50 part-time English teachers in HUTECH, 12 of which would be selected for interviews. The teachers selected in this study were those with at least two years experience teaching non-major English at HUTECH, and who were currently teaching non-major English classes for second year Bachelor students. The teachers were told clearly that the purpose of the study was to investigate the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH, and they were all assured that this study did not aim to criticize or make any judgmental assessments of any staff. After receiving this explanation, the 12 teachers selected to participate indicated that were willing to participate. The plain language statement (PLS) (Appendix D1), consent form (Appendix D2) and the interview questions (Appendix F1) were also sent to the teachers via email, so the teachers could read them carefully before making a formal acceptance. Two teachers had to withdraw from the initial 12 teachers invited, due to heavy teaching loads. The researcher then invited other teachers to replace those who withdrew, and two agreed to participate, allowing the researcher to interview 12 teachers for the research as proposed.

Whether the teachers accepted to participate or not was due to their availability and interests. As a result, five teachers in the interviews were the ones who taught the students in the survey, and others were not. However, it was not necessary for the participating teacher to have taught the student participants, because this study was not intended to compare the viewpoints of the teacher and students in the same class. Even if they were in the same class, they might have the similar or opposite viewpoints. The purpose of this study was to gather the viewpoints of the teachers and the students independently.
The teachers invited to the interviews were varied: full-time and part-time, male and female, early, middle and late career, so as to gather as broad a range of opinions and experiences from teachers. After the researcher received the signed consent forms from participating teachers, the interviews were scheduled and conducted.

The interviews were arranged at the teachers’ convenience so that they would feel relaxed, and able to talk and discuss in depth. Most interviews were conducted in staff rooms after class time so that the interviews were not affected by noise or other interference. Some interviews were held in the English Faculty Office where the researcher had previously worked. Before the interviews, participants were asked if they would like to be interviewed in Vietnamese or English. Ten of them preferred to use Vietnamese, and only two teachers chose to use English in the interviews.

Gathering data from face-to-face interviews can be done in three basic ways: tape-recording, note taking during the interviews and writing down data as soon as possible after interviews (Merriam, 1998). Tape-recording was believed to help record full answers, providing actual and detailed data from the interviewees, and to help keep the natural flow of the interviews. In addition, tape-recording allowed the researcher to revisit interviews and re-listen to answers provided if unsure of the participants’ responses (Minichiello, 1995). Therefore, all interviews were tape-recorded.

In the plain language statement (Appendix D1), participants were informed that the interviews would be tape-recorded, to which all participants accepted, by signing the consent form (refer to Appendix D2 for example of consent form). A high quality recorder was used to record the interviews. In practice, using a recorder was helpful in keeping the natural flow of the interviews and saving time, as the researcher did not have to stop often to take notes during the interviews. Each participant was interviewed once, and the normal time for each interview ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. The interview was structured around
15 main questions, focusing on exploring the teachers’ perspectives about various factors which may affect English teaching and learning in HUTECH. These factors included: curriculum, syllabus, facilities, teaching methodology, HUTECH’s leadership, students’ motivation (see Appendix F1 for interview questions). In addition, depending on the flow of each interview, the researcher also asked more questions to elicit more in-depth information from the interviewee.

4.6.1.4. Managers’ interviews. It was believed that the opinions and perspectives of managers were also important in providing a full understanding of English teaching and learning at HUTECH. For this reason, individual face-to-face interviews were also conducted with two managers from the HUTECH English center, who were directly involved in the management and responsible for the activity of English teaching and learning at HUTECH. As mentioned earlier, the HUTECH English center managed and ran the non-major English program for all faculties in HUTECH. Two managers of this center were contacted directly and invited to participate in this research. The plain language statement, consent form and the interview questions were sent to these managers so that they could read and make an informed decision about their participation. Both managers were very interested and most willing to be interviewed. They also confirmed their acceptance to participate by signing the consent form and sending it back to the researcher before the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were also used for the managers (refer to Appendix G for a copy of the interview schedule). Each manager was interviewed once, and the time for each interview was about 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the managers’ offices, at their convenience, so they were not affected by noise and interference from other people. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, at the preference of the two managers. The managers were also informed in the plain language statement that they
would be recorded, and both agreed by signing the attached consent form. Both interviews with managers were recorded with a high quality recorder, so their responses would be recorded with fidelity.

Every attempt was made to ensure that the interviews were conducted in a happy and comfortable atmosphere. The interviews were conducted in a conversational, friendly manner, to encourage the two managers to talk and share their view points. The interviews focused on the planned questions, which aimed to explore the managers’ perspectives about the factors which may affect English teaching and learning in HUTECH, including teachers, HUTECH leaders’ policy, curriculum, syllabus and facilities (see Appendix F2 for interview questions). In addition, the researcher also asked more questions, to gain richer data, and a deeper understanding of the participants’ perspectives.

### 4.6.1.5. Class observations

One of the multiple methods identified as useful for this research was observation. Observation is one of the primary techniques for data collection which takes place in the natural field setting and helps to gain understandings of the context that surrounds specific incidents and behaviors (Merriam, 1998). Much foreign language teaching and learning research is concerned with what occurs during classroom learning. In foreign language teaching and learning, observation is often used as a technique to study language teaching and learning process in the classroom, by paying close attention to teachers’ and learners’ behaviors and interactions (Seliger, 1989). Observation appears to be more appropriate for describing the social context of foreign language learning, such as descriptions of teacher and learner language in the classroom, teacher and learner interactions, activities conducted, teacher and learner gestures, classroom context, desks arrangement, teacher and student movement. Because of the above reasons, classroom observation was considered an appropriate technique for this study.
There are two types of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. Non-participant observation is when the researcher does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer, watching and listening to the classroom interactions, recording or taking notes of the observed activity, and drawing conclusions from the class (Kumar, 2011; Long, 1983; Seliger, 1989). In this study, non-participant observation was undertaken.

As indicated by Merriam (1998), before observations, researchers should decide in advance about what to observe and what to concentrate on. In the observations, the researcher focused on the interactions of teachers and students, activities in the classes, teaching aids, teachers’ methodologies and teaching styles because it was believed that these elements would help to answer the central research question mentioned earlier (refer to Appendix H for Observations Notes and Appendix I for the Observation schedule used to gather this data).

The research design for this project sought to gain permission from four teachers to observe their classes. Some teachers invited for the interviews were asked if they would give permission for class observations. The teachers selected for class observations were: one young male full-time teacher, two older male part-time teachers, three young female full-time teachers, two older female part-time teachers. At HUTECH, each teacher was given different classes in different major disciplines. Because of this, it was not difficult for the researcher to arrange to observe a variety of classes from different major disciplines. There were in total eight observations completed in this study.

In addition to gaining permission from the teachers to observe their classes, students were also informed about the research. In order to ensure the classes proceeding as naturally as possible, teachers were assured that the purpose of the research was not for assessment or criticism, and were encouraged to deliver their lessons as usual. The teachers
and the students were cooperative and classes proceeded quite naturally, which was believed to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process.

All observations were done in Ung Van Khiem Campus because most second year students studied at this campus. Each observation lasted 45 minutes which was equivalent to a class period. The textbook used for the second year non-major English students was *American Headway*, book 2 (Soars & Soars, 2009).

The observations undertaken in this research were designed to intrude as little as possible to the natural atmosphere of the classrooms, so the researcher did not use cameras or audio recorders. Instead, data were collected through the writing of observational field notes. The field notes were designed in advance to help the researcher maintain a consistent focus on the particular elements identified as pertinent to the research question. The field notes included: descriptions of setting, people and activities, direct quotations of what people said and observer’s comments (Merriam, 1998) (see Appendix H for sample field note).

4.6.2. Data analysis.

4.6.2.1. Quantitative data analysis (survey questionnaires). A range of techniques can be used to analyze quantitative data. “The computer is essential for the analysis of most quantitative research data, since it can handle complex analyses of large amount of data in a very short time and at a very reasonable cost” (Seliger, 1989, p. 238). Among the many computer packages developed for the analysis of quantitative data, the most widely used in social science research is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009; Punch, 2005).

SPSS is an extremely comprehensive package which can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions. SPSS has a vast number of
statistical and mathematical functions, scores of statistical procedures, and a very flexible data handling capability. (Punch, 2005, p. 130)

Therefore, in this study, SPSS was used in order to conduct quantitative data analysis for the survey questionnaires.

After the questionnaire was administered, the data were coded and entered carefully into a computer database. The paper questionnaires were also assigned identification numbers which made it possible to cross check the entered data. After the data were entered into the computer database, the researcher checked for consistency throughout the entered data.

Once the data entry procedure was completed and checked to ensure accurately, the data underwent analysis using SPSS. The results gained from data analysis in SPSS were imported into a spreadsheet, using Microsoft’s Excel software. Excel was used for presenting the analyzed data in tables, bar charts and pie charts. The findings and interpretations were made in narrative writing.

4.6.2.2. Qualitative data analysis (interviews and class observations)

Interview analysis. The teacher and manager participants were coded using the identification numbers as follows.
Table 4.2

Coding for Teacher and Manager Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Identification numbers</th>
<th>Interview dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>07 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>19 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>25 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>18 May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>T5</td>
<td>23 May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>T6</td>
<td>29 May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>T7</td>
<td>03 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 8</td>
<td>T8</td>
<td>06 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 9</td>
<td>T9</td>
<td>09 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 10</td>
<td>T10</td>
<td>15 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 11</td>
<td>T11</td>
<td>20 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 12</td>
<td>T12</td>
<td>28 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager 1</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>15 July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager 2</td>
<td>M2</td>
<td>21 July 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews with the teachers and the managers were audio tape-recorded and then transcribed carefully. The researcher undertook the transcribing by herself, in order to verify the transcription accurately and thus captured the meaning expressed during the interviews. The main topics of conversation in the interviews were closely related to the research question, that is, the factors affecting the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. The instructions for qualitative data analysis introduced by Creswell (2009) were used to analyze the transcribed interview data. Initially, the transcripts were read
through to ascertain the main themes, including the predetermined themes and new, emerging themes. After that, an inductive approach was used to code the data within each main theme. The unit of analysis was a phrase or a short sentence. Similar expressions were grouped into sub themes and were labeled with names that described their content. After that, the interpretations of the results were made in narrative passages. Particular responses of the teachers and managers were quoted in the thesis to provide evidence for the analysis and findings.

Extracts taken from the interviews were coded using participant, date and line number, so extracts could be easily identified, for instance: Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.19. This code means that this excerpt was extracted from the transcription of the interview with Teacher 1, which took place on April 07th 2012, line 19.

Class Observation Analysis The class observations were coded using identification numbers as follows.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes observed</th>
<th>Identification numbers</th>
<th>Observation dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>15 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>18 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>19 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>21 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>C5</td>
<td>23 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>C6</td>
<td>28 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 7</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>28 April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 8</td>
<td>C8</td>
<td>29 April 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The field notes of class observations were completed and analyzed, following the instructions for qualitative data analysis introduced by Creswell (2009). The focus of class observation was to explore the activities set by the teachers for their students in the classes and the interactions between the teachers and students rather than on the individual students’ activities. Thus, rather than a highly detailed description and a very close detailing of the interactions between teacher and students, the observational field notes were directed towards gaining a broad description of the classroom interactions.

The class observation field notes were read through to identify important observations. Then, the field notes were read line by line to more clearly obtain and describe the emerging themes. When the main themes were obtained, an inductive approach was used to code the data within each main theme. Similar categories were grouped together to make sub themes. These categories were labeled with names to indicate their content. Then, the findings were interpreted in narrative passages. Some excerpts in the field notes were quoted in the thesis to support the analysis and findings. These extracts were coded as: Observation excerpt C1.15.04.2012.25. This indicates the excerpt was extracted from the observation notes of Class 1, observed on April 15\textsuperscript{th} 2012, line 25.

4.7. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are the two most important criteria for assuring the quality of a research study. “Social scientists rely on assessments of reliability and validity to evaluate the quality of their measurement methods or tools” (Wagner et al., 2012, p. 80). Thus, “reliability and validity are central issues in all measurement” (Neuman, 2012, p. 121).
An important consideration in relation to the concept validity is what it measures. “Validity asks: Do the instruments measure the phenomenon that they are supposed to?” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 85). Smith defines validity “as the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure” (1991, p. 106). According to Babbie, “validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration” (1990, p. 133). In terms of measurement procedures, “validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure” (Kumar, 1999, p. 137).

There are two types of validity: internal validity and external validity (Creswell, 2009; De Vaus, 2001; Seliger, 1989). “Internal validity is the extent to which the structure of a research design enables us to draw unambiguous conclusions from our results”, whereas “external validity refers to the extent to which results from a study can be generalized beyond the particular study”. This distinction is important, as De Vaus notes, “a study may have good internal validity but its value is limited if the findings only apply to the people in that particular investigation” (2001, p. 28).

Reliability is also crucial to the quality of research. “Reliability estimates the consistency of your measurement” (Wagner et al., 2012, p. 80). Neuman (2012), in a similar vein, explains, “reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that repeated, stable outcomes are the same under identical or similar conditions” (p. 121). “Reliability asks: If I use the same measure today and repeat it again on the same population shortly thereafter, will I obtain the same result?” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 85). According to Kumar, “reliability is the degree of accuracy or precision in the measurements made by a research instrument. The lower the degree of ‘error’ in an instrument, the higher is the reliability” (1999, p. 140).
Although they are separate concepts, there is a close relationship between reliability and validity. The instruments we use for our research must be both reliable and valid. It is not useful to measure something consistently if we are not measuring the thing we intended to (Wagner et al., 2012). In relation to this point, Bryman (2008) also states that “although reliability and validity are analytically distinguishable, they are related because validity presumes reliability. This means that, if your measure is not reliable, it cannot be valid” (p. 153).

It is pointed out that “perfect reliability and validity are virtually impossible to achieve. Rather, they are ideals for which all researchers strive”, and “all social researchers want reliable and valid measures because it helps to establish the truthfulness, credibility, and believability of findings” (Neuman, 2012, p. 121). Therefore, in order to assure the quality of this research study, great efforts were made by the researcher during the research process to increase the validity and reliability.

Before data collection, the questionnaires were developed over a prolonged period of time. As mentioned in section 4.6.1.1, a pre-pilot phase and pilot phase were conducted to gather feedback and changes, revise and modify the questionnaire to enhance the reliability and validity of data collected. In the interviews, questionnaires, and class observations, anonymity and confidentiality were assured to make all participants feel confident and comfortable to answer questions openly. In order to increase the validity of the survey questionnaire, the characteristics of the sample population were the same as those of the target population (second year, non-major English students) at HUTECH.

In the interviews with teachers and managers, every effort was made to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere so as to encourage the interviewees to express their thoughts and opinions freely. During class observations, the researcher assured and encouraged both teachers and students to behave naturally, as in their normal lessons.
During class observations, note-taking was employed, and the researcher also sat at the back of the class, so as to disturb the class as little as possible, and not to distract the teachers or students from their teaching and learning activities.

In the data analysis procedure, steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of data analyzed. The recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher carefully to ensure accuracy. When coding data, attention was given to the smallest details, and care taken to ensure consistency. Intercoder agreement was applied, which allowed the researcher to ask another person to cross-check the codes (Creswell, 2009). The coders agreed on most of the codes used. In addition, peer debriefing was also used “to enhance the accuracy of the account. This process involves locating a person (a peer debriefer) who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192).

This awareness of the importance of validity and reliability informed the research design and ensured that the researcher was aware of the need to recognize personal biases and impressions when analyzing and interpreting data. The researcher reported exactly and objectively the results of data analysis in the findings chapters. All the recommendations were made based on the results of the study, and related to the research questions of the thesis. The following section introduces the concept of insider research and the researcher has used a change of voice, switching from third person to first person, to highlight the issues of a researcher being personally connected to the research site.

A very important factor in this research is my insider status as a researcher conducting this study. Researchers must be aware of their own position within the research and how it can influence the objectivity and subjectivity of the data. In my own research, my dual position as both a known teacher within HUTECH and a researcher presents potential conflict which can best be acknowledged by stating my role as an insider
researcher. Being an insider research carries both advantages and disadvantages. Insiders have a wealth of knowledge which outsiders do not have access to (Pham, 1999). One example of how an insider researcher can be advantaged is in the response of interviewees who may feel more comfortable and talk more openly with the researcher if they know the researcher well (Tierney, 1994). This personal knowledge of the participants and the researcher can also work negatively in that information could be withheld or modified because the researcher is known. It is important to understand that there is no neutral position and the researcher cannot control all the possibilities and needs to work with the tensions that arise within each context. Insider research, may have a potential to increase validity due to the researcher’s profound knowledge of the research’s background and context, which provides the richness, fidelity, honesty and authenticity of the acquired information (Peacock, 1997). Therefore, it is important for researchers to be aware of their status in a research study and the various impacts this can have on the validity of the study (Siao-Cing, 2012). In this study, my position as an insider is based on my four years working at HUTECH, and my knowledge of HUTECH’s education system, policy and operation. This knowledge was an advantage for the researcher when conducting the research (selecting appropriate participants, choosing appropriate research techniques, etc.). My insider status gave me a number of advantages, especially in the data collection phase. As a known teacher at HUTECH, I had no difficulty when asking for the approval from HUTECH’s leader to conduct the research at HUTECH, which an outsider might have had. I also have friendly social contacts with many teaching staff and administration staff at HUTECH. Therefore, I did not have difficulty when inviting them to participate in the research and asking for teachers’ permissions to access their classrooms to conduct observations. Most staff members reacted positively to my requests. In addition, some of my colleagues are also enthusiastic and supportive, by spending time reading my pilot
questionnaire and giving me feedback, which contributed to the success of my main questionnaire.

My awareness of my own insider status prompted more careful thought about possible bias, subjectivity and the inevitable blind spots that my knowledge about HUTECH may have caused me to overlook. As a teacher at HUTECH, I might have personal prejudices supporting the teachers’ interpretations. My data report might reflect my own impressions and feelings, which might show the support for the teachers. This awareness reminded me to be more careful during all phases of the research, especially in data analysis and interpretations, to avoid prejudice. In writing the report, I clarified the research process in details as much as possible. As mentioned earlier, I also had a person play role as a peer debriefer who read my data report and ask questions to clarify the findings and interpretations.

4.8. Ethical Considerations

This study followed the ethics principles required by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee. An ethics application was completed by the researcher and the study received ethics approval from the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN) in January 2012 (refer to Appendix C)

All participants of this study were selected on a voluntary basis. There were no power dependent relationships between the researcher and the participants. The researcher was a teacher at HUTECH (four years), but at the time this study was conducted, the researcher was not involved in any teaching activity at HUTECH. Therefore, there was no teacher-student relationship between the researcher and the students completing the questionnaires. The teachers in the interviews were, however, the researcher’s colleagues. Approval from HUTECH leaders to conduct this study on HUTECH property with
HUTECH staff and students was also sought in advance and received (refer to Appendix B).

Before interviews, questionnaires and observations were conducted, the Plain Language Statement (Appendix D1) and the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D2) was sent to all participants, and the Informed Consent Form with participants’ signatures was received by the researcher. All participants were informed clearly about the purpose and nature of this study in the Plain Language Statement. They were also informed about what they were expected to do and how much time would be required for each activity they were involved in. The participants were assured that they would remain anonymous, with the exception of the researcher and her supervisors. Only the researcher and the supervisors had access to the raw data, and all the data was securely stored in a password protected computer and locked filing cabinets at RMIT University, Australia for five years after the completion of the PhD, and after that, the information would be destroyed. The participants were also assured that any information provided by them would be used only within this project. Participants were informed that analyzed data may be published in seminars, journal articles or presented at conferences, but participants’ names would not appear in these publications or presentations. The participants were also assured that there were no impacts on their normal day-to-day activities. The students and the teachers participating in the survey, interviews and classroom observations were advised clearly that their involvement would not affect ongoing assessment, grades, or treatment. Participants were informed that they had the rights to withdraw from participation at any time and any unprocessed data could also be withdrawn from the research study. The contact information of the researcher and the supervisors, including emails, phone numbers and addresses were provided so that the participants could make contact to ask for any information or raise any issues relating to this research.
In this research, participants’ freedom and feelings were also respected. For the survey questionnaire, the monitors of the classes were advised to choose the class meeting time which was most convenient and comfortable for the students to fill out the questionnaire. For the interviews, the teachers were also advised to choose the time which was most convenient for them so that their normal activities would not be affected. In addition, the interviews were conducted in places which made the participants feel comfortable. Participants were informed in the Plain Language Statement that the interviews would be recorded, and before the interviews, participants were always asked again if they felt comfortable to speak in front of the recorder, and if they consented to the interviews being recorded. All teachers and managers agreed, and were happy to cooperate. The teachers and managers were also reminded that they had the rights to have the data in their interviews excluded, if for any reason they wished to, and the researcher would do as they requested. However, after the interviews, no special requests were raised.

For the observations, care was taken to minimize disruption of the classrooms, and ensure participants felt comfortable. The teachers were advised that the research would not be used for any assessment, and that the teachers were free to go about their normal teaching activities. The students were also informed in advance and encouraged to behave as they would in their normal lessons. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, in order to maintain a natural and comfortable atmosphere in the classrooms observed, cameras or recorders were not used by the researcher. Instead, observations were collected using note-taking. The researcher did not observe any expressions of being embarrassed, uncomfortable, or nervous from the teachers and the students.

Ethical issues were also considered in the data analysis procedure. In the questionnaires, participants’ anonymity was protected through the coding procedures. In
the interviews and observations, the coding numbers for participants and places were used to protect identities.

In addition, ethical considerations in interpretation, writing and disseminating the research were also applied. The language or words which are biased against persons were avoided, and care was taken to present the findings objectively.

4.9. Summary

This chapter has detailed the research design and research methodology taken to conduct this research study. A Pragmatic approach to the research question/s and data collection techniques led to the adoption of a mixed methods concurrent embedded case study. An advantage of this approach was the potential to combine various research techniques. To address the research questions of this thesis, a variety of data sources and methods were identified: a survey questionnaire with students, interviews with teachers and managers, and non-participant class observations in HUTECH. In addition, this chapter has also addressed concerns of validity and reliability, providing clear descriptions that explicate the necessity of reliable and valid instruments and methods, and the steps taken to ensure this research is of high quality, through careful attention to research design, and throughout the research procedures. Finally, this chapter addressed the ethical considerations and concerns for the research, highlighting the steps taken to ensure this research was undertaken in an ethical manner. In conclusion, these methodological choices were made to provide the most valuable results, in order to make significant contributions to the improvement of English teaching and learning in HUTECH in particular and in Vietnamese higher education in general.
Chapter 5. Students’ Perspectives of English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH

5.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of the students’ questionnaires. This analysis reveals students’ positive, negative and neutral viewpoints about a range of factors. The students’ responses have been recorded in Appendix J, tables 1-33, but in this chapter, to avoid the duplication of the information presented, figures created using these tables are used to illustrate the results.

5.1. General Information

5.1.1. General information about data presentation. In some questions, because the students could give multiple answers for one question, the total percentage of the results gained after data analysis of each of these questions added up to more than 100% (Figure 5.7, Figure 5.13, Figure 5.31, Figure 5.32).

5.1.2. General information about the students who participated. Students who completed the questionnaires were asked to nominate where they are from (Appendix E3, Section 1, Question 1. Where are you from?). The students came from various provinces in Vietnam. Most of them were from the Southern provinces of Vietnam because HUTECH is located in Ho Chi Minh City which is in South of Vietnam. The majority of students (30.9%) came from Ho Chi Minh City. A large proportion of the students were from the provinces near Ho Chi Minh City, including Long An (18%), Dong Nai (14%), Binh Phuoc (11%) and Tay Ninh (10%). Students from the Northern Provinces of Vietnam, such as: Quang Ninh, Thai Binh, Cao Bang, Ninh Binh were a minority (see Table 1 in the Appendix J).
The students ranged from 17 to 23 years of age. Among these, the highest percentage (91.2%) were students aged 19 to 20 years (see Table 2 in the Appendix J). This is consistent with the education system in Vietnam, where the majority of students commence primary school at the age of six, and therefore start their higher education at the age of eighteenth. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the students’ ages.

![Figure 5.1. Student respondents’ ages.](image)

Students were also asked about the time they started their English study (Appendix E3, Section 2, Question 2. When did you start learning English?). Most of students responded that they started learning English when they began junior secondary school (see Table 3 in the Appendix J). This is consistent with MOET policy that a foreign language is compulsory at secondary schools, and due to the importance of English, most secondary schools in Vietnam choose English as the compulsory subject in their curriculum. While a
foreign language is compulsory in secondary schools, it is only a supplementary subject in primary schools. Therefore, only some high quality primary schools in major cities have an English teaching program in their curriculum. There were some student participants who were sent to international standard kindergartens with foreign teachers or to English centers to study English when they were very young. Figure 5.2 below illustrates at which time in their education students started English learning.

![Figure 5.2](image)

*Figure 5.2. The time students started their English learning.*

### 5.2. Students’ English Background Knowledge

Students were also asked how long they have studied English (Appendix E3, Section 2, Question 1. How long have you been learning English?) , and the majority of students had studied for seven to nine years (see Table 4 in the Appendix J). Again, this is consistent with the Vietnamese education system, where most students start their English study at junior secondary schools, continue in senior secondary schools and then higher education institutions. There were, however, a minority of students who responded that they have studied English for a shorter duration, about one to three years. This can be
attributed to students coming from more remote areas of Vietnam, where there were not enough English teachers, and English could not be taught to these students. This could also be attributed to some junior and senior secondary schools who set French, or Russian, or Chinese as the compulsory foreign language to teach their students. Figure 5.3 below illustrates the length of time students learned English.

![Figure 5.3: The length of time students learned English.](image)

Students were also asked about their opportunities to live or study in foreign countries where they used English (Appendix E3, Section 2, Question 3. Have you ever lived or studied in foreign countries where you often use English for communication?). A very high percentage of students responded that they had never lived or studied in foreign countries (94.9%) (see Table 5 in the Appendix J). Therefore, they were unfamiliar and
had very little experience with native English speaking. Figure 5.4 below illustrates the students’ opportunities to live or study abroad.

![Pie chart showing students' opportunities to live or study overseas and use English. Yes 5.1%, No 94.9%]

*Figure 5.4. Students’ opportunities to live or study overseas and use English.*

When asked if the students had opportunities to practise English outside classes (Appendix E3, Section 2, Question 4. Do you often have opportunities to practise English outside classroom?), the majority of students responded “Yes” which accounted for 68% (see Table 7 in the Appendix J). This is also illustrated in Figure 5.5 below.
Figure 5.5. Students’ opportunities to practise English outside classes.

The questionnaire data also revealed the common activities taken outside class by students to improve their English (Appendix E3, Section 2, Question 4).

Figure 5.6. English practice activities outside classes.
The most common student responses were listening to music in English (37.3%) and learning English at foreign language centers (21.1%) (see Table 8 in the Appendix J). In Vietnam, English songs and music are so popular that almost all young people know several English songs. Many students answered that listening to English songs was one of the most popular ways to improve English. Foreign language centers were also a popular destination for many students outside of class time. Students attended these centers to review their general English knowledge, or to improve speaking-listening and communication skills which were not taught much in the limited class time at universities. Figure 5.6 above illustrates the most common outside class activities of students to improve English.

5.3. Curriculum

Students were asked to give their opinions and evaluations about the English curriculum being used at HUTECH (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 1, 4, 5, 7, 10). Students were asked about the syllabus, majors being taught in English language, the time allocated for English in general, and for the separate English macro skills taught in classes. The results are detailed in sections below.

5.3.1. Syllabus. The syllabus currently used for non-major English teaching and learning in HUTECH was *American Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2009). The results of the questionnaire showed that students have positive attitudes toward the syllabus (see Table 9 in the Appendix J). While there are many international syllabuses for teaching and learning English being introduced in the Vietnamese market, American Headway (Soars & Soars,
2009) remains one of the most popular syllabuses used in many universities and foreign language centers. Figure 5.7 below illustrates the students’ opinions about the syllabus. Figure 5.7. Students’ evaluation of the English syllabus.

5.3.2. Majors taught in English. In HUTECH, except for the international cooperation programs in which all subjects were delivered in English, all other programs used Vietnamese language as the medium of instruction. Students were asked two questions about English as a medium of instruction. First, students were asked if using English as a medium of instruction would help them improve their English (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 4. If some subjects in your study major are taught in English, do you think it will help you improve English?), which the majority of students (76.8%) agreed with (see Table 10 in the Appendix J). This result is illustrated in Figure 5.8 below.

The term “appropriate” in this context means “suitable for students’ abilities and interests.”
Figure 5.8. The helpfulness of using English as a medium of instruction in some major subjects.

The second question asked students if they would like to have some major subjects taught in English (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 5. Do you like if some subjects in your study major are taught in English?), to which most students (71.3%) replied that they would (see Table 11 in the Appendix J). Figure 5.9 below illustrates the students’ opinions about the use of English for teaching some major subjects.
The students who did not advocate the use of English in teaching some major subjects were also asked to specify the reasons for their viewpoint. The most common explanation (64.9%) was that the students were afraid they would not understand the lessons when they were taught in the English language (see Table 12 in the Appendix J). This explanation matched the common perception that the English ability of HUTECH students was low. Figure 5.10 below shows the reasons given by students who did not support for the use of English as a medium of instruction in some major subjects.

Figure 5.9. Students’ support for the use of English in teaching some major subjects.
5.3.3. Time allocated for English. In HUTECH, the non-major English program for Bachelor students is delivered in five ten-week semesters. Classes were scheduled over three 45-minute periods each week. Students were asked if the amount of time allocated for English in HUTECH was “too much”, “enough” or “not enough” (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 1). The results show that the majority of students were split between “enough” and “not enough” (see Table 13 in the Appendix J). Figure 5.11 below illustrates the students’ opinions about the amount of time allocated for English subject.
5.3.4. **English skills being taught in classes.** There was one question in the questionnaire that asked students about the skills and knowledge usually taught most in English classes (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 10). Students were asked to select up to three responses from the following options: Listening, Speaking, Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading and Writing. The results revealed that for teaching content, Grammar received the most focused, with 60.3% of responses (see Table 14 in the Appendix J). A detailed discussion of the reasons for the strong focus on Grammar will be mentioned in Chapter 9, after the results of the interviews and class observations. Figure 5.12 below presents the students’ opinions about the English skills usually being taught in classes.
Teachers play an important role in EFL classes. Hence, HUTECH students were also asked about their English teachers in the questionnaire. Students were asked about the teachers’ enthusiasm, teaching style, teaching methods and how often they were assigned group and pair work. Students were also asked about the types of teachers they preferred in their English classes. The results are detailed in the following sections.

5.4.1. Teachers’ enthusiasm. Students were asked about their teacher’s enthusiasm (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 12. Is your English teacher enthusiastic?). Nearly two thirds of students (60%) reported that their teachers were enthusiastic (see Table 15 in the Appendix J). Furthermore, a third of students (34%) reported that their teachers were neutral; neither enthusiastic nor unenthusiastic. Only 6% reported that their teachers were
not enthusiastic. These results show that the students were satisfied with the enthusiasm of their teachers. Figure 5.13 below presents students’ evaluation of their teachers’ enthusiasm.

Figure 5.13. English teachers’ enthusiasm.

5.4.2. Teaching style. Students were asked if their teacher’s teaching style was interesting, neutral or not interesting (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 14). More than half of the students investigated held the view that the teachers’ teaching style was neutral (see Table 16 in the Appendix J). This result shows that the students believed that their English teacher’s teaching style could be more interesting. Figure 5.14 below illustrates the students’ evaluation about their English teachers’ teaching style.
5.4.3. **Teaching methods.** The students were also asked if their teacher’s methodology was easy to understand, not easy to understand, or neutral (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 13). Similar to the previous question about teaching style, more than half of the students reported that their teacher’s methodology was neutral (see Table 17 in the Appendix J). This indicated that both teaching style and teaching methods of HUTECH teachers were seen as areas that the students thought could be improved. Figure 5.15 below presents the students’ evaluation about the teachers’ methodology:
5.4.4. Classroom activities. The students were asked if pair work and group work activities were often used by their teachers in English classes (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 11). The results revealed that over half of students reported that pair work and group work were not conducted often by English teachers in HUTECH (see Table 18 in the Appendix J). As pair work and group work are central to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, this result implies that the CLT principles are not being used much in English classes at HUTECH. Figure 5.16 below illustrates the students’ responses to the question about the use of pair work and group work in English classes.
5.4.5. Native English teachers and non-native English teachers. In Vietnamese higher education, non-major English classes are predominantly taught by local teachers. Foreign teachers generally teach English major classes and special programs such as international cooperation classes, or in more expensive centers where students pay a premium for the opportunity to study English with foreign teachers. Answers given in the questionnaires expressed students’ desire to study English with foreign teachers, alongside with local teachers. A large number of students (52.9%) recommended a combination of various types of teachers in English language classes (see Table 19 in the Appendix J). Figure 5.17 below illustrates the students’ preference of the type of English teachers (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 8. Who do you like to teach you English?).
Figure 5.17. Types of teachers who students preferred to study English with.

5.5. Facilities

In relation to facilities, equipment and teaching aids for their English classes, students were asked if these were adequate, inadequate, or too poor (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 6). This question received positive feedback from students, with 59% of students responding that facilities and equipment were adequate (see Table 20 in the Appendix J). This finding indicates that students were satisfied with the facilities and equipment in their English classes. Figure 5.18 below presents the students’ responses to the question about their evaluation of the facilities, equipment and teaching aids in their English classes at HUTECH.
5.6. Class Size

As class size may be an important factor which might affect the quality of teaching and learning of EFL, a question about class size in HUTECH was included in the questionnaire. Students were asked about the number of students in their English classes (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 2). The results were surprising, with 68.4% of students answering that class size was reasonable (see Table 21 in the Appendix J). Further explanation and discussion about this result is contained in Chapter 9. Figure 5.19 below presents the students’ opinions about the class size in HUTECH.
5.7. Students’ English Levels

The students were asked about the levels of students’ English in their classes (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 3). The majority of students responded that the English ability of students in their classes was not at the same level (see Table 22 in the Appendix J). In universities in general, and in HUTECH in particular, students with different levels of English proficiency were put in the same classes, which made it hard for teachers to teach and therefore affected the quality of English teaching. Figure 5.20 below shows the students’ opinions about the English abilities of HUTECH students in the same class.
5.8. Students’ Motivations

The questionnaire asked students about their interest in English, their reasons for studying English, and how necessary they thought English would be for their future. The results revealed that, for the question about students’ interest in English (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 2), the majority of students were interested in English, with 16.5% very interested, and 52.2% quite interested (see Table 23 in the Appendix J). This result shows a positive signal to the activity of English teaching and learning. Figure 5.21 presents the students’ opinions about their interest for learning the English language.
For the question about the necessity of English (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 1), nearly all students (97.8%) in the questionnaire recognized the necessity of English study (see Table 24 in the Appendix J). This result shows the students’ recognition of the necessity of English, which would be a good motivation for students to focus on their English studies. Figure 5.22 below shows the students’ responses to the question about the necessity of English.
While the necessity of English was identified by most students in the questionnaire, they pointed out different reasons for their English study (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 3. Why do you study English?). The result of the questionnaire showed that the majority of students (81.4%) studied English because they believed it to be useful for their future (see Table 25 in the Appendix J). Figure 5.23 below illustrates the reasons for students to study English:

Figure 5.22. The necessity of English to students.
5.9. Students’ Autonomy

Learner autonomy is also an important contribution to the success of teaching and learning. Hence, students were questioned to explore learner autonomy. Students were asked about the efforts they put into their English study (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 4), their preparation for classes (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 5), if they study at home (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 6), and their use of English outside of classes (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 7).

Although, as the previous section has shown, students were interested in studying English and recognized the future benefits, when answering about the effort they put into their English study, a large number of students responded neutrally (63.6%), as illustrated in Figure 5.24 below (also see Table 26 in the Appendix J). This result is somewhat paradoxical, as although students realized the importance of English, they did not make a great effort toward learning English.
The results also revealed that most students did not often prepare for their lessons before English classes (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 5). Most disappointing was the finding that some students did no lesson preparation at all before classes, as illustrated in Figure 5.25 below (also see Table 27 in the Appendix J).
Similarly, the percentage of students who did not often study English at home (Appendix E3, Section 4, Question 6) was very high (62%), with 6% responding that they never studied at home, as illustrated in Figure 5.26 below (see Table 28 in the Appendix J).

![Figure 5.26. Students’ English study at home.](image-url)

Furthermore, the questionnaire data also recorded that the proportion of students who often practised English communication outside class time was very low (4.8%), as illustrated in Figure 5.27 below.
5.10. Assessment

For non-major English in HUTECH, students have one mid-term test and one final test each semester. The tests were designed by a group of teachers. They are multiple choice tests, focusing on testing students’ knowledge in Vocabulary, Grammar and three skills: Listening, Reading, and Writing. The tests were done on computers and the results were shown on the computer screen right after the students completed their tests. Students were asked a number of questions about the assessment. When asked if the test content was appropriate with the study program being taught (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 8. Are the English tests and exams appropriate with the study programs?), the majority of students (85%) replied ‘Yes’, as illustrated in Figure 5.28 below (see Table 30 in the Appendix J).
In HUTECH, students studied four macro skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. However, there were no speaking tests for students. Therefore, students were asked if they thought having speaking tests would help to improve their English speaking and communication skills (Appendix E3, Section 3, Question 9). The majority of students (87.5%) expressed their belief that the oral tests would help them improve their English speaking and communication skills, as illustrated in Figure 5.29 below (see Table 31 in the Appendix J).
5.11. Students’ Expectations

HUTECH students had a chance to express their expectations about English teachers and the university through the two open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Students’ responses were categorized, and similar responses were grouped together to make themes. Many interesting ideas were presented and helpful suggestions were made by the students in answer to these two questions.

5.11.1. About teachers. Students were asked to list the five most important attributes an English teacher should have (Appendix E3, Section 5. Question 1). The students’ answers to this question returned interesting results. Figure 5.30 below illustrates the students’ expectations of an English teacher (also see Table 32 in the Appendix J).
The theme which was considered most important by students was not teacher’s qualifications or experience, but the teacher’s personality. 24.9% of students mentioned attributes such as “enthusiastic”, “friendly”, and “humorous” as the most important characteristics. The second most important theme mentioned was the teaching style and method of teachers. 22.9% of students stated that a good English teacher must have an interesting teaching style and an effective teaching method. Besides that, students also liked to study with teachers who showed a deep concern, respect and had a good understanding about their students (12.7%). The next most important theme indicated by students was the teacher’s voice and pronunciation. 10.5% of students said that they wanted their English teachers to have good pronunciation, and the teacher’s voice should be loud and clear enough for students to understand. In addition, the teacher’s sense of humor and ability to make a lively atmosphere in the class was also mentioned by students.
9.3% expressed their wish to have English teachers who know how to arouse students’ interests and motivation, how to make a happy and comfortable atmosphere in the class through the combination of amusement and learning activities, such as: games, songs, group work and pair work. Furthermore, other essential factors contributing to making good English teachers were also pointed out by students, such as: teachers’ youth and appearance, teachers’ experience, and teachers who often use English as a medium of instruction in classes.

5.11.2. About the university. Students’ expectations about HUTECH were also explored in the questionnaire (Appendix E3, Section 5, Question 2). Students were asked to list the five most important factors they believed HUTECH should do to improve their English ability. According to the questionnaire results, as illustrated in Figure 5.31 below, there were a wide range of factors mentioned by the students to improve EFL teaching and learning at HUTECH.
16.8% expressed that teachers with enthusiasm, friendliness, and helpfulness were necessary for their English improvement. 14.1% of students suggested the improvement of the facilities and equipment. The students believed that HUTECH needed to equip classrooms with good cassettes, data projectors, microphones, and more books in the library. In addition, 13.3% stated that HUTECH should have clubs and activities related to students’ English improvement so that the students can participate. Although HUTECH did in fact have an English club, it was not held regularly. Therefore, students lacked an educational playground to improve their English. Besides the English club, students also pointed out that HUTECH should hold activities, such as English speaking contest, or English music contest to arouse students’ interests in English. The two next important things mentioned by students were the teachers’ teaching methods (10.3%) and the class size (10%). Students indicated that HUTECH should have good teachers with effective

Figure 5.31. Students’ expectations of HUTECH.
teaching methods, and it was believed that teachers with good teaching methods would help students a lot in their English study. Besides that, students also recommended that HUTECH should have smaller class size because the current class size was quite large. This is consistent with the result in section 5.6 which revealed that although a larger number of students (68.4%) were satisfied with the current class sizes in HUTECH, there was still a large number of students (30.9%) pointing out that there were too many students in a class (see Table 33 in the Appendix J).

5.12. Summary

Generally, the questionnaire results indicated that the students thought critically and were concerned about their English study. They used the questionnaire to enthusiastically contribute their opinions and ideas. The results from the questionnaire show expected responses from some questions, but also reveal some unexpected responses from some other questions, such as: students’ advocating for some major subjects being taught in English, students’ interests in English learning, students’ recognition of the necessity of English. In order to have a more comprehensive picture of the activities of English teaching and learning in HUTECH, the next chapters explore the opinions of the teachers (Chapter 6), the managers (Chapter 7), and further data about the classrooms activities through class observations (Chapter 8).
Chapter 6. Teachers’ Perspectives of English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH

6.0. Introduction

This chapter details the results of the interviews with EFL teachers about the teaching and learning of English at HUTECH (Appendix F1). The first section outlines general demographic information about teachers who participated in the interviews (Appendix F1, Question 1 - 4). A summary of the teachers’ educational background is provided in the next section. Then, the positive and negative aspects of the EFL teaching and learning pointed out by the teachers are described through the interview analysis. Finally, this chapter addresses the expectations that teachers had of their university, and their suggestions for an ideal English training program at HUTECH.

6.1. General Information about Participating Teachers

There were twelve teachers who participated in the interviews. There were three male teachers and nine female teachers. Their ages ranged from 28 to 64 years. Five of them were full time teachers and seven were part time teachers at HUTECH. The teachers had a range of EFL teaching experience, from six years to 41 years, and across many different locations. Most teachers had experience teaching at colleges, universities, and foreign language centers. Some teachers also had experience teaching EFL at primary schools and private companies or institutions. All of these teachers also had a great deal of experience teaching EFL at HUTECH, from at least four years to 18 years. Some teachers reported that they have taught in HUTECH since it was established in 1996.
Table 6.1

*Teachers’ General Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching places</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Years of teaching in HUTECH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>universities, colleges, companies, language centers</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>primary schools, secondary schools, language centers, universities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>universities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>universities, language centers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>primary schools, language centers, universities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>high schools, language centers, universities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>high schools, universities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>universities, colleges, language centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>universities, colleges</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2. Teachers’ Educational Background

All of the teachers interviewed held university qualifications in EFL teaching. Nine teachers held MA degrees, and five of them held MA degrees from Australian universities.

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In the Vietnam context, colleges are often used to indicate educational institutions providing training courses which are equivalent to advanced diploma programs.
which had training cooperation programs in Vietnam (University of Canberra, Curtin University of Technology and Victoria University). Other teachers studied MA courses provided by quality universities of Vietnam, such as: HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanity, HCM City Open University.

Table 6.2

**Teachers’ Educational Background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Highest qualification</th>
<th>Training organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BA in English linguistics</td>
<td>Overseas (The United States)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Open University (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Victoria University, Australia (cooperation training program in Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BA in English linguistics</td>
<td>HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanity (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Victoria University, Australia (cooperation training program in Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanity (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Curtin University, Australia (cooperation training program in Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanity (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Victoria University, Australia (cooperation training program in Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>Canberra University, Australia (cooperation training program in Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>MA in TESOL</td>
<td>HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanity (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>BA in TESOL</td>
<td>HCM City University of Pedagogy (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of their own English education, the majority of teachers interviewed explained that when they were students, the facilities and materials for teaching and learning English were not adequate as compared to the current conditions. The main materials and equipment for English teaching and learning at that time were cassettes,
course books, boards, chalk, and handouts. Some teachers revealed that the cassettes were also not popular, and that made it difficult for listening practice activities. Teacher 2 said:

I studied Bachelor more than 20 years ago. At that time, many things were inadequate: books, facilities. Even photocopiers were very rare, and I only knew about what photocopiers are when I nearly graduated. We found it difficult to learn listening due to the lack of cassettes. Even in a family, there was only one cassette, and we were afraid of making it out of work if we listened a lot. Therefore, the time for listening practice was limited (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.10).

Teachers also mentioned that they did not have many opportunities to practise speaking English. Most of them only practised speaking in the class time with teachers and friends. Some of them practised speaking at home by talking to themselves, or speaking to roommates. Some of them sometimes went to English speaking clubs. However, it was reflected that in the English clubs, most attendants were Vietnamese, and there were only few, or even no foreigners, so they also did not have enough opportunities to talk with foreigners, especially native English speakers, to improve their communication skills. Only one teacher, who studied overseas in America, had the opportunity to communicate a lot in English, inside and outside class.

The teachers said that at the time the teachers were students, they were very serious about their education and very studious. They followed what their teachers said, learned what teachers taught in class, reviewed the lessons and did a lot of grammar exercises at home. As noted by some teachers, they learned vocabulary and grammar quite well, but their listening and speaking skills were not very proficient. Teacher 9 explained:

About vocabulary, we learned in system, looked up new words in dictionary, wrote them down in notebooks, learned in family words, synonyms and antonyms, read stories to remember vocabulary, so we had a great amount of vocabulary. In
general, about vocabulary and grammar structures, we studied harder and better than students nowadays, but about listening and speaking, due to the lack of opportunities and equipment, students at that time were not good compared with students nowadays. If at that time we had approached a lot of information and technology like today, I think we would have studied better and more effectively (Interview excerpt T9.09.06.2012.13).

Three of the teachers admitted that speaking and listening were the two activities they were most afraid of as students. However, as indicated by two other teachers, the difficulty in learning speaking and listening motivated them to try harder, in order to improve, and specialize in teaching speaking and listening skills. Teacher 11 shared the following reflection:

At the time I was a student, I only like learning grammar and reading, and did not like speaking and listening because I did not practise a lot and was not confident about these skills. But now, as a teacher, I prefer teaching and listening because I have experienced difficulties in studying these subjects and can understand and know how to help students overcome difficulties (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.23).

6.3. Positive Aspects of English teaching and learning in HUTECH

Most aspects related to the activity of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH were explored in the interviews with the teachers. The teachers discussed openly about both the positive aspects as well as the negative aspects. This section addresses the positive aspects mentioned by teachers, including the syllabus, teaching methods, some facilities and equipment, and support from HUTECH leaders.
6.3.1. Syllabus. All teachers said that they were satisfied with the syllabus because it was designed by a group of international experts in language education, and it had all language skills and knowledge covered. The syllabus lessons were arranged logically and systematically, and it made it convenient for teachers and students to use. Talking more generally about using a syllabus, teachers pointed out that each syllabus had its own advantages and disadvantages, and it was more important how the teachers could exploit and adapt it appropriately for different classes and contexts.

While teachers were generally happy with the syllabus currently used in HUTECH, one issue mentioned by one teacher was that the managers should arrange and divide the syllabus up over the semesters more appropriately to suit the students’ levels of English abilities. As mentioned earlier, students were assigned to study *American Headway 2*, *American Headway 3*, and half of *American Headway 4* (Soars & Soars, 2009) over five semesters. This meant that in each semester, students studied half of each book. Teacher 6 said:

*American Headway*, new edition is up to date, covers all skills. Its content and lessons are designed well. Book 1 and book 2 are all right, but book 3 and book 4 is quite high for students’ level in HUTECH. Few students can follow. So, we should begin with book 1 first, then book 2, then book 3 so that students can gradually follow. (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.31)

Although this idea was raised by only one teacher, it was quite interesting and a reasonable suggestion. Therefore, it was worth considering by managers responsible for English training in HUTECH.

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6 In HUTECH context, syllabus refers to a range of textbooks used for a major subject. Curriculum refers to the content knowledge, the time allocated, the testing and assessment criteria, the syllabus and materials for teaching and learning a major subject.
6.3.2. Language teaching methods. The results from the interviews with teachers showed that they used a variety of methods for English teaching, depending on each class and each skill they were teaching. Seven of the twelve teachers preferred the Communicative Language Teaching approach and a student-centered approach. The teachers claimed that they tried to manage time so that students had communicative activities in classes. Teacher 6 said:

I tried to let students communicate a lot. I use CLT in teaching all skills, especially in speaking and listening. Even in teaching grammar, I also let them practise in pairs, ask them to use the structures they have learnt to ask and answer. Similarly, in reading, I also ask students to ask and answer the questions in books. Generally, I want to improve students’ communication in class. (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.36)

However, some teachers believed that it was not good to advocate for any single method. According to them, teachers should use a variety of teaching methods, which are suitable for different classes and different lessons. Teachers should also use a combination of methods in order to exploit the advantages of each method, and to make the lessons more effective. In discussing the use of methods in classes, Teacher 2 pointed out:

Teachers should combine teaching methods. I do not think that we should always apply Communicative Approach while it was not suitable for our class. So, if the teachers should use CLT or Grammar-Translation Method depends on the specific class. It must be appropriate with context, with real classes. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.64)

Generally, the teachers’ responses showed that they thought critically about the methods they use for their classes. Despite what methods they prefer, the most common belief of the teachers in the interviews was that they tried their best to find out appropriate methods for
their students’ abilities and interests, so that they could bring most benefits to their students.

**6.3.3. Facilities and equipment.** Nine of the twelve teachers noted that the facilities and equipment for English teaching and learning in HUTECH were adequate, and from their experience, better than almost other universities in Ho Chi Minh City, especially the public universities. Some universities had very limited facilities, and some did not even have their own campuses; they had to rent rooms or buildings for teaching and learning activities. Teacher 1 stated, “I am happy with the equipment and classrooms here: adequate and modern” (Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.45). Teacher 4 added:

I have taught in this university for 17 years, from the year it was established. I have seen a lot of changes in HUTECH. At the beginning time, 17 years ago, HUTECH did not have their own campus, and had to rent campuses for teaching and learning. But gradually, facilities in HUTECH have been improved a lot, especially in recent years. It is amazing. From my own viewpoint, facilities in HUTECH can be rated as one of the top well-equipped universities in the South of Vietnam. (Interview excerpt T4.18.05.2012.25)

In addition, it was pointed out by four teachers that most facilities in the Ung Van Khiem Campus were in better condition than at the Dien Bien Phu Campus. This is not surprising, as the Ung Van Khiem is a new campus which was built only a few years ago. The equipment and facilities there are almost brand new.

**6.3.3.1. Data projectors.** One aspect which was satisfactory for the majority of teachers was that all rooms were equipped with a data projector. Ten out of twelve teachers said that data projectors were useful for their English teaching activities. The teachers used the projectors to help make their lessons more interesting by showing audio and video
resources, providing clear and colorful pictures or images on the screen. The projectors also helped the teachers to save class time and attract more focus from the students.

Teacher 7 explained:

Data projectors and computers were necessary and helpful for my teaching. For example, when teaching about English in hotels, I showed the video clips about the situations and conversations in hotels so that the students can see and learn the authentic language. And then, they can role play to practise speaking (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.39).

6.3.3.2. Benches and tables. The classroom furniture of benches and tables were also appreciated by the teachers. Eight out of twelve said that most benches and tables in HUTECH were new and in good condition, especially the ones in Ung Van Khiem Campus. Teachers also explained that the benches and tables were checked and replaced annually to meet the standard requirements of HUTECH leaders. Teacher 5 expressed:

I appreciate HUTECH leaders’ investment in facilities and equipment. Recently, they have replaced a lot of benches and tables. It is great to teach and study in classrooms with good and new equipment (Interview excerpt T5.23.05.2012.23).

6.3.4. HUTECH leaders’ support.

6.3.4.1. Increasing the time amount for English. A notable point mentioned by three teachers was the increase of time allocated for EFL teaching. Since the year before (2011), the time allocated for teaching English had been increased from three semesters to five semesters. This demonstrates that HUTECH leaders showed their concerns and considerations for the improvement of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. Teacher 4 explained:
We used to have three semesters for English training program, but HUTECH leaders realized that it was insufficient. Therefore, in the English curriculum reform last year, they decided to increase to five semesters for non-major English subject. For me, it is enough if teachers conduct effective teaching methods, and both teachers and students must work hard and cooperate well in teaching and learning.

(Interview excerpt T4.18.05.2012.39)

6.3.4.2. Increasing salary. Eight of the twelve teachers agreed that the salary in HUTECH was higher than other universities in HCM City in particular and in Vietnam in general, especially when compared with public universities. Recently, HUTECH implemented a new salary system in which the payment for staff and teachers was increased. However, staff and teachers were also assigned more tasks and duties. Increasing salary was still a positive point which could motivate the teachers to devote more to their teaching career. Teacher 5 stated:

In the context where living costs are rising, the salary increase is a great effort from HUTECH leaders. I appreciate this effort. For me, the salary is acceptable. However, if it is increased more, I will feel happier. (Interview excerpt T5.23.05.2012.27)

6.4. Negative Aspects of English Training in HUTECH and Suggested Solutions

The teachers also discussed some negative aspects of the English training program at HUTECH. Most negative aspects were related to the curriculum, class size, facilities and equipment, support from HUTECH leaders, teacher recruitment, students’ attitudes and motivation. The following sections detail these negative aspects as well as the teachers’ suggestions to improve them.
6.4.1. **Curriculum revision.** Most teachers commented that the EFL curriculum in HUTECH was not logical and therefore should be revised. This includes the time allocated for classes, the time for English speaking and listening, speaking tests, the disparity of students’ English levels, if the curriculum benefits students and the schedule and timetable for English.

6.4.1.1. **Time allocated for EFL.** Although some teachers appreciated the support of HUTECH increasing the allocation of time for English from three semesters to five semesters, other teachers stated that it was not enough. These teachers believed that the time allocated for English should be increased to seven or eight semesters, so that students learn English steadily at the university until they graduate. The teachers believed that this would be more advantageous for students applying for jobs, as the English knowledge they gained at the university would still remain fresh. Teacher 2 pointed out:

Employers nowadays consider English competency as one of the top criteria for employment, especially foreign companies, enterprises and corporations. English ability and information technology knowledge are two key elements for career success. So, if students have prolonged English learning process in university, it will be helpful for their future jobs. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.55)

6.4.1.2. **Time for teaching English speaking and communication.** Five out of twelve teachers said that the amount of time scheduled for English was enough for teaching macro skills if the teachers had good time management, effective teaching methods and the students worked hard. However, seven out of twelve teachers revealed that they did not have enough time to teach their students speaking and communication skills, although they wanted to undertake these activities. The time allocated for the English subject in each semester was enough if the teachers only taught students grammar,
vocabulary, reading, writing and listening. It was not enough if the teachers included speaking and communication activities. Teacher 10 raised his concerns:

The thing I consider is that if teachers only teach grammar or writing, students cannot speak English after they leave the university. So, what I mean is that the university should focus on teaching speaking skill so that the students can speak English inside and outside class. Nowadays, a lot of university students graduating without being able to communicate English well with foreigners because they did not enough time to learn speaking English at the universities. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.53)

In addition, it was suggested by two teachers that instead of waiting for the time amount to be increased by HUTECH leaders, the teachers should try to find ways to help their students improve speaking skills. Teacher 5 shared her idea as follows:

To have time for speaking practice, the teachers in classes should decide by themselves, be flexible to remove some parts which are not very important, and let students do some parts at home by themselves, and use the time for teaching speaking. (Interview excerpt T5.23.05.2012.32)

6.4.1.3. Speaking tests in examinations. One of the common complaints raised by the teachers was that the content of the tests and examinations did not cover all macro skills. This highlighted a particular tension between the aims of the university and its management. Although their aim was to equip students with English communication abilities for future jobs after graduation, they did not have a speaking section in the tests and examinations. The main reason was that the speaking tests cost time and money. It was believed by most teachers in the interviews that without speaking tests, the teachers and students did not have a motivation for teaching and learning these skills. Instead, they
would focus on the knowledge areas and skills which would be tested so that the students could pass the exams. Teacher 4 explained further:

The final examinations focus on grammar and writing. So, if the teacher teaches students speaking skill, students may think that the teacher is not good because what he or she teaches is not applied in the examinations. So, we should change the curriculum so that the final examinations should test not only grammar and writing but also speaking skill. (Interview excerpt T4.18.05.2012.19)

Teacher 12 also expressed the need for teaching and examining English speaking:

If we want to teach students speaking, there should be more time for English subject, and the speaking tests must be included in the exams. When the speaking tests are included in the exams, the students will have to try hard to improve speaking and communication skill to pass the exams, and hence, their speaking and communication skill will be better (Interview excerpt T12.28.06.2012.26).

Therefore, some teachers suggested that HUTECH should have clear purposes and objectives for the EFL training program, by providing a systematic curriculum in which all the aspects, including training content and testing content must be in accordance so as to serve the common purposes and objectives set out.

6.4.1.4. Benefits for students. In discussion about the effectiveness of the EFL training program in HUTECH, two teachers revealed they believed that it was not beneficial for the students. They showed their concerns about what the students could achieve after graduation, and if the English knowledge they received during their student time at HUTECH was helpful for them in their life and future careers. They said that the university still focused on what the students learn each year, but did not focus on what the students could achieve each year and after graduation. Teacher 1 expanded on this point:
All teachers are concerned about how to help students, but there is not enough time for them to do what they want. In my opinion, there is a need to reconsider the curriculum. We cannot reduce the time amount for English because it is not much, but we should reduce the knowledge amount the teachers need to provide in each lesson, so that the teachers have more time for the students to practise and use the language they learned. Generally, we should focus on what the students can gain after their lessons (Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.19).

6.4.1.5. Schedule and timetable. The schedule and timetable was also raised as a problem by the teachers. It was pointed out that normally, the students studied English once a week during a 15-week semester. However, due to a variety of reasons, some classes were arranged to study English twice a week and therefore finished the course sooner than 15 weeks. Teacher 10 said:

It would be normal if the students were arranged to study in two sessions which were not too close to each other so that the students had spare time between two sessions to review the lessons and absorb the knowledge provided. However, the thing is that the students have to study English in two close days in a week and I think it is ineffective for the students’ learning (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.47).

Moreover, it was reported by two teachers that the overall amount of subjects the students had to study made them tired, and made it difficult for them to concentrate on their subjects in general and on English in particular. Teacher 2 said:

Not only HUTECH students have to study a lot of subjects in a day. Students in other universities also have the same problem. Therefore, university leaders should revise the general curriculum to make a more reasonable schedule for students. If
possible, they should cut off any subjects which are not practical and not useful for students’ careers. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.48)

6.4.1.6. Disparity of students’ English levels. Four out of twelve teachers interviewed stated that the English ability of the students in the same class was not at the same level. Students with different English levels being put in the same class made it difficult for the teachers to conduct their teaching effectively. Teacher 11 explained the difficulties for a teacher when teaching a mixed class with students’ various English abilities:

If the teacher uses the activities and tasks appropriate for the good students, the weak students could not follow and would be de-motivated. But if the teacher teaches simple knowledge appropriate for the weak students, the good students will get bored, and it also wastes their time and money in a class like that. (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.45)

This shows that when there is a disparity of student ability in the same class, with the same knowledge content provided, some students could understand but other students could not. This results in some students missing out; either the better students, who become bored and restless, or the weaker students, who are unable to follow the lesson.

6.4.2. Class size. One common complaint raised by eight out of twelve teachers was that when compared with the requirements of a standard English class, the number of the students in English classes in HUTECH was quite large. This issue is not specific to HUTECH, however, as large classes are very common in Vietnam. In HUTECH, there were about 50 to 60 students in an English class, and this was believed to reduce the quality of English teaching and learning. Big classes were more difficult for the teachers to manage and control. It is especially difficult and time-consuming for the teachers to
conduct communicative activities such as pair work and group work. The teachers said that it was impossible to help the students achieve their best in such crowded classes. Teacher 2 claimed:

We often talk about education reform, education quality and application of new teaching methods. But how can we do this in such crowded classes. In crowded classes, there is little time for individual students. So, the quality is not assured.

(Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.104)

6.4.3. Facilities and equipment. In general, the teachers were satisfied with the facilities and equipment in HUTECH and they appreciated the effort of HUTECH leaders in providing good facilities and equipment for the activity of teaching and learning in HUTECH. There were however, still some problems raised by the teachers regarding how the facilities and equipment in HUTECH could be made more complete and also make HUTECH become one of the leading universities in providing the best facilities and equipment in the Vietnamese higher education system.

6.4.3.1. Air conditioning. Three out of twelve teachers complained that the classrooms were quite hot, especially in the afternoon periods. This made the teachers and the students tired, and this also affected the students’ concentration on the lessons. However, the teachers also acknowledged that this was the common situation in most classrooms in Vietnam. In most normal classrooms in Vietnam, there were no air conditioners, with the exception being the more expensive international classes and special classes. Most classrooms in Vietnam were only cooled with ceiling fans. The main reason was that it would cost a lot of money for electricity if the air conditioners were used. Therefore, although the teachers found it difficult to teach in the hot rooms, they also knew that it was financially unfeasible for the HUTECH leaders to equip all the classrooms with
air conditioners. Instead, the teachers recommend that the HUTECH leaders should provide more fans for the classrooms.

6.4.3.2. Sunlight. There were three teachers who reported that some rooms in HUTECH were too bright. The sunlight shining into the classrooms through the glass window and reflecting made the boards and the screens of the data projectors difficult to see. The students in the class, especially the students at the back of the class, were unable to see the letters and the images on the boards and the screens clearly. The solution suggested by the teachers for this problem was relatively simple: that these bright classrooms should be fitted with curtains to reduce the light shining into the classes.

6.4.3.3. Furniture. In discussion about the arrangement of furniture inside the classrooms, teachers noted that the furniture had an impact on the types of teaching activities they could perform. Normal classrooms in HUTECH were equipped with long benches and long desks. This is a common arrangement in most Vietnamese classrooms. However, the teachers believed that this arrangement discouraged movement activities in their classes. In English classes which required a lot of communication activities such as pair work and group work, the use of such long benches make it inconvenient for the teachers to form new groups and pairs for the students. It was also hard for the teachers to conduct some games or tasks which required the movement and communication around the class. Thus, it was suggested that all the classrooms should be equipped with separate chairs so that it would be easier for communication and movement activities.

6.4.3.4. Room and multimedia room allocation. Two teachers indicated that most rooms in HUTECH were always occupied and very few spare rooms were available. Thus, when they wanted to help their students more before the exams, or to support the weak students in their free time, it was difficult for them to book a room. In addition, it was also
hard for the students to find spare rooms for self-study or group study. In regard to this, these teachers wished that when HUTECH had more new buildings and campuses, the HUTECH leaders would allow more rooms to become available for teachers’ and students’ use when they were needed. It was also reported by two teachers that HUTECH had a shortage of multi-media rooms for English subjects. They suggested that more multi-media rooms were needed to support the activity of students’ English improvement in HUTECH.

6.4.3.5. Data projectors. Four out of twelve teachers interviewed indicated that the data projectors in some classrooms in Dien Bien Phu Campus did not work well. In discussion about data projectors, teacher 7 said:

In HUTECH, basic facilities and teaching aids are equipped, but it is hard to say if they are all good or not. Ung Van Khiem is a new campus, so the facilities and equipment are good, but in Dien Bien Phu Campus, some data projectors are too dim. We often face the situation that the students and the teacher prepare the lessons well at home, but when showing on the screen, it was so dim that we could not see. Thus, I think HUTECH should check data projectors and equipment at the beginning of each school year and fix the problems in time. (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.43)

Other teachers also reported that the projectors sometimes stopped working suddenly while the teachers or the students were presenting. These technical problems, and waiting for staff to come and fix the equipment wasted the class time, preventing effective teaching.

6.4.3.6. Wireless microphones. The sound system in HUTECH was also mentioned by three teachers. They said that the sound system was generally all right, however, in some rooms, the microphones did not work very well. Sometimes, the sound was too loud
and sometimes, it was too soft. In addition, the teachers also pointed out that having more wireless microphones for the classes would be convenient for the students to present their ideas or opinions even when they were at the back of the class. To date, at HUTECH, wire microphones were still popular, and each class was equipped with two microphones. Only some special classrooms were equipped with wireless microphones. The idea that there should be more wireless microphones was an interesting suggestion which should be taken into considerations by the HUTECH leaders.

6.4.3.7. Number of cassette players at Ung Van Khiem campus. As mentioned earlier, the facilities and equipment in Ung Van Khiem Campus were quite good because they were all brand new. There was, however, one problem mentioned in the interviews with teachers, which was that there were not enough cassette players in Ung Van Khiem Campus for English teaching. Teacher 8 said:

In Ung Van Khiem Campus, sometimes I face the problem of not having cassette players to teach listening. In this campus, there are only five cassettes, while there are many English classes. The problem happens when the teachers want to teach listening and borrow the cassettes at the same time. (Interview excerpt T8.06.06.2012.39)

A simple solution suggested by two teachers was that each classroom should be equipped with one cassette player so that this problem would not happen any more.

6.4.4. Support from HUTECH leaders. HUTECH leaders made great efforts in making HUTECH one of the leading private universities in Vietnam. They provided good facilities, equipment and paid much attention to the activity of English teaching and learning. However, according to the teachers, there were still some aspects they thought could be improved regarding the support from HUTECH leadership.
6.4.4.1. Programs for teachers’ professional development. It was revealed by six teachers that the programs and activities for the professional development of English teachers in HUTECH were very limited. There were no training courses, workshops or seminars for English teachers to improve their career. Teacher 11 said:

To keep good teachers and improve the quality of teaching, we should have training courses or workshops for teachers, but in fact we do not have these programs. So, we need to do this, and do effectively so that the teachers realize they are useful for them, and they will participate. I myself have been to some workshops outside this university, but they are not effective, so I do not go there any more. (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.101)

6.4.4.2. Response time to the teachers’ problems. Five teachers were disappointed with the system set up by HUTECH leadership to respond to teachers’ problems. They commented on the slowness in addressing teachers’ problems. When the teachers had problems using technical equipment, or when they required some support from the facilities and equipment office, they often had to wait a long time for their problems to be solved. Some problems were not solved until the end of the school year. Teacher 10 noted:

Sometimes the data projectors did not work well, but when I called the maintenance staff, they said that they would come, but we had to wait for so long. I prepared my lesson in my laptop, when the data projectors did not work suddenly but were not fixed right away, I could not continue my lesson well as intended. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.81)

6.4.4.3. Funds for English improvement activities outside class time. Another aspect that could be improved was raised by three teachers, who expressed disappointment that there were no funds for activities or programs outside class time to help students
improve their English ability. These teachers proposed that there was a need to have an effective educational playground for the students with useful activities outside class time, such as English clubs, English speaking contests and English music festivals. In order to make these activities work well and regularly, financial support from HUTECH leadership was very important. It was pointed out that HUTECH leaders used to have a small fund for these programs, but it had been cut off since last year. Teacher 7 explained:

Academic activities outside class time not only help students improve English but also provide them with opportunities to make friends and exchange information and knowledge. They can share each other the ways they improve English. So, the students can learn from each other in these academic activities. However, there are no funds from HUTECH. So, we cannot hold the programs regularly and effectively (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.57).

### 6.4.5. Recruitment

Four out of twelve teachers mentioned that the teacher recruitment process in HUTECH was not very professional. The university had an official and formal recruitment program for full-time teachers. However, these teachers expressed the view that part-time teacher recruitment was flawed, as the applicants did not have to demonstrate their teaching performance for recruitment. Teacher 11 explains:

The recruitment procedure for part-time teachers is not professional and not competitive. When the teacher performance is not assessed in the recruitment procedure, the quality of the teachers selected is not assured. Therefore, the quality of English teaching in HUTECH in general is also affected. (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.97)

### 6.4.6. Students’ attitudes and motivation for English study

Nine out of twelve teachers indicated that the students’ attitudes towards English depended on the majors they
studied. Students from different major disciplines had different attitudes towards English. It was pointed out that generally, the students from majors related to economy such as business, finance, accounting were interested in English and studied English better than the students from majors related to technology, such as mechanical engineering, civil construction engineering. All the teachers expressed their disappointment about the attitudes towards English and the English abilities of the students from interior decoration majors and fashion design majors. Teacher 7 said:

I use the same tasks for the students at different majors, and see that the students from business or finance or IT are more interested in doing the tasks and do well while the students from majors such as civil construction or fashion design are not very interested and do not finish the tasks well (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.69).

However, it was also pointed out by five teachers that generalizing about work ethic and English proficiency depending on a student major was fraught, as even students in the same class, in the same major had different attitudes and English abilities. Teacher 2 explained:

The students in majors like civil construction, fashion design are very lazy. But it doesn’t mean that all the students in one class are the same. In one class, there are also good and bad students. For example, last semester, I taught a class majoring in fashion design, and saw that there were also some good and hard working students in that class. So, the students’ attitudes depend on classes, and on individual students (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.90).

Besides the different attitudes found generally between classes with different majors, the teachers also discussed other reasons that students might have a low motivation towards learning English. In the interviews, the teachers suggested many factors that might be de-
motivating students from learning English. The most mentioned reason was that the students in some majors did not think English would be important for their majors and their future careers. Teacher 6 shared:

The students in some majors requiring English a lot for future jobs like business, accounting had positive attitudes, and study well, but the students from majors like electronics, civil construction, fashion design may think that English is not very useful for their future. They think that if they do not work for foreign companies, they can work for Vietnamese companies, so they are not positive in learning English (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.58).

In addition, teachers suggested that students were de-motivated when they did not have a good base knowledge of English. Some students did not study English intensively when they were at secondary school and high school, and therefore, they did not have a basic English background to continue their English study at tertiary education. Some other students came from remote areas where English was not taught very effectively, or in some cases where a language other than English was taught in secondary or high school. Some students only started English when they were at high school. Therefore, when these students came to the university, it was hard for them to follow the English program for higher education students. Other reasons de-motivating the students from English study were that the students were not confident when studying in the same class with good students and that the teachers were not enthusiastic.

The teachers were also asked to offer solutions that might help the students become more interested and motivated in their English study. Seven out of twelve teachers expressed that they would approach de-motivation by trying to understand the student’s specific situation, so that they could implement suitable solutions. They said that they
would explain to the students the importance of English and give them the advice and strategies to learn English. Teacher 1 said:

I think the teacher and the university also had strong effects on the students. So, the most important thing is that at the beginning of the course, the teacher must make the students motivated, make them interested and have inspirations (Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.58).

Moreover, it was pointed out by two teachers that the teaching styles and methods also influenced the students’ attitudes towards study. For different types of students, different methods should be used. Teacher 7 shared her ideas:

Due to the difference in the students’ English ability, I use appropriate techniques for each group of student. For the majors like business, where most students are good and only some students are weak, I can let weak students work in groups with good students and ask them to help and support each other, and I see that they can do well. But for some majors like civil construction, where only some students are good, I use more simple tasks for the whole class, but still have to assure that the basic knowledge required for the course would be covered (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.74).

Relating to this point, Teacher 5 also shared her experience:

For weak students, I focus more on them, ask them simple questions to encourage them, because if I ask difficult questions, they cannot answer and will lose their interests. I also encourage them by giving them compliments when they answer the questions or do the tasks well (Interview excerpt T5.23.05.2012.38).

In addition, it was agreed by the majority of the teachers that creating a happy and interesting atmosphere in the class was also important in increasing the positive attitudes of the students. The teachers also shared the techniques they used to make their classes
interesting. Some teachers said that they used games or songs to make the class happy and relaxed. Some other teachers revealed that they apply a learner-centered approach which encouraged students to reduce the teacher’s lecturing time and increase the students’ talking time. They believed that through these techniques, the students had chance to speak, to discuss and work together and would not feel bored or tired. Teacher 11 reported:

Sometimes, I let the students design their own communication activities, and I am surprised when they can do that and even do very well. As students, they understand each other, and therefore, they design the tasks or activities which are appropriate for their style, age and interests (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.88).

6.5. Teachers’ Expectations

Teachers were also asked in the interviews about their expectations of HUTECH leadership. The following section details a number of interesting statements teachers made regarding policies and support for EFL teaching and learning at HUTECH.

6.5.1. Teaching opportunity. Three teachers proposed that HUTECH needed to create a good working environment where the teachers felt comfortable, friendly but also challenged. It was mentioned that the teachers should be given opportunities to express themselves through various classes. Teachers also suggested that they should not have to teach Bachelor and Advanced Diploma classes all the time. Instead, they should be assigned to teach Master classes or international classes to improve their teaching skill and experience. Teacher 10 expressed:

If we only let the teachers teach normal classes while they are qualified to teach higher classes, their motivation will be decreased a lot. So, we should let the teachers be in charge of higher classes and see their performance. If they do well,
we should let them continue with these classes and raise their salary. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.128)

6.5.2. Salary policy. It was interesting that the salary was the point mentioned by all the teachers. The teachers in the interviews agreed that the current salary in HUTECH was all right, compared to the average salary level in Vietnam. But they also added that if the salary was higher, it would be more attractive. If the teachers had a good salary, good benefits and bonuses, they would be more motivated. Teacher 3 explained:

The living cost now is increasing. So, HUTECH should increase the salary so that the teachers do not have to concern about the living cost for the family and can invest more time in their teaching career (Interview excerpt T3.25.04.2012.54).

In discussion about salary, the teachers also expressed the idea that HUTECH should have a more reasonable and professional salary policy. It was said by four teachers that HUTECH should have a priority policy for the teachers who worked for a long time in HUTECH to let them know that their commitment to HUTECH was appreciated. This would also encourage other teachers to make a greater commitment to HUTECH.

Moreover, it was suggested by three teachers that they should be paid based on their performance, ability and qualifications, which would encourage them to continue studying and improving their career knowledge. Teacher 12 said:

We should not have the balanced salary for all the teachers. That’s not good. That’s not challenging. The teachers should have challenges. They do want to have the challenges in their teaching so that they will be more motivated to teach better. We should increase the salary and have awards for the teachers who teach well (Interview excerpt T12.28.06.2012.58).
6.5.3. Professional development for teachers. Seven out of twelve teachers said that they wished HUTECH had more effective training courses or workshops for teachers. It was suggested that in order to have well-organized, quality workshops or seminars, there would need to be a group of staff or experts who specialized in doing these activities. The teachers suggested that HUTECH could organize the workshops themselves or cooperate with other universities to organize workshops, and that the workshops should be held regularly. The teachers also discussed the best way to organize and ensure the quality of workshops, Teacher 1 said:

The teachers in Vietnam are not confident to talk about the weak points of themselves and of each other. Therefore, in the workshops, the teachers should be encouraged to discuss not only strong points but also weak points. We should make the workshops effective, not for performance only. The workshops should be held every month. English should be used during the workshops, and the teachers take turns to be the trainers or leaders of the workshops. (Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.66)

However, the teachers also pointed out that in order to have quality training courses or workshops organized regularly, there would need to be financial support from HUTECH leadership. Teacher 7 explained:

We need funds for this activity to be done well, such as: payment for inviting well-known teachers or professors to come and present, payment for the teachers to attend the workshops, expenses for food and drink during the workshops. In reality, we did not have funds for this activity, so there have not been any good workshops about English teaching and learning being held in HUTECH. (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.52)
Moreover, the teachers also expressed their wishes that HUTECH would have overseas training courses in English speaking countries for English teachers so that they could learn authentic language and improve their teaching knowledge. The teachers believed that if HUTECH could do so, the professional development policy in HUTECH would be very attractive for the teachers.

6.5.4. Teacher assessment. It was suggested by four teachers that HUTECH should have regular and professional teacher assessment to assure the quality of teaching. The assessment could be done by conducting class observations or collecting students’ feedback. It was believed that the feedback from the students would be helpful for the teachers to better understand the students and adjust their teaching practices to meet the students’ needs. In addition, the class observations would provide the teachers and the observers the opportunity to discuss both the strong and weak points of their teaching practice in classes, thus encouraging the teachers to invest more in their teaching to create beneficial lessons for the students. It was also pointed out that without assessment, permanent teachers would not be motivated to improve their teaching because they would be too secured in their permanent position, and not afraid of being sacked. Teacher 10 said:

The managers should have observations to permanent teachers, to make them know that the managers are following them, and they should keep their good teaching as they did in the past. Take my case as an example. If I am not observed, there will be two things happening. The first thing is that I think I am a bad teacher, and they did not want to observe me. The second thing is that I think I am a very good teacher, and they do not need to have any observations in my class. So, observations can give the teachers challenges, opportunities, and also chances to improve themselves. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.163)
Two teachers suggested that the observations should be done unexpectedly to assure the reliability of the observational data. Teacher 6 explained:

We should do unexpected class observations to have correct results, because if the teachers are informed in advance, they will have preparation and do differently from their usual days. For example, normally, they do not use teaching aids like OHP, but when being observed and assessed, they will use OHP. (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.85)

6.5.5. Using English for teaching major subjects. One interesting idea raised by two teachers was the use of English as a medium of instruction for teaching major subjects in HUTECH. It was realized through discussion that the lack of qualified teachers who could use English proficiently to teach major subjects would make it impossible to teach all the major subjects in English. Instead, it was suggested that only some compulsory subjects in each major should be selected to be taught in English. Teacher 11 stated:

If this can be done, it will be very effective for students’ English improvement. If some compulsory subjects are taught in English, students will have opportunities to use English in class more often, and will also have great motivation to improve their English in order to understand lessons and pass their exams. (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.123)

6.5.6. Feedback from teachers and students. Four teachers expressed their disappointment that HUTECH did not respond as quickly as they would have liked to the teachers’ and students’ problems. For example, some problems about the equipment and facilities were reported at the beginning of the school year but they were not solved until the end of the year. It was suggested by the teachers that HUTECH leaders should spend more time listening to the teachers and students, getting feedback from them and trying to
solve the problems more quickly. It was pointed out that in order to do this effectively, HUTECH leaders should have staff who are in charge of getting and managing feedback from the teachers and the students and solving the problems in required time.

6.5.7. Full-time positions and work load. In the interviews, the teachers remarked that there was a big work load for the full-time teachers at HUTECH. Every year, they were required to undertake a minimum of 480 teaching hours in order to receive the basic salary level. According to some teachers, because of the quantity of teaching hours assigned in HUTECH, and because the basic salary in HUTECH was not enough for family living costs, they also had to take up extra work in other universities, and did not have enough time to invest in improving their quality of teaching. Therefore, it was suggested that either the work load be reduced for the current salary level, or vice versa, the current work load could be kept if the salary was increased. This would mean that the teachers would not have to teach in other universities and have more time to prepare lessons for the students in HUTECH. Moreover, it was stated that there were not enough full-time English teachers in HUTECH. Being a big university with more than twenty thousand current students and thousands of new students expected every year, HUTECH had less than twenty full-time teachers being in charge of teaching non-major English. In the interviews, it was revealed that many part-time teachers wanted to become full-time teachers in HUTECH but the number of full-time positions was limited by HUTECH leadership. Therefore, it was suggested that HUTECH leaders should consider employing more full-time teachers, especially by transferring the current part-time teachers to full-time positions so that they would feel stable and more committed to HUTECH.
6.6. Suggestions for an Ideal EFL Training Program in HUTECH

The teachers were also asked their opinions in relation to an ideal EFL training program. Interestingly, all the teachers admitted that in Vietnam higher education, it was very difficult, even impossible, to have an ideal English training program which met the international standard requirements. Therefore, the teachers were very pragmatic in their suggestions, offering ideas that could be realized within their financial and institutional constraints.

6.6.1. Balance between financial profit and education quality. It was reported by four teachers that HUTECH leadership was too focused on financial profit and this was believed to affect the quality of English teaching and learning. Therefore, the teachers wished that HUTECH leaders could find a balance of financial profit and education quality. This balance, however, is very difficult to achieve. However, teachers were convinced that if there were more effective management strategies, this problem could be solved. Teacher 10 shared his ideas:

Currently, we have many teaching staff who do not work very effectively. So, we should refine the teaching staff team so that we can reduce the cost. We should pay higher salary for the good teachers and require more contributions from them. By doing this, we will have an effective teaching staff team and can solve the problem of financial profit and education quality. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.186)

6.6.2. Independence for teachers and students. It was said by two teachers that an ideal training program was one where the teachers and students were given freedom and independence in their teaching and learning. It was pointed out that in HUTECH, the textbooks and the lessons were assigned for the teachers. To complete the syllabus, the teachers also had to assign their students with fixed tasks from the textbooks. The only
choice left for the teachers was the teaching methods. The teachers and the students did not have much independence or flexibility in their teaching and learning. In discussion about this point, Teacher 6 suggested:

   We should only give the overall target of each semester, then let the teachers free to choose ways to obtain that target. The teachers should have rights to choose books appropriate for their classes, their students’ levels, what skills to be taught more. In their classes, the teachers should have rights to adjust their teaching schedule, decide what lessons to teach first, what to teach later. So, should be flexible, give the teachers more independence so that the teachers can give their students more independence. That will help them feel comfortable, and therefore, the teaching and learning will be more effective. (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.101)

6.6.3. EFL program hurdle. At present, in HUTECH, the students studied English at the same time as their other major subjects. Three teachers suggested that the English teaching and learning in HUTECH would be of higher quality if the English program was taught before the main program. Teacher 3 pointed out:

   We can adapt the model of FPT University. The program in FPT university is very effective. The students do not study English at the same time with their major subjects. The students who meet the English requirement can start the main program immediately, but the students who do not meet the English requirement have to study English full-time during one year, and after they meet the English requirement, they are allowed to study major subjects. If not, they continue studying English until they meet the requirement. (Interview excerpt T3.25.04.2012.96)
6.6.4. Placement tests. It was suggested by six teachers that HUTECH should have placement tests to categorize the students and put them in the appropriate classes. When the students’ English level in a class was equal, it would be easier for the teachers to conduct their teaching activity and apply their teaching methods more effectively.

6.6.5. Good and enthusiastic teachers. The role of the teachers was considered very important in creating a good English training program in HUTECH. It was revealed by three teachers that because of the busy teaching schedule, the teachers sometimes felt tired and did not invest much time in their lessons. They also lost enthusiasm and passion for their career. Some teachers came to the classes with only the book and the tape recorder, without good preparations. Therefore, it is important to have appropriate assessment and reward policies to motivate teachers.

6.6.6. Good curriculum. It was believed by all teachers in the interviews that a good curriculum was essential to make a quality English training program in HUTECH. The syllabus for English teaching in HUTECH was considered satisfactory by all teachers. As such, the teachers did not have many comments about the syllabus, but they showed concerns about the curriculum. It was also pointed out that the English curriculum in HUTECH should cover four skills, not only in the teaching and learning but also in the examinations. The content being taught and tested should aim to develop the students’ communication skills and ability to use English for their future jobs.

6.6.7. Smaller class size. The teachers suggested that an ideal English class should be around 20 students, however, they understood that it was impossible to have this number. Thus, the teachers said that a class with no more than 30 students in HUTECH would also be an improvement. Some teachers said that 40 or 50 students would also be
acceptable, if the students’ English levels in the same class were equal. Once again, the importance of the placement tests was emphasized.

6.6.8. Students’ autonomy. In the interviews, five teachers expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the students’ autonomy in HUTECH. According to them, an effective English training program required the cooperation of teachers and students. Students’ autonomy was considered an important factor contributing to the success and quality of English training programs in HUTECH. Teacher 8 said:

Learners’ autonomy is very important, especially at tertiary level. With limited time in class, the teachers cannot provide all knowledge, so they can only provide the main and basic knowledge and instruct the students the ways to develop more by themselves. So, students need to spend more time outside class for self-study, research and improve their knowledge. (Interview excerpt T8.06.06.2012.23)

6.7. Summary

The teachers in the interviews enthusiastically expressed their opinions about the activity of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH. They also contributed ideas and suggestions for the improvement and quality of the program. However, besides the teachers’ perspectives, an understanding of the managers’ viewpoint and classroom practices was also necessary before any conclusions could be made. The next chapter explores the managers’ perspectives about the teaching and learning of English at HUTECH in Vietnam.
Chapter 7. Managers’ Perspectives of English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH

7.0. Introduction

This chapter details the results of the interviews with the non-major English program managers at HUTECH (Appendix F2, Interviews questions for managers). To begin, general information about the two managers who participated in the interviews is provided. This is followed by a detailed account of the positive and negative aspects of English teaching and learning in HUTECH, from the perspective of the two managers. This chapter addresses the strategies that the managers suggested to make the activity of English teaching and learning in HUTECH more effective.

7.1. General information about managers participating

The two managers interviewed were both experienced in EFL teaching management in other universities and language centers before they were employed at HUTECH. Manager 1 had four years experience and Manager 2 had seven years experience in management positions, including HUTECH experience. Both managers held MA degrees in EFL teaching, and taught English for more than ten years in educational institutions in Vietnam before they were appointed to management positions. These managers both held senior positions, very involved in the management of activities relating to English teaching and learning. They were responsible for the non-major English programs as well as activities both inside and outside class time. They both shared the view that English was a very important subject for all Vietnamese students. They believed that English was an important international communication means for Vietnam, allowing communication with other countries, and the opportunity to integrate with the world. In addition, according to the managers, English proficiency would help Vietnamese people to
keep up with rapid international developments, and provided access to knowledge from a range of global sources. According to the managers, when discussing the importance of English for HUTECH students, they both pointed out that English was a compulsory subject and was believed to be a strongly supportive element for the students’ future jobs.

7.2. Positive aspects of English training in HUTECH

The managers in the interviews expressed their satisfaction about many aspects of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH. They were quite happy about their activities, strategies and solutions for the English training program, of which they were in charge. The positive aspects mentioned by the managers were related to the syllabus, the curriculum, the facilities and equipment, the support from HUTECH leadership, the teacher recruitment and appraisal policies.

7.2.1. Syllabus. The managers had positive comments about the syllabus used in HUTECH at the time of the interviews. The syllabus was said to be up to date and had a comprehensive database of language knowledge (vocabulary, grammatical structures) appropriate for students’ English development. They also stated that the syllabus had good situational practices, which provided scenarios in different situations or contexts for students to practise English. Manager 1 expressed:

*American Headway*, new edition is a very good syllabus. It consists of adequate and good language aspects for learners to update their database. If there is not enough database, it is very difficult for skills training. That is the reason I chose this syllabus (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.129).
7.2.2. Curriculum. The managers stated that the curriculum they introduced was helpful for students’ English improvement. The various aspects of this curriculum are explained in detail in the following sections.

7.2.2.1. Program structure. The managers explained that the curriculum for EFL teaching and learning for the students at the Bachelor level was underpinned by a logical structure. As mentioned earlier, in five semesters, the students had to finish four course books of the *American Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2009). However, only three books were taught in classes, and the last one was introduced for the students to study at home. Relating to this decision, Manager 1 explained:

> Why do we only use three books to teach in classes instead of four books? Because at higher education, self-study is important. We show the students directions, provide them with basic background knowledge. Based on that, how the students can develop depends on the attitudes and efforts of the individuals. We create the competition on the thinking orientation and the abilities of the students. The ones with great efforts will have good opportunities for their future life. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.72)

7.2.2.2. Communicative competence. The managers explained that the main objective for the non-major English program was to equip HUTECH students with enough basic English language and knowledge for communicative competence. Based on that knowledge, after leaving the university, the students could use English for their career and communication in society. From this basic competence, through practice and experience, graduates could become more proficient communicating in English. Manager 1 stated:

> We want the teachers and students to focus on students’ communicative competence. We want students to be able to use their English they have learned at
the university for their future jobs, especially when they work for foreign companies: answering telephones from the clients, writing emails or reports in English, presenting ideas in company meetings. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.79)

7.2.2.3. Allocated time for EFL. It was strongly believed by the two managers that the time allocated for EFL was enough for students to develop communication skills. However, the managers were concerned that if the teachers did not conduct effective teaching and learning activities, and the students were not enthusiastic or studious, the time allocated would not be sufficient. Manager 2 said:

135 minutes in a week during five semesters is enough for improving listening and speaking skills for the students. The students only had three semesters to study English before, but now the time amount was increased to five semesters. Surely, it was enough for teaching students’ English communication. (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.100)

7.2.3. Facilities and equipment. The managers expressed their satisfaction regarding the facilities and equipment provided for teaching and learning in HUTECH in general and for English training in particular. Both managers pointed out that all classrooms at HUTECH were equipped with the necessary teaching aids. According to the managers, 90% of the teaching aids and equipment were in good condition, and due to this, the quality of the teaching and learning was gradually improving. Manager 1 shared:

To create good and effective teaching and learning condition for the teachers and students, HUTECH leaders have had very positive support and investment in teaching aids and facilities. For example, we have multimedia equipment, we have OHPs, we have microphones and speakers, audio and visual equipment with ADSL
modem to help access Internet. We also have good library which can support the students well in their study. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.16)

### 7.2.4. Support from HUTECH leadership.

The results showed that the managers were quite happy about the support from HUTECH leadership. It was stated by the managers that HUTECH leaders invested in the education quality for all the majors in HUTECH, including the non-major English program. The target of HUTECH leaders was to make HUTECH one of the most popular education brand names in Vietnam. Manager 2 pointed out:

HUTECH did not hesitate in financial investment for any activities to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning in HUTECH. This is the viewpoint of HUTECH leaders. The thing is that how the department and faculties can manage and make their activities effective. If the activities or projects are well planned, and the quality and effectiveness are assured, the leaders will strongly support. We are lucky to have the support from the leaders. Not only English center, but also other faculties and departments can receive the support from the leaders if they have new suggestions or good ideas to make their work processing more effective. (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.220)

### 7.2.5. Teacher recruitment.

The managers were asked for their opinions about teacher recruitment in HUTECH. It was indicated by the managers that the teacher recruitment process was conducted professionally in order to assure the quality of the teachers employed to work at HUTECH. The managers’ responses regarding the various aspects of recruiting staff are documented in the following sections.

#### 7.2.5.1. Focus on teacher’s performance.

The managers explained that in their recruitment processes, they focused on quality teaching performance. Qualifications were
important, but it was not the top priority in their recruitment viewpoint. More important than the qualifications or degrees held by the applicants was the quality of their teaching. As Manager 1 states:

In the recruitment, we only assess their real teaching ability, based on their performance, because their performance will express many things: the knowledge, the teaching method, and the way to approach learners. The point needed to be considered is the teaching art. For the same lesson, why teacher A presents very well in an interesting way while teacher B has a boring presentation. So, in the recruitment, we ask the teachers to conduct demonstration performance and then we decide if we will employ them or not (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.174).

7.2.5.2. Tendency to recruit young teachers. It was revealed by the managers that they tended to recruit young teachers. The managers believed that young teachers were youthful and energetic, and created a happy and lively atmosphere in the classroom. In addition, young teachers were also thought to be active, creative, willing to learn and able to adopt new knowledge quickly. It was said by the managers that the young teachers in HUTECH were encouraged by HUTECH to take up higher study courses to improve their career knowledge. Manager 2 said:

It is hard to say who is better, young teachers or experienced teachers. But we prefer to recruit young teachers. We believe that young teachers are the ones who will apply the most updated teaching skills and methods they have learned at their pedagogy universities, and bring a “new wind” to the classes. However, we have to admit that their lack of experience sometimes also causes problems in teaching practices and class management, especially in classes with unequal students’ abilities (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.170).
7.2.5.3. Policy to attract good teachers. In the interviews, the managers stated that HUTECH had a good policy to attract good teachers. Part of this policy was that part-time teachers who performed well would be offered full-time positions. This was believed to be a good policy because the quality of these teachers had been proven during their part-time teaching contracts. In addition, HUTECH also sponsored teachers to take up higher study courses. After completing their degrees, the teachers would receive financial support in the form of a bonus from HUTECH, depending on the level of achievement. In addition, HUTECH also tried to create a good working environment so that the teachers felt comfortable and committed to their teaching career. Manager 2 explained:

In the relationship with the teachers, we let them know that we respect them. We do not force them to do this or do that. We only talk, discuss and share ideas. Our duty is to make the teachers feel comfortable in teaching, have passion and happiness in teaching. If the teachers are uncomfortable, they cannot produce highest quality lessons (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.180).

7.2.5.4. Teacher assessment. It was revealed by the managers that they still conducted assessment of all teachers regularly. One of the ways teacher assessed was through observation. The managers did not go into the classes to make observations, instead, they stood outside the classes for about ten minutes, in a corner, listened to the teacher and watched the activities in the class. In this manner they did not affect the natural atmosphere of the classes and, did not make the teachers and the students nervous, which may have impacted on the observation results. This observation was only part of teacher assessment. The assessment process also included collecting students’ feedback, and collecting reports from the inspectors who were in charge of checking teachers’ attendance and class times.
7.2.5.5. **Contract renewal.** Another positive point mentioned by the managers was that they had refinement processes done regularly to assure the teacher quality and motivate the teachers to improve their careers. Part-time contracted teachers who did not perform well did not have their contracts renewed. It was pointed out by the managers that HUTECH always had the new teachers coming to replace the teachers who did not perform well. Manager 2 shared the following reflection:

When some teachers do not follow the regulations or conditions signed in the contract, do not improve knowledge to meet the requirements of HUTECH, we will have a talk or discussion with them so that they can understand and improve. However, after many meetings, if the situations do not improve and the teachers do not have positive attitudes, we have to stop the contract with them. (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.193)

7.2.6. **Appraisal policies.** In HUTECH, there were also a range of appraisal policies aimed at evaluating more broadly the contributions and wellbeing of teachers and students at HUTECH. The managers explained during the interviews that HUTECH tried to make their appraisal policies attractive to the teachers. The purpose of these policies was to make the teachers feel that HUTECH was a comfortable and happy environment. In addition, HUTECH managers wanted the teachers to know that they were always respected and treated well.

7.2.6.1. **Fair treatment for all teachers.** It was stated by the managers that they always tried to create a good working environment where all the teachers were treated fairly. In recruitment or assessment, the process was clear and objective. All the teachers were provided fair opportunities to express themselves and improve their careers. It was
also pointed out that the managers were willing to welcome good and enthusiastic teachers, but willing to let go teachers who were not cooperative. Manager 1 pointed out:

We give all teachers equal opportunities in all of our policies so that they will feel comfortable to work with us and devote more to their career. We want them to have motivation for teaching (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.201).

**7.2.6.2. Respect feedback from teachers and students.** The managers stated that they always appreciated and respected the feedback from the teachers and students in HUTECH. They welcomed all the ideas, opinions and suggestions from teachers and students. After receiving the feedback, the managers had to make decisions and solutions for the problems mentioned. Manager 1 said:

The feedback from the teachers and the students is valuable for us. We want to have information from various sources. This will help us know well about the reality and the issues related to the English teaching and learning happening in HUTECH. Due to this, we can have suitable solutions and strategies to make our English training program more effective. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.117)

**7.2.6.3. Professional development for teachers.** During the interviews, the subject of professional development for EFL teachers at HUTECH was also raised, and discussed by the managers. They claimed that HUTECH always encouraged the teachers to study more to improve their career knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the teachers who completed their study successfully would receive financial support from HUTECH. In addition, there were plans underway to hold seminars and workshops at HUTECH to provide the teachers the opportunities to learn from the experts, from the professors, and from each other as well. Manager 1 stated:
We are going to have cooperation with the institutions where there are good seminars, workshops or training courses. We are going to invite foreign educational institutions to come and share their experience. We also intend to invite international educational institutions to support HUTECH’s English center by transferring technology, by conducting workshops, seminars, tutorials about new teaching methods, new approaches, new teaching materials and documents.

(Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.209)

Manager 2 said:

We intend to have programs to encourage teachers participate more in conferences, in research activities to improve career knowledge. Currently, the research activities of English teachers in HUTECH are very limited. We are going to support them and get them involved more in these activities. (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.215)

7.3. Negative Aspects of English Training in HUTECH

During the interviews, the managers were also willing to share their perspectives regarding the aspects of EFL teaching and learning that could be improved at HUTECH. These negative aspects are documented in the following section.

7.3.1. Curriculum. According to the managers, the non-major English (general English) courses were taught at the same time as the English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and this was not ideal. They preferred to have the non-major English program completed before the ESP program started. Manager 2 explained:

When the students study non-major English first, they will be equipped with basic and general English knowledge before they can absorb English for their specific majors, approach terminology more effectively. Based on the background English knowledge
provided in advance, they will have more advantages in writing reports, reading
documents, presenting in front of class, or doing group work projects or seminars about
their specific majors. However, because of some reasons, we cannot do this yet. The
schedule for these programs still depends on the arrangement of the Training Department.
(Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.95)

7.3.2. Teachers’ use of ICT and technical equipment. It was revealed that a major
concern held by the managers was the teachers’ skills in using computers and ICT. The
managers were particularly worried about the teachers’ abilities to apply technological
advances in their English teaching. It was pointed out that some teachers’ skills using
Microsoft Word was still a problem. Manager 2 said:

I am responsible for checking the tests designed by the teachers before
administering, and see that the test layout is not professional, such as page layout,
margin, indent, spacing, etc. although we have advised them the format required

When discussing this problem, the managers pointed out that they intended to have training
sessions to help teachers with word document processing in accordance with HUTECH’s
requirements, and the ability to use other equipment and facilities of the university.

7.3.3. Students’ efforts. It was stated by the managers that the students’ attitudes
toward English learning were not as positive as they expected. The managers remarked that
students did not show a great deal of effort in their English study. It was pointed out that
the English center always welcomed students to come and ask for help if they had
problems and difficulties related to the English teaching and learning in HUTECH, yet
very few students used this service. The managers suspected that this was due to students’
low interest and motivation in learning English. Manager 1 expressed:
We want them to come, and ask for our consultancy and help. If some students come, they can talk directly with me. But if many students come, we can arrange and hold a club so that the students can raise their questions and concerns every week. I want them to speak out the things they do not know, so that they will know. But it is a pity that we cannot achieve our purpose. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.109)

7.3.4. Class size and disparity of students’ English abilities. The managers also admitted in the interviews that class sizes of 50 to 60 students were quite big, and that the English abilities of the students in a class were not equal. However, the managers claimed that this was the common situation of most universities in Vietnam. So, as for the managers, it was difficult to ask HUTECH leadership for the reduction of the student number in a class. Instead, the ability and skill of the teachers was suggested as the solutions to this difficulty. Manager 2 discussed:

We can solve this problem by dividing the students in small groups, about three to four groups in a class. We create a conversational situation for each group, and control the activities of the groups. In general, in such a big class, we need the teachers’ ability to minimize the objective difficulties, and maximize the effectiveness. Perhaps, in such a big class, the quality achieved is not good as the quality in a small class with only 20 to 30 students, but it should not be too bad (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.161).

7.3.5. Problems with teachers’ teaching styles and methods. The interviews revealed that managers were also unsatisfied with the teaching styles and methods of the teachers. While the aim of the non-major English program at HUTECH was to equip the students with English communicative competence, the teaching activity of many teachers
in HUTECH did not meet this aim, according to the managers. It was pointed out by the managers that many teachers’ lessons were not interesting enough to attract students and arouse their interests. The managers also believed that many teachers’ methods were not very effective. They explained that they commonly observed many English classrooms in HUTECH with the teachers looking at their books, holding the microphones, and lecturing or talking most of the time, while the students were mainly listening to the teachers, looking at the boards, or screens, and writing down in their notebooks. Not many teachers followed the important step of creating engaging situations and scenarios for the students to practice. In addition, the application of technology to serve English teaching was not exploited effectively. Manager 1 stated:

I want the teachers to focus on teaching listening and speaking so that the students can communicate in English. There is no need to focus too much on teaching and explaining grammar structures. In English teaching, there should be less time for teacher’s talk and more time for students’ talk. The teacher should only be in charge of instructing, providing situations for the students to practice, and control them, like a leader of a music band. I think that is an art. However, to do this, beside the teaching knowledge, other factors also need to be considered, such as: class size, time amount, etc. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.149).

7.3.6. **Lab rooms and equipment management.** The managers were quite happy with the facilities and equipment for EFL teaching and learning at HUTECH, especially the lab rooms with 300 computers for English practice. However, one problem mentioned was that the schedule and availability of the lab rooms was very limited. The schedule operated according to a fixed schedule arranged by the university. The English center and the Training department cooperate to arrange the bookings of the lab rooms for English study. The students from the English center could only ask for the lab rooms when there
were no other activities or other classes, such as information technology classes, scheduled there by the Training department. The students had to book the lab rooms in advance when they wanted to use them, because there was a high demand for computers.

Another point discussed was that sometimes the equipment and teaching aids had problems which made it difficult for the teachers to conduct their teaching. The managers said that they noticed these problems and tried to contact the Equipment and Facilities Management Department to fix them. However, they also said that the fixing process must be in order, and that things could not be done within short time.

7.3.7. Limited students’ autonomy. The autonomy of HUTECH students was also a problem discussed by managers. The managers remarked that many students in HUTECH were not autonomous. The managers explained that a common habit for students was going to the classes and learning from the teachers without investing much time for English study and improvement outside class. According to these managers, the autonomy of learners was very important, especially for students at higher education. The teachers should only play roles such as instructors and helpers, and the students should be active in their study, especially self-study. Manager 2 stated:

Students are expected to be responsible for their own learning. They should seek opportunities to improve their knowledge outside class time: going to English clubs, chatting with friends, doing more tasks at home, asking for help from teachers and friends and even from the managers like us, when they have problems with their learning. But in reality, I see that students’ autonomy is still limited. This may be due to many reasons. So, finding a satisfactory answer for this issue is really a challenge (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.120).
7.4. Strategies

The managers also discussed their strategies to make the English teaching and learning in HUTECH more effective. According to them, the central strategy is to focus on human development, that is to say the development and improvement of teaching staff. A part of this strategy would be the development of more effective appraisal policies to attract good and enthusiastic teachers. This would also include creating a more comfortable working environment so that the teachers would have job satisfaction and inspirations to teach well. In addition, the professional development for the teachers in HUTECH would also be focused more, by encouraging and supporting them to study more, providing them with effective training courses, seminars and workshops.

7.5. Summary

In general, both managers indicated that they were very enthusiastic to improve the teaching and learning of EFL in HUTECH. However, they also admitted the reality that there were still many problems facing both HUTECH and Vietnamese higher education in general. Chapter 8 incorporates an analysis of the EFL class observations and contributes to a complete picture of English teaching and learning in HUTECH.
Chapter 8. English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH through the Observations of Classroom Practices

8.0. Introduction

This chapter details the findings of the class observations of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH (Appendix H Class Observation Notes). Each class was observed once, over a period of 45 minutes. The researcher was a non-participation observer in these classrooms observed. The beginning section of this chapter provides general description of the eight classes observed. The following sections provide a detailed outline of the activities observed in the individual English teaching and learning in classrooms in HUTECH. Both positive and negative aspects of classroom observations are recorded and analysed.

8.1. General Descriptions

There were eight different teachers, eight different classes observed across two campuses: two classes majored in business administration, two classes majored in electricity, one class majored in fashion design, one class majored in interior decoration, one class majored in finance and banking, one class majored in accounting. Two of the above classes were in Dien Bien Phu Campus, and six other classes were in Ung Van Khiem Campus - a new campus of HUTECH which was in operation in 2010. Each class was observed once for 45 minutes. The eight teachers of the eight classes observed were different in age, gender, and experience. All the observations were undertaken by the researcher.

Table 8.1

Classes Observed at HUTECH
During the observations of the year 2012, students at the second year classes were all studying lesson 10, lesson 11 and lesson 12 of the textbook *American Headway 2* (Soars & Soars, 2009). According to the student lists, the number of students in each class ranged from 50 to 57 students. However, the number of the students actually presented in the classes was only around 39 to 49. All observations were arranged with permission of the teachers and with due consideration of their convenience and time availability.

### 8.2. Positive Aspects

Through class observations, some positive aspects in the activities of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH were documented. These positive aspects were mainly related to the syllabus, facilities and equipment. These are detailed in the following sections.

#### 8.2.1. Syllabus

Through the classroom observations, it became clear how the syllabus currently being used in HUTECH was being implemented. The syllabus is built around the three textbooks: *American Headway 1*, *American Headway 2*, *American Headway 3* (Soars & Soars, 2009). The textbook used for the second year student was *American Headway 2* (Soars & Soars, 2009). Each textbook contains 12 units. The units were arranged logically covering a variety of knowledge and macro skills. All skills were covered within one unit: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation. Each unit was well-designed, sequential and repeated developing skills,
which included the following sections: Starter, Grammar, Practice, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Speaking, Vocabulary and Pronunciation, Everyday English. The Starter section was a warm up activity to lead students to the main lesson. The Grammar section provided various tasks to help students learn and review grammar spots, such as: listen and fill in the blanks using the correct verbs in the boxes, listen and answer questions. The Practice section provided activities for students to work in groups, in pairs, using grammar spots they had learnt to talk about themselves. The Listening and Speaking, Reading and Speaking sections focused on improving students’ listening and reading skills through various tasks, such as: listen and complete the chart, read and answer the questions. They also provided tasks for students to practise speaking, following the topics of the listening or reading texts they had listened or read, such as: work with a partner to answer the questions, discuss the questions in groups. The Vocabulary and Pronunciation section aimed to expand students’ vocabulary and improve students’ pronunciation, through various practice tasks. The Everyday English section provided tasks and activities for students to practise common phrases or expressions in English. The syllabus was up to date because there were regular updates of editions. This second edition was the latest edition of the syllabus American Headway (Soars & Soars, 2009). The tasks and activities designed to be more communicative which encouraged the implementation of CLT – the latest teaching method. There were many topics covered through the 12 units of the textbook, which provided students a wide range of knowledge, from situations in social life: travel, dating, holiday, to knowledge which met disciplinary needs: business, hospitality, tourism, technology. (see Appendix K for a sample of the textbook page).

**8.2.2. Adequate facilities and equipment.** It was noticed that all the classrooms being observed were fully equipped with the necessary teaching aids and equipment required for a normal EFL class. There were two microphones, a large whiteboard, a
computer connected with ADSL and a data projector in each classroom. The cassette and CD players were not in the classrooms, but were available in the Department of Equipment and Facilities Management. The teachers and the students could go there to borrow equipment for their classes.

8.3. Negative aspects

The results from the class observations revealed that there were many problems affecting the quality of EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH. There were problems identified with teaching styles and methods, classroom management, lesson preparation and students’ abilities and attitudes.

8.3.1. Teaching style.

8.3.1.1. Songs and games. It was observed that there were not many activities conducted to arouse the students’ interests. During the lessons, most teachers did not use songs or games in their teaching. Only one young female teacher used songs and games for her class. Appropriately chosen songs or games can help students maintain interest and enthusiasm for their lessons, however, the songs she used was only for entertainment and did not connect well with the content of the lesson. The games she designed only focused on developing students’ vocabulary, but did not contain any communicative practice. The game activity in Class 1 was conducted as follows:

The teacher distributed the handouts of the crossword to the whole class, then asked the students to fill in the crossword. The teacher said ‘I will receive the handouts from the first five people who finish and submit to me, then I will check to see who will get most correct answers. That person will be the winner’. Then the teacher let the students fill in the crossword individually. Some minutes later, the first five
handouts were submitted to the teacher. Then, she asked the whole class to stop and look at the screen. She showed the crossword on the screen and elicited the answers from the whole class. After the crossword was filled in completely, the teacher looked at the first five handouts submitted to her and had a quick check, then she informed the whole class of the winner. The students clapped their hands for congratulations. (Observation excerpt C1.15.04.2012.55)

The game activity above demonstrated that the teacher had made an effort to make the students less bored in the class. However, as indicated, her game only helped to improve the students’ vocabulary while students’ communicative ability was not a focus. This activity could be developed if the teacher used the type of crossword which required the students to work in pairs and asked each other for information, definitions, or explanations to fill out the crossword.

8.3.1.2. **Delivery style.** In the classes observed, a lecturing style of delivery was predominantly used. During classes, four out of eight teachers were observed sitting at their desk, holding the microphone, looking at their book and talking most of the time. Two out of eight teachers told jokes and funny stories to make students laugh and feel relaxed. Some teachers also moved around the class, but their voice, their style and activities did not demonstrate any variation. The voice tone was the same during the entire lesson. They did not raise their voice to attract the students when necessary. There were not many gestures and facial expressions to create an interesting interaction between the teacher and students. It was observed that in these classes, students paid attention, listened to teacher, copied down what teachers presented on the board, and took notes about what teachers said, and the atmosphere in these classes was quiet. An example of this is detailed in the notes from Class 4:
The teacher sat at the desk, asked the students to look at page number 88. The students followed his instruction. The teacher asked the whole class to do the exercises in silence. Then, after the students finished, the teacher called the students to stand up and read aloud their answers individually. The teacher sat at the desk, listened and said if the answer was right or wrong. The teacher also corrected students’ pronunciation if any. When the students gave the correct answers, the teacher said ‘Thank you, sit down please’. When the answer was wrong, the teacher called another student until he got the correct answer. (Observation excerpt C4.21.04.2012.27)

8.3.1.3. Warm up activities. It was observed that most teachers did not use warm up activities at the beginning of each lesson to arouse students’ interests and lead them into the lessons. Instead, they introduced the lessons directly. The beginning of the lesson in Class 2 was described as below:

The teacher came to the class. She walked to the teacher’s desk, took the book and laptop from her bag. She connected the laptop and the OHP, then opened the book. She introduced the lesson: ‘Today we study new lesson: “Trying your best”. Now, open your book, page 90, please.’ The students did as directed. At the same time, the teacher wrote the title of the new lesson on the board. She divided the board into two columns. One column was ‘the present perfect tense’ and the other column was ‘the present perfect continuous tense’. Then she helped the students review the two tenses by calling two students to go to the board and write down the formation of the tenses and the examples. (Observation excerpt C2.18.04.2012.07)

Some teachers had warm up activities at the beginning of a lesson. They simply asked questions to lead students to the lesson, but did not use visual or audio aids, or games, or songs to stimulate learning. This is shown in the following warm up activity in Class 1:
The teacher came to the class, put her handbag in the table. She checked students’
attendance by calling the students’ names and ticked in the student list if any
students were absent. After checking students’ attendance, she opened her personal
laptop. She asked the whole class: “Who can tell me what tenses we have
studied?” The students responded in turns, listed the tenses they had studied. Then,
she continued: “Who can tell me the difference between ‘present perfect’ and
‘present perfect continuous’?” Some students responded orally. Then, the teachers
said: “All right, some of you are correct, but some are not. Today, we will review
the two tenses we have studied: present perfect and present perfect continuous”.
(Observation excerpt C1.15.04.2012.07)

8.3.2. Communicative activities. The observations showed that the teachers tried to
conduct communicative activities in their classes. However, the prominent feature noticed
from most of the classes observed was that the communicative activities were limited. All
the teachers conducted pair work and group work activities in their classes. However, these
activities were limited to answering questions in the textbook. In some classes, the teachers
asked the students to form pairs to ask and answer comprehension questions from the
textbooks. In other classes, the teachers asked the students to do exercises in groups, then
the teachers gave marks for the whole group. Most of these questions, answers, or
exercises were from the textbooks, and the teachers did not set communicative situations
which required the students to speak, communicate to explore information from each other
or to solve the problems together. Below is an activity in Class 3:

After explaining to the class the use of ‘so’ and ‘such’, the teacher asked the
students to work in pairs to do the exercise in the textbook (page 89) together. The
students followed the teacher’s direction. They did the exercise in pairs. In most
pairs, both students read the questions in silence, then one student wrote down the
answers in the book. If their partner agreed, they moved to the next question. If not, they discussed again to have a common answer. The language used for discussion was almost all Vietnamese. In some pairs, they could not agree with each other for the answers, and had to call the teacher for help and asked for the correct answer from the teacher. After 10 minutes, the teacher asked the whole class to stop. Then the teacher called individual students to stand up and read aloud their answers. The teacher listened, gave feedback and corrected mistakes if there were any.

(Observation excerpt C3.19.04.2012.43)

In addition, during the observed classes, there was only a small amount of time set aside for communicative activities. As mentioned earlier, most pair work or group work activities were limited to asking and answering questions in relation to the textbook. In most classes observed, the students did not have opportunities to speak, present ideas or have conversations in English. In several classes, the students were given some communicative situations, but very little time was allocated for the students to undertake them. These activities were only conducted for about 10 minutes. Here is the description of a communicative activity in Class 5:

The teacher showed the instruction of the communicative task on the screen. The task required the students to play roles as a customer and a waiter/waitress in a restaurant. The teacher asked the students to form pairs, called student A and student B. According to the teacher, student A would play role as the customer, and student B would be the waiter/waitress. The teacher gave the handouts to all pairs in class. Student A looked at handout A, and student B looked at handout B. They had to make conversations, ask each other to get information to fill in the blanks in their handouts. The students had seven minutes to do the task. After seven minutes, the teacher asked the whole class to stop. Some pairs finished, but most other pairs
did not complete yet. The teacher called some pairs who finished to read aloud their conversations in front of the class. (Observation excerpt C5.23.04.2012.29)

The above activity was designed to help to develop students’ English communication. However, the time was very limited. The students were eager to take part in this activity, but seven minutes was not enough for them to complete the task.

8.3.3. **Grammar driven teaching model.** One notable observation was that the grammar and text driven teaching model was quite popular. In four out of eight classes observed, the teachers focused a great deal of time on teaching grammar. During the 45 minute classes, the teachers spent most of the time reviewing grammar points which the students had already studied when they were at high schools. Nearly two-thirds of the time was spent on reviewing the formation and the use of some grammar structures, and doing written practice exercises. At the time of the observations, the classes were reviewing the use of “so” and “such”, conditional sentences, present perfect continuous tense. Although these grammar points had been taught in the high school program, it was observed that most students still paid attention and wrote down in their notebooks the formation and the use of these grammar points. Below is a description of a grammar review in Class 3:

The teacher asked students who could remember the use of ‘so’ and ‘such’. The students raised hands. The teacher called one student to answer in front of class. Then the teacher asked the whole class ‘Everybody, is it correct?’ The whole class responded ‘Yes’. Then the teacher called another student to write down on the board two sentences as examples, using ‘so’ and ‘such’. Then, the teacher explained again to the students the use of ‘so’ and ‘such’. The students listened and copied down the grammar structures and examples on the board into their notebooks. After explaining to the class the use of ‘so’ and ‘such’, the teacher
asked the students to work in pairs to do the exercise in the textbook (page 89) together. (Observation excerpt C3.19.04.2012.37)

8.3.4. **Time management.** Through the class observations, attention was paid to the teachers’ management of class time. Interestingly, all the teachers in the classes observed did not set the time for the students in each activity they conducted. They asked the students to do tasks, or activities individually, or in pairs, in groups, but they did not inform the students the time allocated for these tasks. Therefore, most tasks or activities lasted longer than planned, and the teachers had to teach quickly at the end of the lesson to finish the lesson in time. This resulted in many activities and lessons being rushed, which made it much harder for students to take in new information and may have lowered the effectiveness of the lesson. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, too much time was spent teaching grammar and little time allocated for communicative activities, which also indicated that the time management of the teachers could be improved. Below is an activity taken place in Class 7:

The teacher showed exercise 2 about phrasal verbs on the screen. The exercise required the students to complete the sentences, using provided prepositions to make appropriate phrasal verbs for the sentences. The teacher asked the students to do the exercise in silence. After that, he asked if the class finished or not. Some students said ‘Yes’, but some said ‘No’. He waited some more minutes until the majority of the students finished. Then he asked the whole class to stop to check for the correct answers. He looked at the student list and called the students to read aloud their sentence individually. The teacher listened and gave feedback.

(Observation excerpt C7.28.04.2012.25)

It was also observed that some classes did not begin on time. Two teachers were about three to five minutes late for the class. Most teachers arrived on time for the class,
but some of them did not start the lessons immediately. Instead, they had a quick chat with students before introducing the lessons. In some classes, some students were not punctual. They arrived when the classes had already started.

8.3.5. **Student instruction.** One more notable observation during classes was that some teachers did not give clear instructions for their activities. In two out of eight classes, it was observed that the teachers’ instructions were not easy for students to understand. The consequence of this was that the students misunderstood and could not complete the tasks or did the tasks in a different way than was expected. Evidence of this was provided in the following Class 8 activity:

The teacher gave the students small handouts of the listening task. There were handouts for student A and handouts for student B. In the handouts of student A, there was a question ‘what would you do’, and in the handouts of student B, there was a statement ‘if you were Lucy’, or ‘if you were Andy’, or ‘if you were Maureen’. The teacher asked the students to listen to the tape and write down suitable information. Then the teacher played the tape twice for the students to listen. After that, he gave the students two minutes to write down their answers. Then, he called two students to write the answers on the board. However, the two students stood near the board for so long but could not write down their answers. The teacher called two other students but one student could not write anything, and one student wrote again the statement ‘if you were Lucy’ which was already mentioned in the handout. The teacher was very angry and criticized the class.

Then, the teacher spent time explaining again the use of Conditional Sentences.

(Observation excerpt C8.29.04.2012.23)

In the above situation, the students’ inability to complete the task can be attributed to the lack of clarity in the teachers’ instructions. While the instructions could have been
clearer, the teacher also did not provide the students with an example of what the task entailed.

8.3.6. Class size. Throughout all the observations, it was clear that the classes were crowded. The number of the students present in each class was around 45, but the real number according to the student list was higher, generally above 50 students. It was observed that some students at the back of the classes could not see the information on the board and the screen clearly. They had to ask their friends in front or ask the teachers to say aloud the words on the board or the screen so that they could copy down the information in their notebooks. As mentioned by the teachers in their interviews, crowded class was one of the significant problems affecting the quality of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. In a classroom in general, and in a language classroom in particular, a small class size was believed to enhance the educational quality. In a small class, it would be easier for the teacher to handle the activities, as the next section shows, large classes can be difficult to control.

8.3.7. Teachers’ limited ability in classroom management. The results of the observations revealed that the ability of some teachers in classroom management was limited. In two out of eight classes observed, the teachers had difficulty controlling the class. They were quite slow in forming students in pairs or in groups when they wanted to conduct communicative activities. It was noticed that these teachers tried to include some entertainment and communication activities to make the class happy and relaxed through games, songs, pair work, group work, but due to the large class sizes, and also the teachers’ limited ability in classroom control and organization, these activities took quite some time to organize, and the class environment was in chaos. The following description of an activity in Class 4 illustrates the issue:
The teacher said to the whole class: ‘Now we practise the use of Conditional Sentences’. He asked the students to form groups of four or five. The students started to form groups. After about three minutes, the teacher asked if the students were ready, some students responded ‘Not yet, teacher’. The teacher waited. At the same time, some students were still running around to find the groups they wanted to join. Some minutes later, all groups were formed, the teacher asked each group to choose famous people and make sentences about him/her/them, using the structure ‘If I was him/her/them, I would…’. The students worked with each other in groups. The teacher sat at the desk to observe the activity. Sometimes, he walked around the groups. After that, the teacher called one person in each group to stand up and read aloud their sentences. In some groups, students stood up and made sentences quickly, but in some other groups, students hesitated and avoided standing up to report in front of classes. (Observation excerpt C4.21.04.2012.42)

In the above activity, the teacher lost much class time because he did not use classroom control and organization skills to organize the activity quickly and effectively. Waiting for the students to form groups on their own resulted in students’ wasting time.

8.3.8. Disparate student proficiency. The students’ English ability in the classes was also observed, and it was seen that there was a difference in the English ability between the classes, and even between the students in the same class. Of the classes observed, the students from the classes related to business were more energetic and interested in the lessons, completed the tasks and responded to teachers’ questions more quickly than the students from the classes related to technology. However, it was also observed that, even in the same class, the English levels of the students were not equal. Some students could respond well and immediately to the teacher, while some other students had difficulty in finding the answers for the teacher’s questions. In addition, the
students’ attitudes were also different. Some students were quite active and willing to raise ideas, but some other students preferred to keep silent. Below is an activity in Class 1:

The teacher divided the board into two columns: ‘present perfect’ and ‘present perfect continuous’. Then, she asked the whole class: ‘Who can go to the board and write down the formation and example sentences of these tenses?’. Some students raised hands. Other students kept silence. The teacher called two of the students who raised hands. The two students wrote down the formation and example sentences on the board. When they finished, the teacher checked and asked the whole class to copy down into their notebooks. Then, she asked the students to read Andy’s story on page 90 and answer the three questions about Andy in exercise 1 (page 90). The students read the story and wrote down the answers. After 5 minutes, the teacher asked the students to compare their answers in pairs. In many pairs, both students finished their answers and worked cooperatively. In some pairs, one student who finished had to wait for the student who did not finish. In several pairs, both students did not finish and still worked individually in silence.

(Observation excerpt C1.15.04.2012.08)

8.3.9. Lesson preparation. In most classes, through observing the teachers’ performance and the activities during the class time, it seemed that the teachers did not spend much time preparing the lessons before classes. Most activities were quite simple and repetitive. The most common classroom activities were that the teachers looked at the course book and explained the lesson content, the students did the exercises in the course book, then the teachers called upon the students to stand up to read aloud the answers or write down the answers on the board. There were not many teaching materials beside the course book and its CD used in the classes observed. This issue is illustrated through an activity in Class 7:
After the class completed exercise 2, the teacher asked the students to do exercise 3 in pairs. The exercise required each student to do or act out an action to a partner, and their partner had to guess what the phrasal verb was, following the list of the phrasal verbs in the textbook, such as: pick (something) up, look for (something), turn (something) off, lie down, turn around, try (something) on, throw (something) away. After five minutes, the teacher called some pairs of students to perform in front of class. After that, the teacher asked the students to look at the textbook and do exercise 4 individually in silence. This exercise required the students to complete sentences, using the phrasal verbs in exercise 3. The students followed the teacher’s instructions, doing the exercise silently. The teacher waited until most students finished. Then, he asked individual students to read aloud the full sentences. After each student read aloud their sentence, the teacher played the tape with the correct answer for the whole class to listen and check (Observation excerpt C7.28.04.2012.26).

In the above activity, it was observed that the students were happy when doing exercise 2, which required them to work in pairs to act out the phrasal verbs, and guess the phrasal verbs through their partner’s demonstration. The class was full of fun and laughs. However, it was seen that both exercise 2 and 3 were in the textbook. The teacher followed the textbook closely. He used textbook and CD as the only resources during his lesson.

8.3.10. Use of facilities, teaching aids and technology. Classroom observations also indicated that teaching aids and technology were not used often by the teachers. The teachers prepared handouts for their students in only three of the eight classes observed. However, these handouts were not substantial: only for small games or tasks. This is illustrated through an activity in Class 2:
After asking the students to review the tenses and write them on the board, the teacher gave handouts to five students in the class and asked them to come to the board and do the task in the handouts. At the same time, the teachers also showed the task on the screen so that other students can look at the screen and do the task as well. The task required the students to use the correct verb tenses to fill in the blanks. When the five students completed the task on the board, the teacher asked them to come back their seats. Then, the teacher called other students and asked them if the answers on the board are correct or not. (Observation excerpt C2.18.04.2012.09)

Although all classrooms were equipped with data projectors, not all teachers used them for their lessons. In three out of the eight classes observed, the teachers did not use data projectors. The teaching materials used by the above teachers were mainly the textbook and CD players. In the other three classes, the teachers used data projectors but they did not use them to their full potential. In these three classes, the data projectors were mainly used for showing the enlarged images of the pages from the textbook so that all students could focus, or for presenting the vocabulary lists prepared in advance at home for students to copy down in their books and then read them aloud together. In only two classes observed did the teachers use data projectors effectively. They prepared the lessons at home using Microsoft PowerPoint slides, and included pictures and video clips to attract the students and increase the effectiveness of the lessons.

The observations also showed that although all classrooms were equipped with data projectors and computers, most teachers did not use computers. Instead, they used their personal laptops. It was also revealed that the data projectors in Ung Van Khiem campus were better than the ones in Dien Bien Phu campus. In one out of two classes observed in
Dien Bien Phu campus, the images from the screen were dim. In Ung Van Khiem campus, all the data projectors in the classes observed worked well, and produced the clear images.

In addition to teacher’s use of computers and laptops, students’ use of technology was also observed. While most students used notebooks to copy down the information provided by teachers, a number of students used their personal laptops to obtain the information and knowledge. This result indicated that technology use was also familiar to some students.

The use of microphones in classes was also observed. The results showed that most teachers used microphones in their teaching, but in different ways. In four out of eight classes observed, the teachers used microphones mainly for giving instructions or giving content knowledge. In the other four classes, microphones were used by both teacher and students to make the teacher’s instructions and students’ responses more audible. In two of these classes, microphones were even used between pairs of students when they were called by the teacher to give answers in front of class.

The observations revealed the different use of whiteboard and also the limited use of whiteboard for writing. The whiteboard was mainly used by three teachers who did not use data projectors. In these three classes, teachers used the whiteboard to present the information, and also asked the students to write their answers on the whiteboard. In the other classes, as teachers used data projectors to present information, the use of whiteboards was limited. It was only used for writing main points and new ideas from students.

All classrooms observed were equipped with benches instead of separate chairs. There were three to four students sitting in a bench. Most students remained in their seats during the class time. There were not movements to change seats among students when they were asked to work in groups or pairs. In some classes, when the teachers asked the students to
work in pairs, two students who sat next to each other would form a pair. When the students were asked to work in groups, three to four students in the same bench would form a group. In some other classes, a group was formed by students of the two benches which were close to each other. Two or three students of the bench in front would turn back and work with two or three students of the bench behind them.

The observations showed that there was a significant variety in the use of classroom facilities and equipment. It was also indicated that there was a potential for development which will be discussed in the next chapter.

8.3.11. Underestimation of students’ role as a learner. Through the observations, it was realized that when the teachers gave the students opportunities to talk, discuss and express their opinions, the students were willing to present ideas and were confident to talk in front of their classes. However, this practice only happened in some classes, and with some groups of students, but not with all classes and all students. In most classes, the students’ role as a learner to engage and self-direct their own learning was not exploited effectively. It was observed that although in English classes, the Vietnamese language was still used a lot by teachers and students. Most students were not shy when talking to teachers in Vietnamese, but were not confident to speak in English to each other. In some classes, when the teacher made jokes in Vietnamese, the students responded happily. This demonstrated that the students themselves were not passive, but their confidence in using English was limited. Therefore, it can be said that some of the factors inhibiting students from active class participation were: lecturing style, lack of confidence speaking English, and limited opportunities to express themselves.
8.4. Summary

The results collected from the class observations have contributed to completing the picture of English teaching and learning in HUTECH. Positive as well as negative aspects which are believed as affecting factors have been explored. The EFL classroom observations highlight the following:

1. Classes are large and thus make it difficult for teachers to undertake speaking and listening activities to engage students with communicative practices in English
2. Classes are dominated by textbook activities
3. EFL content is dominated by grammar type exercises
4. Teachers’ EFL delivery style is dominated by lecturing style presentations
5. Teachers’ knowledge of class management strategies appeared to be limited
6. Teachers’ use of teaching aids and the classroom technology appeared to be limited
7. The role of students as EFL learners has not been exploited well.

Based on these findings, and the findings from Chapter 5, 6, and 7, a more holistic picture of EFL teaching and learning can be considered, and will be discussed in the following chapter. Discussion will concentrate on the results, drawing conclusions, and integrating the literature and previous research studies reviewed in Chapter 3 to draw this research study to a final conclusion and suggest recommendations for future action and research.
Chapter 9. Discussions, Recommendations and Conclusions

9.0. Introduction

This chapter provides in-depth discussions of the key findings of this study as related to the main research question: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH?”. These key findings are drawn from the results from the questionnaires with students, the interviews with teachers and managers, and the EFL class observations in HUTECH. The key findings discussed can be broken into the following themes: facilities and equipment, curriculum, leadership, teaching, and students’ attitudes and motivation. Because the study results combine three different methodologies: quantitative questionnaires, interviews, and observations across three different participant groups, direct comparisons could be misleading. However, the mixed methods design allows a comprehensive range of attitudes and opinions from and within each participant group that illuminate a range of different perspectives. Importantly, it allows the researcher to observe and investigate the different perspectives of the students, teachers, and managers, paying attention to agreements, but more significantly to disagreements and discrepancies between participant groups. The results show a broad agreement between managers, teachers and students regarding class size, syllabus, facilities and equipment as well as students’ motivation and attitudes. All participants agreed that the class sizes were too large. They also believed that students’ motivation and attitudes toward English learning could be improved. All three participants groups showed favorable attitudes toward syllabus, facilities and equipment in HUTECH. However, there are some differences in the viewpoints regarding curriculum, leadership support and teaching methods in HUTECH. Even though there were general agreements on many factors, different participant groups often expressed different solutions to issues, and there were
often discrepancies around who would take responsibility for these issues. The findings are also discussed in relation to the Vietnamese background and context in Chapter 2, which affects EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam, and the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In order to improve the efficacy of English teaching and learning at HUTECH, recommendations for related key stakeholders are included in each discussion. The recommendations are made based on the findings and the reference to the literature review. In addition, some limitations of the study are also discussed, and some recommendations for future research and researchers are presented. To conclude this chapter, a summary of the main recommendations will be presented in relation to the research question, and sub-research questions.

9.1. Facilities and Equipment in HUTECH

The students, teachers and managers in this study shared the view that compared with many other universities in Ho Chi Minh City, the facilities and equipment in HUTECH are more than adequate: enough classrooms, sufficient technical teaching aids such as data projectors, CD players, computers, e-library. HUTECH originally started having to rent campuses and buildings in poor condition for teaching and learning, but has developed significantly, and currently has three campuses with sufficient facilities. When asked about the facilities and equipment at HUTECH, students, teachers and managers all expressed their satisfaction (see Chapter 5, section 5.5, Chapter 6, section 6.3.3, Chapter 7, section 7.2.3). The results from the class observations also indicated that the equipment and facilities at HUTECH were adequate (see Chapter 8, section 8.2.2). This finding relates to the MOET (2010) report, which states that the lack of facilities is a common situation among Vietnamese universities. In this respect, HUTECH stands out, as it is relatively well-equipped, due to a range of factors. Although HUTECH is a university
under the control and management of MOET in general, HUTECH still has more freedom in financial decision making compared with public universities. As a private university in the national education system, HUTECH still has to follow the ceiling of the tuition fee level set out by MOET (Harman et al., 2010). However, HUTECH leaders have freedom and flexibility in how they control their finances, and can make their own decisions regarding finance management and investment. So, the facilities at HUTECH have been renovated and well-equipped using HUTECH’s own budget under the instructions of HUTECH’s leaders, without waiting for approval from MOET. This strategic decision has made HUTECH one of the most well-equipped private universities in Vietnam. In this respect, three factors can be identified that have positively affected EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH: financial autonomy, leadership autonomy, and leadership vision. As one teacher commented:

I am happy with the equipment and classrooms here: adequate and modern. They are better than many public universities and colleges in Ho Chi Minh City area.

(Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.45)

This raises an issue about why the facilities in a private university like HUTECH are believed to be better than the facilities in many public universities. Is it due to the fact that as a private university, HUTECH is given more freedom and flexibility compared with public universities? If so, in order to make the public universities more well-equipped, should there be more freedom and flexibility in finance and investment given to them by MOET? At present, MOET has the primary role in the control and management in almost all aspects of Vietnamese education (Harman et al., 2010). This is believed to facilitate good management in the Vietnamese education system. However, if the schools and universities have to follow strictly all regulations and instructions from MOET, they will lose their flexibility and independence which are important factors for future development.
9.2. Curriculum for English Teaching and Learning in HUTECH

9.2.1. Syllabus. The results from the data indicated that all three groups of participants had positive attitudes toward the syllabus for non-major English at HUTECH. It was revealed that current textbooks used in HUTECH are considered to be well-designed, contain up-to-date knowledge and cover various language skills. Teacher 2 said:

It is a syllabus designed by a group of experts, by famous educators in the world, not by one person. We cannot criticize it, but the thing is how teachers use and exploit it (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.64).

According to the managers and teachers, each syllabus had its own advantages and disadvantages, but the important thing is how the teachers can use it effectively to serve their teaching objectives. Based on the main content in a syllabus, teachers should design appropriate tasks or activities to fit their particular classes and students. However, the results from class observations revealed that teachers in HUTECH still strictly followed the textbooks without being creative with their teaching and learning activities. The following description illustrates this point:

The teacher connected the laptop and the OHP, then opened the book. She introduced the lesson: ‘Today we study new lesson: “Trying your best”. Now, open your book, page 90, please.’ The students did as directed. At the same time, the teacher wrote the title of the new lesson on the board. She divided the board into two columns. One column was ‘the present perfect tense’ and the other column was ‘the present perfect continuous tense’. Then she helped the students review the two tenses by calling two students to go to the board and write down the formation of the tenses and the examples. (Observation excerpt C2.18.04.2012.08)

Thus, it is advisable that teachers should develop their skills in using textbooks in a more engaging way in order to maximize the benefits of the text materials. In a study conducted
by Tuan (2012) about the use of textbook in a Vietnamese university, it is pointed out that each teacher has his or her own way to exploit the textbook. Some can follow the order of the chapters and the sections in each lesson. Some can skip some parts which are not necessary or not appropriate, or too easy for their own classes. Some can add more materials or more activities such as: films, games, songs, articles, video clips, or topics for speaking.

As stated by Kong and Shi (2009) in their study about textbook use in Chinese universities, rather than following a textbook mechanically, a skilled textbook user is one who can conduct lessons efficiently by combining various curriculum resources. Textbooks should be considered as an essential part of teaching materials, but not the sole resource. It is therefore recommended that textbook use and the ability to make creative and innovative use of textbooks should be a focus for future teacher professional development.

**9.2.2. Time allocated for English.** The results from the data provided opposing viewpoints between the teachers and the managers about the time allocated for EFL classes. At HUTECH, all students study English as a compulsory subject in the first and second year. The English subject is taught once a week for 135 minutes (equivalent to three periods). Bachelor students have to achieve twelve credit points for the English subject, and the subject is delivered over four semesters (three credit points for each semester). The teachers’ interview data indicated that with the time allocated, it was impossible for them to help students improve all English knowledge and skills: vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.4.1). Due to the insufficient time, the teachers could not focus on teaching English communication for students, although they really may have wanted to do so. The result from the teachers’ interviews is consistent with the previous studies which indicated that insufficient time is one of the factors affecting the quality of English teaching and learning (Chen & Goh,
2011; Le, 1999; Ming & Jaya, 2011). However, the data collected from interviews with the managers are quite different, as they believed that the time allocated for English subject at HUTECH is enough for students’ English improvement, including English speaking and communication skills. According to the managers, the time for English is sufficient; the issue is how the teachers use this time effectively to increase students’ English ability. The teachers are required to select and apply appropriate teaching methods and strategies to reach the targets assigned, that is, improving students’ English proficiency within the time allocated. These results show that the teachers perceived that the university leaders should take responsibility for this issue by altering the schedule, but the managers claimed that the teachers were responsible for using the available time effectively. The class observations, as presented in Chapter 8 did indicate that in practice, some teachers could use class time more effectively. In an activity in Class 7 (Chapter 8, section 8.3.4), it was revealed that the teacher did not set the time for students to complete the activity. She had to wait for the whole class to complete the activity before she could give her feedback. Therefore, it can be said that the above activity was not a good use of time, as it did not motivate the students to work intensively or speed up to complete their tasks within the appropriate time. The students who finished their tasks quickly might have felt bored when the tasks lasted so long, and the students who did not finish might have also felt bored as they could not learn much from the tasks.

In fact, the issue of time allocated for English subject is a shared responsibility, and it is recommended that a meeting between the managers and the teachers should be held to discuss directly the time needed for the English subject in HUTECH, and the responsibility of teachers, managers and HUTECH leaders. Based on such a discussion, the managers would have suggestions for HUTECH leaders to adjust the time allocation for the English subject which will help to improve students’ English proficiency, including communicative
abilities. This discussion would also raise the need to implement teacher professional development to improve their class time management skills.

In relation to the classroom time allocation issues is the time allocation to teaching and learning across the four years of the Bachelor degree at HUTECH. The results from the interviews with the teachers also reflected the findings of the previous studies (Linh, 2007), that ceasing English programs at the end of the second or third year to focus on other major subjects results in students gradually forgetting the English knowledge they have learnt as they do not have opportunities to practise it regularly. As a result, after graduation, students have reduced ability to use English effectively for communication. This is an issue challenging not only HUTECH but also most universities and colleges in Vietnam. Therefore, there should be a consideration from university leaders to adjust not only the time amount scheduled for English, but the continuation of English classes in the second and third year of study, so as to foster students’ English learning and retention.

9.2.3. Teaching methodology. In relation to the application of teaching methodology, the results of the study reveal a disparity between what teachers believe and what teachers actually do. In the interviews, most of the teachers expressed confidence about their teaching methods, and advocated the use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

This result echoes the findings of a study conducted by Mai and Iwashita (2012). Their study focused on four core elements of CLT: the importance of grammar, the quality and quantity of error correction, the use of group work and pair work, and the role of teachers in the classroom. The results showed that teachers had favorable attitudes towards CLT. Mai and Iwashita (2012) also claimed that “CLT does not exclude grammar instruction or error correction” (p. 39) and that language teachers “should be encouraged to
incorporate grammar and corrective feedback into CLT, as long as this is done with attention to meaning and context” (p. 39).

Teachers also commented on the necessity of a combination of various teaching methods to achieve the best teaching outcomes. As one teacher expressed:

I do not think that we should always apply Communicative Approach while it was not suitable for our class. So, if the teachers should use CLT or Grammar-Translation Method depends on the specific class. It must be appropriate with context, with real classes. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.65)

This result reflects the study of Alkhawaldeh (2011) which pointed out that the teachers have the need to combine different teaching methods to fit different students and different classes. According to Alkhawaldeh, this is best done when teachers are not confined to follow any particular teaching methods (2011). In relation to this issue, teachers in HUTECH are encouraged to use teaching methods which can help to improve students’ communicative abilities; they are not forced to follow any teaching methods assigned by the managers and HUTECH leaders. They have freedom to choose the teaching methods which they believe to be the most appropriate for their classes. It is the view of the managers and leaders at HUTECH that giving the teachers independence and flexibility will result in more effective English teaching. The teachers in the interviews also admitted that they had freedom in choosing their teaching methods and that they supported the mix of multiple methods in their teaching, including the use of CLT. However, what was documented in the EFL class observations indicated that the classroom reality did not always match this philosophy. The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was still the most popular method used and the CLT was not a focus (see Chapter 8, section 8.3.2, section 8.3.3).
This result concurs with the managers’ beliefs in the interviews and the previous studies (Gao, 2012; Le, 1999; Mai & Iwashita, 2012; Mondal, 2011; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). These previous studies indicate this finding is not an isolated issue for English teaching in HUTECH, but also an issue for English teaching in Vietnam and in other EFL countries.

There have been many research studies pointing out the reasons for the common use of traditional methods and the hindrances of communicative approaches in Vietnam in particular, and in EFL language contexts in general. The findings of this study are consistent with the previous studies. There is a complex interaction of factors as is demonstrated by previous studies in this area. One of the most common reasons is the traditional testing system which excludes the speaking component (Chen & Goh, 2011; Gao, 2012; Hiep, 2007; Kam, 2002; Mai & Iwashita, 2012). According to Mai and Iwashita (2012), Le (1999) and Hiep (2007), English language examinations in Vietnam mainly focus on testing linguistic competence rather than on communicative competence. Speaking and listening components are seldom included in the exams and tests. This practice therefore affects negatively on the communicative language teaching and learning, as teachers and learners will not have the need to improve students’ English speaking ability if it is not included in the tests or exams. It was also pointed out that big class sizes (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006; Chen & Goh, 2011; Hiep, 2007; Kam, 2002; Le, 1999; Ming & Jaya, 2011) and unequal students’ English abilities in each class (Hiep, 2007; Ngan, 2004) make it difficult and time-consuming for teachers to conduct communicative activities for students. The lack of an authentic English language environment is also an obstacle to the effective implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT). Students do not have the need and motivation to improve and practise English if the environment around them does not require them to use English.
In addition, Ming and Jaya (2011) found that limited teaching hours, inadequate teacher training, and teachers’ lack of knowledge and skills related to English are also the hindrances to the effective implementation of CLT. The limited use of CLT and the preference of traditional teaching methods like the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) may be also due to the busy schedule of EFL teachers. In Vietnam at present, EFL is a popular subject being taught in all educational levels, from primary schools to colleges and universities, in both public and private institutions. In addition to having full-time teaching positions in one institution, most teachers take on part-time or casual teaching jobs in other institutions so as to have more income. In the situations where the teachers are too busy and too tired to prepare the lessons for classes, the GTM is preferred because it is not too demanding on teachers. As described by Cook (2001), Richards and Rodgers (2001), and Rivers (1968), this method does not require much effort, preparation and imagination from teachers. With the GTM, teachers usually follow the textbooks page-by-page, exercise-by-exercise. When teachers are tired, they can set a written exercise for the whole class to do. It is also easy for the teachers to make tests and mark papers. The busy workplaces and work lives of teachers, and the ease of using GTM provide a possible explanation for the finding that GTM was used extensively in teaching English at HUTECH. This domination of GTM could also be explained by a number of other reasons. It might be because the teachers believed that grammar was very important for students and that their students needed to be good at grammar before they could study other English skills. It could also be due to the training and experience of the teachers, as at pedagogy universities, grammar was a strong focus, leading to the belief that when they became the teachers, they needed to teach grammar more than other skills, and their confidence was linked to their own educational experiences.
Returning to the discrepancy between what teachers say about their teaching methods and what they actually do in classes, the findings show that teachers are aware of CLT, and the benefits for students and language learning, yet in reality, a range of factors and difficulties have prevented them from a more extensive implementation of communicative techniques. As one teacher stated:

When the faculty set the syllabus and curriculum, teachers have to run hard to finish the lessons in the course book to meet the deadlines of the courses. I also advise students to study more at home as the time at university is not enough. But not many students follow my advice. As a result, students’ ability in English, especially spoken English, is limited. Teachers know this, but cannot help, as we have to finish the course book within 45 periods, covering many aspects: listening, grammar, reading, vocabulary, speaking and writing. So, the time for communicative English is insufficient. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.41)

Because the teachers were afraid they would not be able to cover all of the other tasks and activities, they did not give the students much time for speaking and communication practice. Therefore, the claims made by Mai and Iwashita (2012) “[while] teachers held favorable attitudes towards CLT, their classroom practices often deviated considerably from the principles of CLT” (p. 29) seem to be true of this study also.

Thus, as indicated by Chen and Goh (2011), it is important for all stakeholders to recognize the challenges which teachers encounter in their teaching. It not only helps teachers to employ appropriate teaching techniques to improve their professional practice but also encourages teacher educators to design effective teacher preparation and training programs so as to reduce the teachers’ difficulties and increase the EFL teaching quality.

9.2.4. Testing and assessment. The results of the study showed that the perspectives of the students, teachers and managers were quite similar regarding the
appropriateness of the testing content and the teaching content. It was indicated that the content of the tests aligned with the content of the lessons being taught in the classes. However, it was also revealed that there was no speaking component in the English tests, and this hindered the teaching and learning of communicative English. This result concurs with the previous studies which pointed out that using only traditional, written-form testing for assessment leads to the teachers’ and students’ preferences for exam-oriented teaching in classes, and this impedes the implementation of communicative English teaching (Hiep, 2007; Mai & Iwashita, 2012; Ming & Jaya, 2011; Pan & Block, 2011). In their study of factors affecting the teaching of communicative English in China, Pan and Block (2011) outline a number of observations that are quite relevant to the Vietnamese situation, as Vietnam was dominated by China for almost a thousand years, and has been profoundly affected by Chinese culture and education (Ly Tran et al., 2014; Wright, 2002). As revealed by Pan and Block (2011), in China, the examination culture has been deep-rooted in the people’s minds since the time of feudalism, and examinations have been considered an important tool to evaluate people’s study success. The written tests which are the products affected by the imperial exams aiming to assess learners’ achievements have been maintained in the Chinese education system until now.

Regarding the testing and assessment of students’ English competences, both teachers and students shared the view that speaking tests would help to improve students’ English speaking. Most teachers in the interviews expected that there should be spoken exams. As one teacher pointed out:

If we want to teach students speaking, there should be more time for English subject, and the speaking tests must be included in the exams. When the speaking tests are included in the exams, the students will have to try hard to improve
speaking and communication skill to pass the exams, and hence, their speaking and communication skill will be better (Interview excerpt T12.28.06.2012.26).

Although speaking tests might be time-consuming and incur a greater financial cost to the university, students and teachers believed them to be useful and necessary for a complete English training program. This agrees with the previous studies which emphasized the importance of speaking tests in facilitating the activity of teaching and learning communicative English (Chen & Goh, 2011; Mai & Iwashita, 2012; Ming & Jaya, 2011).

9.2.5. Class size. A clear finding from the interviews with teachers, managers and from the EFL class observations was the general consensus that the class sizes in HUTECH were too big, and that this large class size affected the quality of English teaching and learning (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.2, Chapter 7, section 7.3.4, Chapter 8, section 8.3.6). This result echoes the previous studies which indicated that the big class size was one of the de-motivating factors of English teaching and learning activities (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006; Chen & Goh, 2011; Hiep, 2007; V. C. Le, 1999; Ming & Jaya, 2011). As pointed out by Kam (2002), crowded classes discourage any new teaching methods to be implemented in English language classrooms, which hinder the use of more engaging teaching methods. Ming and Jaya (2011) investigated factors affecting CLT implementation in Taiwan, and found that it is challenging for teachers to implement CLT in the classroom with more than 50 students because they have to give every student opportunities to practise English. In addition, “it is more difficult to monitor classroom activities in large classes than small classes” (p. 9). In a study about English teaching in higher education in China, Chen and Goh (2011) also found that one of the challenges emerging from the teaching context is the large number of students in class with 40 to 60 students. “Large class sizes have a direct impact on the amount of time individual students have to get involved in the activities and lower the effectiveness of these activities. They
also hinder communication between students and teachers” (p. 339). Therefore, it can be said that large class size is an issue challenging effective English teaching not only in Vietnam but also in other EFL countries.

However, the student survey revealed interesting results about students’ perspectives regarding the class size in HUTECH. In the questionnaire, 68.4% of the students said that the number of students in the class was reasonable, 30.9% said the class were too many (see Chapter 5, section 5.6.1). While this result seems inconsistent with the interviews with teachers, managers, and EFL class observations, it is important to consider the scholastic experience of Vietnamese students when interpreting this finding. Most students in Vietnam have experienced large class sizes, from their primary schools until tertiary level, and this situation has been so common in Vietnam that most students perceive the class size with 40 to 60 students to be normal and reasonable. Interestingly, one teacher noted a connection between crowded classes and student happiness:

It is too crowded for an English class, and it is difficult for effective teaching.

However, students may like crowded classes because such classes are happy.

Students often have psychological habit that the crowded classes are happier, and they prefer crowded classes (Interview excerpt T1.07.04.2012.19).

While the questionnaires showed that a majority of students thought class sizes were reasonable (see Chapter 5, section 5.6), their responses to the open-ended question asking them to list five factors to improve English teaching and learning, class size reduction was one of the top five factors identified by students. This indicates that although students perceive current class size in HUTECH to be acceptable because they are familiar with this situation, they still notice the benefits of small class sizes and recommend the class size in HUTECH to be reduced.
This data suggests that teachers, students and managers all believe that a reduction in the number of the students in a class would enhance the quality of English teaching and learning. According to the teachers, an ideal language class should be around 20 students (see Chapter 6, section 6.6.8). However, they also recognize that financially, it is impossible to have this number. Therefore, as for the teachers, if the class size were to be reduced to have about 30 students, it would also be reasonable and acceptable (see Chapter 6, section 6.6.8). While an improvement, this staff/student ratio (1:30) is still too high, as indicated by Harman et al. (2010). Large class size is really a challenging issue for not only HUTECH but also Vietnamese education in general. This problem has existed for a long time because there are many students who wish to study, but not enough classes and teachers. There is also the economic issue as bigger classes return greater profits.

9.2.6. Disparity of students’ English abilities. The study results indicate that the students, teachers and managers shared the same viewpoint about the students’ English abilities, specifically, that the students’ English abilities in the same class were unequal. There were no placement tests to categorize the students and put them in the class appropriate for their English proficiency (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.6, section 6.6.4). This problem was also mentioned in previous studies as a barrier to the quality of English teaching and learning (Hiep, 2007; Linh, 2007). According to Linh (2007), the fact that students with different English abilities are put into the same class, with the same textbook and the same allocated time hinders the effectiveness of English teaching in Vietnamese higher education. In a study conducted by Hiep (2007) about the implementation of CLT in university in Vietnam, it was pointed out that students’ unequal abilities to take part in independent active learning practices is one of the constraints of CLT practices.

The reason for the students’ unequal English abilities was explained by one teacher as follows:
“Students have different English backgrounds. A part of them studied English as a compulsory subject at secondary schools and high schools at Ho Chi Minh, and big cities, which made them better at English than other students from rural areas or countryside, where there was not enough time, or even no time for English. As a result, there is a large variation in students’ English abilities in higher education classes”. (Interview excerpt T7.03.06.2012.61)

When discussing the solutions to this problem, the teachers and the managers had very different views. While the teachers called for HUTECH’s leaders and managers to take responsibility and organize the entrance English tests to put the students in appropriate classes, the managers indicated that it was the teachers’ responsibility to control and manage the classes with unequal English levels.

It is the recommendation of the researcher that while teaching methods and classroom management skills can help to some degree in working with large classes of disparate English ability, teaching skills would yield greater improvement if classes were of a similar English proficiency. According to Chen and Goh (2011), it is difficult for teachers to manage a class of students at different English proficiency levels. It is hard for teachers to encourage students of low English ability to get involved in class activities and make some solid progress, while at the same time, help students of good English proficiency make more progress.

So, it is recommended that placement tests should be introduced to categorize students into English proficiency levels, and put them into appropriate classes. Placement tests should be done at the beginning of the first year, after students have passed the national entrance exam to university. After each English course, students should also be re-tested, with students who achieve the required scores progressing to higher levels, while students who do not perform well may have to repeat the course or take some EFL
extension study weeks. Currently, this practice is being implemented widely in many educational institutional in developed countries, where a lot of international students come to study. Students of insufficient English ability have to undertake English courses until they have sufficient English proficiency to be eligible to start their main courses. In Vietnam, only some universities, such as FPT University, RMIT Vietnam, can implement this model well, as it requires many efforts and financial costs.

9.2.7. Proficiency and attitudes across disciplines. The interviews with teachers, together with the EFL class observations, revealed another interesting finding: the difference in English proficiency not only exists between the students in the same class, but also exists between the students from different majors in different classes. It was pointed out that the students from the faculties or majors related to business or commerce had more favorable attitudes toward English and their English ability was also better than the students from faculties or majors related to engineering or science (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.6). The explanations for this difference given by the teachers in the interviews (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.6) also reflected in the viewpoint of Byun et al. (2010) who investigated Korean students and found that students from business related majors considered English proficiency to be helpful for their future career whereas students from engineering or science classes did not admit the English necessity for their field of study and future career. Therefore, students from business related majors tended to focus more on improving English than students from engineering or science classes. As a result, the English ability of business students was better than the English ability of engineering or science students. This finding raises the question of what might be done to help the students from engineering and science majors to recognize the benefit of English proficiency for their future career. According to Nguyen, Fehring, and Warren (2015), the teachers, as well as university leaders and managers conduct activities which aim to
increase students’ awareness about the importance of English. This can be done formally through meetings or seminars conducted by universities and faculties, or can be done informally through regular talks or advice from teachers. Also, career advice sessions which demonstrate the need for English proficiency for future jobs should be held regularly to encourage students to invest more in their English study.

9.2.8. English as a medium for instruction. This study has pointed out that the use of English as a medium of instruction in major subjects was mentioned by teachers and students as helpful for the improvement of students’ English proficiency. Both participant groups agreed that it would help to improve students’ English abilities (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, Chapter 6, section 6.5.5). This finding is consistent with the students’ viewpoint in the previous study conducted by Byun et al. (2010) in Korean University (KU). The survey results in the study of Byun et al. (2010) showed that students believed the use of English as a medium of instruction would lead to their English improvement. In addition, according to Byun et al. (2010), the use of English as a medium of instruction had some other beneficial results, such as: attracting more international students to come to KU to study, increasing the number of articles published in international academic journals by KU professors.

However, when being asked about the possibility and support for the implementation of teaching major subjects in English at HUTECH, both teachers and students expressed some concerns. Although most students liked the major subjects being taught in English, 28.3% of them did not advocate for this practice. They were afraid that their low English proficiency would inhibit them from achieving the major subject specific knowledge. Two teachers expressed their viewpoint that the lack of qualified teachers sufficiently proficient in English would be a hindrance to the use of English as a medium of instruction at HUTECH (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.5). These results support the study of
Byun et al. (2010) which indicates that the English proficiency of students and instructors is the most challenging issue for the use of English as a medium of instruction. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the researcher that in order to use English as a medium of instruction at HUTECH, some planning and preparation needs to be undertaken before the program could be implemented. First of all, the general English courses should be completed before the main study course so that students will be equipped with a basic English background, which will be helpful for them in the study of major subjects. Due to the lack of teachers who are capable of delivering the major subjects effectively in English, the program should be limited to some major subjects instead of all major subjects.

It is true that the lack of quality teachers who can use English to teach major subjects is also a problem which needs to be considered. As revealed by Mai and Iwashita (2012), in a recent test administered by MOET across 24 of the 64 provinces in Vietnam, only one-fifth of EFL teachers received a B2 grade, according to the testing system of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR). The issue of how to improve of the quality of English teaching and EFL teachers has attracted much concern from the government. Through the Decision 1400/Ttg of the government, the National foreign languages project in the period 2008-2020 has been implemented, with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages in Vietnam, including English teaching and learning. However, it seems that there should be more efforts and cooperation from many related parties so as to facilitate the success of this project, in which the participation and contribution of individual educational institutions like HUTECH plays an essential role.
9.3. HUTECH Leaders’ Support and Management

9.3.1. Finance and education. In regard to financial support at HUTECH, the interviews with the managers and teachers showed contradictory opinions. While the teachers complained that the HUTECH’s leaders did not supply funds for outside class activities to increase students’ English proficiency, the managers stated that the management board and leaders in HUTECH were always willing to sponsor any activities or programs as long as they helped to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in HUTECH (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.4.3; Chapter 7, section 7.2.4). This would seem to imply that the HUTECH leaders might not be certain about the efficacy of the outside class activities which the teachers recommended to be carried out. It is possible that the teachers’ plans were not attractive and persuasive enough to receive approval from HUTECH’s leaders. In this situation, in order to convince the leaders, it is recommended that regular meetings be held for the leaders, managers and teachers to discuss and express their opinions and expectations. In addition, the teachers and managers of the English center should endeavor to prove the efficacy of their programs or activities by organizing outside class activities. This also provides an opportunity for staff to raise money to support themselves. For example, an English speaking club can be held, and money can be raised by the financial contribution from the long-term club members, or by entrance fees from the casual visitors. When these programs are effective, HUTECH’s leaders might be persuaded to sponsor other activities or programs which require funds.

Another important issue regarding finance was raised by some teachers in the interviews. There was, amongst some teachers, a dissatisfaction and concern with the growing commercialization of education at HUTECH. As noted by one teacher:
If I were the leaders of this university, I would try to balance the financial profits and education quality, try to make our education beneficial for students. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.174)

This concern reflects the viewpoint of Pham (2006) who states that in the market economy context, the boom of commercializing education is making the quality of Vietnamese higher education hard to assure. The project which had an aim to increase the percentage of Vietnamese citizens with a higher education to 4.5% by 2020 is facilitating the opening of many private universities. With this rapid increase in the quantity of private universities, many issues arise regarding the assurance and control of quality teaching and learning. Harman et al. (2010) have documented a number of common problems in private universities in Vietnam that lower the quality of teaching and learning:

The report referred to inconsistencies in governance and management structures, disagreements within governing boards, friction between rectors and their governing boards, limited campus space, poor-quality libraries, inadequate provision of teaching and learning supports, insufficient numbers of full-time teaching staff, insufficient high-quality permanent teaching staff, and serious deficiencies in physical infrastructure. (p. 225)

Throughout the interviews with the teachers, three of these problems were identified by teachers at HUTECH, which were: inadequate provision of teaching and learning supports, insufficient numbers of full-time teaching staff, and insufficient high-quality permanent teaching staff (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.4, section 6.4.5; section 6.5.3, section 6.5.7).

There was a general consensus among the teachers in this study that HUTECH leaders should strive to reach a balance between education quality and profitability. If there is too great a focus on financial profits, the education quality will be reduced (see Chapter 6, section 6.6.1). However, profitability is not directly opposed to quality. If
HUTECH focuses on quality of teaching, graduates outcomes will improve, and their reputation will also improve, drawing more high quality students to HUTECH in the long term.

Finance was also an area where the quality of teaching staff at HUTECH could be improved. As suggested by the teachers (see Chapter 6, section 6.6.1), one possible way to do this is for the HUTECH leaders to refine the full-time teaching staff team to keep qualified teachers and not contract unqualified teachers who deliver low quality learning outcomes. By doing this, HUTECH would effectively save a large amount of money, and could use this money to invest in permanent positions for qualified teachers, allowing them to devote more time and commitment, and thus deliver a higher quality of teaching and learning for HUTECH.

The issue about the quality of education raised by the teachers in HUTECH is also an issue of concern for MOET. According to MOET, the quality of education in Vietnam is still low because there has not been unity in benefits and concerns for quality of education between teachers, learners, education investors, employers and society (MOET, 2010). There is still much work to do to reach agreement between these key stakeholders, who hold different viewpoints regarding the benefits of education. This is beyond the scope of this research, but an important topic for further study.

9.3.2. Dealing with feedback at HUTECH. The analysis of the data also reveals a dissimilarity between the teachers’ and the managers’ perceptions regarding how HUTECH responds to feedback from teachers and students. The teachers claimed that HUTECH’s leaders were slow to respond to feedback. However, the managers claimed that HUTECH’s leaders respect all feedback and always try their best to solve the problems raised by teachers and students. This claim from the managers makes commercial sense, as shown by Harman et al. (2010), who identify that in comparison with
public institutions, private universities and colleges would be more concerned with responding to students’ feedback, as their students are also their customers. However, if feedback and problems were indeed always solved, why do the teachers mention this as an issue? With a closer reading, it is not that the feedback does not occur that the teachers indicated as a problem, so much as the expediency of the solution. There is often an expectation that when giving feedback, any problems or issues will be solved soon after being reported. Identifying the problems, however, is only the first step of a larger order procedure at HUTECH. This research suggests that implementing a more effective policy to deal with feedback and solve problems raised by the teachers and students in an appropriate time period would improve teaching and learning activity. As one teacher suggested:

I think like doing business, we should make customers happy by meeting their requirements. In fact, are our students customers? Yes, they are customers. So, in education, we should treat students like our customers. (Interview excerpt T2.19.04.2012.65)

The discussion of the slow response to the teachers’ and students’ feedback leads us to another interesting discussion regarding the hierarchical management system. In HUTECH currently, the HUTECH leaders play the primary management role in all activities. This means that the managers have to wait for the leadership approval for any programs, activities or proposals to be carried out, which can be a lengthy process, especially for proposals requiring financial support. As revealed by Pham (2006), hierarchical management systems in Vietnam which emphasize top-down decision making, have hindered development in Vietnamese society and education due to the slow pace of decisions and the lack of flexibility. Therefore, it is advisable that the HUTECH leaders give managers more independence and power in making decisions relating to the
management of English training. This will help to make the activity of English teaching management more flexible and effective, along with expediting feedback response. This will also help to reduce the workload for the university leaders who have to deal with variety of issues and problems in every field.

9.3.3. Teacher professional development. The findings of this study also identify the professional development of teachers as an important factor that needs to be addressed. The teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the limited professional development for teachers in HUTECH, while the managers avoided discussing the current professional development for teachers in HUTECH. Instead, the managers talked about their future plan for professional development. In considering the role and direction of professional development, many pertinent findings were collected from the classroom observations, including teaching styles, teaching methods and classroom management. In collecting data about teaching styles, the researcher focused on the teachers’ ability to make the class interesting and engage students in activities. Regarding to teaching methods, the researcher concentrated on the teachers’ strategies to make the lessons understandable and beneficial to students. All these types of data helped to point out not only the need to invest in teacher professional development at HUTECH but also to suggest a direction for professional development, as currently, at HUTECH, this program is still limited.

The results of the EFL class observations revealed that the teachers tended to focus more on teaching grammar and vocabulary, listening and reading while little attention is paid to speaking skills. In five out of eight classes observed, more than half of the class time was spent on doing exercises in grammar and reading using the textbook. This might be explained that in terms of oral proficiency, Vietnamese EFL teachers who do not come from an English-speaking background often have to face the problem that their English competency is not as proficient as native English speakers. In addition, they are not
familiar with the native-speakers using English in real life conversations. This lack of confidence prevents them from carrying out speaking lessons in English classes. The findings of this study support the previous studies which indicate that the lack of teacher training and professional development is a de-motivating factor to the quality of English teaching and learning (Chen & Goh, 2011; Ming & Jaya, 2011). Chen and Goh (2011) studied challenges Chinese teachers face when teaching oral communication and found that teachers lack in-service training. “Of the 30 interviewees, only five who have taught English for more than eight years have attended in-service training programs. Without proper training and support, teachers will inevitably feel inadequate and unprepared to teach oral skills” (p. 341). Ming and Jaya researched the integration of CLT in two universities in Southern Taiwan and pointed out that inadequate teacher training is a factor hindering teachers to implement CLT in their EFL classes. Some teachers expressed that the workshops they attended did not meet their needs, and suggested that the workshops should focus on practical applications of CLT rather than theory. This concurs with my study in HUTECH in Vietnam, where teachers also stated that they were not happy with professional development program, and that they needed more practical and beneficial training workshops. In relation to this point, it is important to consider the findings of Yilmaz (2011) who indicates that the more proficient the teachers believe themselves in four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), the more confident and effective they feel about teaching EFL. Therefore, it is important to provide adequate training programs and professional development for teachers, to increase their proficiency in all four macro skills, resulting in improved learning outcomes.

These findings emphasize the important role of HUTECH leaders in creating an effective professional development program for EFL teachers. A number of recommendations arise from this research, and related literature. First, there should be
seminars, training workshops or conferences in the field of English teaching and learning held frequently at HUTECH. This will provide the EFL teachers with opportunities to discuss, exchange teaching methods and share experiences with each other. Second, another positive policy change would be to provide funds for teachers to attend seminars, conferences, and workshops held in other universities, broadening exposure to new and different methods, as well as expanding their networking with other colleagues and improving their career knowledge. Third, in light of the many international conferences focused on teaching English held annually all over the world, especially in EFL countries like Korea, China, Japan, Cambodia, it would be ideal if HUTECH could become an organizer and host of national and international EFL conferences. In Vietnam, a number of universities and educational institutions have regularly organized some international conferences, such as the British Council, Hanoi University of Foreign Languages. In the future, organizing and hosting conferences will help to increase HUTECH’s standing among other universities, and help make HUTECH a quality research center, as set out by the vision and mission of HUTECH’s leaders (HUTECH, 2011). Research activities encourage teachers to explore new career knowledge, to have opportunities to reflect on their own teaching, and to promote connection between practice and student achievement (Henry, Tryjankowski, Dicamillo, & Bailey, 2010; Hensen, 1996). As pointed out by Smigiel (2006) “one of the most effective ways to enable professional development is to encourage critical reflection and research on practice” (p. 132). At HUTECH, the research portfolio is mainly on science and technology with one PhD program in the field of Electrical Engineering. The research program for English is currently very limited, however, there is a plan to introduce Master program for English in the coming years. It is recommended that a Master program should include a research component, not only a
coursework program, so that teachers and students would have more opportunities to be involved in research activities.

It is recommended that HUTECH encourage EFL teachers to follow higher education training courses to upgrade their qualifications and career knowledge. In order to motivate EFL teachers to continue their further study, HUTECH can provide financial support for their study courses, and allow them to reduce teaching time to focus on study while they can still receive full payment as full-time teachers. It is also recommended that HUTECH sponsor EFL teachers to take part in short-term and long-term training courses both domestically and internationally. Especially, as EFL teachers, they should have opportunities to participate in overseas training programs in order to learn new cultures, absorb and practise using English with native speakers, which will be very helpful for their teaching career. However, in order to avoid “brain drain” with teachers leaving the university or country, and assure that the sponsored teachers still work for the university after finishing the courses they undertake overseas, the university should have strict legal agreements with all teachers before the training programs are conducted. These requirements need to clearly set the minimum serving time for the university each teacher has to commit, depending on the type of programs and the amount of sponsorship they receive. This practice has been conducted by MOET and a number of educational institutions, as a part of national foreign language policy in the period 2008-2020, and has produced some positive results (Harman et al., 2010). Therefore, it seems worthwhile for HUTECH leaders to examine this model and consider how they might implement it, as it holds great potential to improve the quality of teaching at HUTECH.

While HUTECH leaders play a key role in implementing a teacher professional development program, it does not mean that teachers and managers simply follow their instructions. For teachers, it is important that they actively seek opportunities for
professional development, instead of waiting for and depending on the financial assistance
from the university leaders. For instance, the teachers can apply for scholarships for
overseas study programs provided by the Vietnamese Government, non-government
organizations, foreign universities and educational institutions. Recently, many scholarship
programs have been introduced, creating a variety of professional development
opportunities for teachers, including: Project 911 of the Vietnamese MOET
(http://vied.vn), the Fulbright scholar program delivered by the United States
(www.cies.org), and the AusAid scholarships provided by the Australian Government

In addition, it is recommended that teachers actively participate in conferences,
seminars, and workshops in TESOL conducted by other universities or educational
organizations, such as: the British Council, VUS English center, SEAMEO (Southeast
Asian Ministers of Education Organization). Moreover, the teachers who have not
graduated from pedagogical universities (teacher training universities) should organize
time to take up short courses in TESOL to equip themselves with teaching skills and
methods in language education. In addition, they are encouraged to update their teaching
skills and knowledge by reading more books from specialists in ELT. The book written by
Harmer (2007) is an example. It introduced various teaching methods and knowledge in
ELT which can be a good guide for teacher professional development.

The role of managers is also important in teacher professional development. It is
advisable that instead of waiting for conferences or seminars to be sponsored by the
university leaders, managers can be proactive in holding small, internal seminars or
workshops for English teachers at HUTECH as these types of seminars or workshops are
inexpensive. If these seminars and workshops are successful, and proved to be effective, it
is hoped that the university leaders will increase the funding for these workshops and
seminars. If a clear benefit can be discerned, HUTECH may also consider sponsoring bigger workshops, seminars or conferences, because, as pointed out by one of the managers in the interviews, HUTECH leaders are willing to invest in programs and activities suggested as long as they are proved to be beneficial and useful for the education quality.

The managers should also seek to create opportunities or environments where teachers can exchange experiences and learn from each other. For example, the “critical friends group” (CFG) model, which has been implemented successfully in the project conducted by Vo and Nguyen (2010) could be adapted for EFL teachers in HUTECH. The program provides teachers with opportunities to observe each other’s teaching, and to discuss and receive feedback from each other, to improve their teaching skills and methods. It is highly recommended that the managers adapt this model at HUTECH, as it is an economical and effective method of teacher professional development. Supporting this model, the managers do not have to depend on financial support from the university leaders, and can carry it out independently, with the participation of English teachers. As pointed out by Alkhawaldeh (2011), teacher professional development can be done effectively by teachers’ collaboratively learning from each other and critical evaluation of their teaching practices.

9.3.4. Teacher recruitment and assessment. It became clear during the course of this research that teacher recruitment at HUTECH is a controversial issue. The teachers spoke about the high workload for the current full-time teachers, and the need to employ more full-time teachers to share this workload. However, the interviews with the managers revealed that teacher appointments at HUTECH tend to be on short-term or casual contracts, giving leadership greater flexibility to scale up or down due to demand, and greater ease making unsatisfactory teachers redundant. This finding supports the statement
of Harman et al. (2010) that private universities prefer to have short-term contracts with academic staff, and the contracts may not be renewed if the teaching performance is unsatisfactory.

There is also a financial benefit for HUTECH to recruit casual and part-time teachers with short-term contracts, as the university can save a large sum of money on expenses such as health cover, social benefit cover and annual bonuses. However, if they have a large turnover of staff, and low job security, this will work against HUTECH investing in professional development, as the time and money invested in training staff may not be retained or built upon. Both full-time and part-time teachers in the interviews recommended that HUTECH recruit more full-time teachers, especially from the current part-time teaching staff. According to the teachers, the recruitment of more full-time teachers will not only help to reduce the workload for the current full-time teachers but also provide current part-time teachers with opportunities to become full-time teachers. This would also provide a motivation for the part-time teachers to perform well so as to be considered for full-time positions. It is recommended that HUTECH leaders adjust the full-time teacher recruitment quotas annually, in a reasonable way so that it will bring most benefits to HUTECH, balancing financial considerations with staff number and teaching quality.

In relation to teacher recruitment, there was another interesting finding that is important to this discussion. In the results from the students’ questionnaires, the question relating to what characteristics students expected from their teachers, “young and good looking” was rated by students as the sixth top characteristics (See Chapter 5, section 5.11.1). Interestingly, the preference for young teachers is consistent with the managers’ viewpoint in the interviews, when they stated that they preferred to recruit young teachers. As explained by the managers, young teachers are energetic, creative and active in learning
and exploring new knowledge. In addition, because they have graduated recently, they can remember and apply the most up-to-date knowledge and teaching skills to their classes. These positive attitudes for young teachers reflect the opinion of Vo and Nguyen (2010). In a study which evaluated the implementation of a new model for teacher professional development in Vietnam, they recommended that this new model should be started first with young teachers, as they were the most willing to try and learn new things. Then, it should be gradually expanded with other experienced teachers.

While there were many favorable attitudes for young teachers, it is important to consider the many benefits that more experienced teachers bring as well: experience in class management, mentorship and development role for young teachers, understanding of older teaching methods and the ability to compare new and old teaching methods. Despite the fact as to whether they are young or experienced, when teachers value their career, enjoy teaching their students, and feel the respect and concern from their students and society, they will devote more to their teaching. As pointed out by Nguyen (2001), “teachers tend to work because of the expectations and respect from the society” (p. 184).

One more point needs to be discussed here and that is although the teachers and the managers support frequent teacher assessment in order to assure the teaching quality, they held different views regarding what types of assessment should be used. Most teachers suggested unexpected class observation inside the classroom, which allows the managers to come to the class and do the observations without informing the teachers in advance. However, the managers pointed out that they prefer to observe the classes covertly by standing in a corner outside the classes so that the classrooms’ atmosphere will not be affected, and the teachers and students are unaware of being observed. In Vietnam, this covert observation is not controversial. It is understandable that the managers prefer to use concealed observation techniques as their presence may affect the normal teaching
practice. One manager expressed this viewpoint about how teachers are assessed through observations:

A class in which students have a lot of interactions and communications in English, with each other, in pairs, in groups, with teacher, I say, is a successful class. If in a class, teacher speaks most of the time, students only listen, and write, and look tired and sleepy, teacher of that class should self-check and adjust their teaching style and method. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.205)

As for the managers, during the assessment process, if they see areas that the teachers need to improve, they will have a private meeting to discuss these issues with those teachers. Manager 2 said:

We have many ways to assess teachers, through various channels: students’ feedback, observations, reports from administration office. If we see any problems with any teachers and their teaching practice, we will invite them to our office to discuss privately, so as to improve the situation. If the situation is not improved after that, we will have to end the contract with them. (Interview excerpt M2.21.07.2012.197)

The positive thing here is that the managers have expressed their expectations and deliver any criticism in a constructive way. This can be seen as a good signal for the improvement of teacher assessment and teacher quality.

9.3.5. Appraisal policies. Appraisal policies at HUTECH were also mentioned by managers and teachers, and their viewpoints around this issue also differed. The appraisal policies aim to assess teachers’ performance in classes, teachers’ adherence to administration and regulations, teachers’ participation and research, and teachers’ contribution to the university’s development. While the managers had positive attitudes
about appraisal policies for teachers at HUTECH, the teachers were dissatisfied with some of the criteria of the appraisal. Teacher 9 said:

HUTECH leaders should make teachers feel comfortable, respect them, rather than applying strict regulations, especially regulations regarding class arrival time. They make teachers nervous. (Interview excerpt T9.09.06.2012.60)

As Nguyen (2001) states, teachers could “gain significant intrinsic rewards from working in a stimulating, collegial atmosphere, from contact with their students, from a sense that they were contributing to their students’ overall growth and development, and from opportunities to exercise professional autonomy” (p. 184). The university leaders at HUTECH could also make appraisal policies more attractive and competitive by improving benefits and income for teachers. The teachers believed that if these policies were applied, they will motivate current teachers and attract more qualified teachers to HUTECH. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Nguyen (2001) whose research shows that appraisal policies have direct impacts on teacher motivation and teaching quality. Teacher motivation will be promoted and teaching quality in Vietnamese universities will be enhanced if more effective appraisal policies were to be applied.

9.4. Teacher-Related Factors

9.4.1. Teachers’ use of teaching aids. In terms of using teaching aids and materials, the results arising from the class observations (see Chapter 8, section 8.3.10) are consistent with many previous studies’ findings that there was insufficient use of teaching aids and teaching materials in English classes (Abebe & Davidson, 2012; Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006; Yilmaz, 2011). These studies were undertaken in India, Nigeria and Turkey. According to Abebe and Davidson (2012), teachers rarely use visual materials such as cards, charts, real objects in language teaching even though they admit the
effectiveness of these visual aids to the students’ learning. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) have pointed out that textbooks, workbooks, dictionaries, chalkboards and posters are dominant in English classrooms whereas modern materials such as audio and video tapes, programmed texts, language laboratories, flash cards, computers, magazines, and newspapers are rarely used.

As explained by Gilmore (2011), there are some considerations to take into account in discussing this insufficient use of teaching aids, particularly factors hindering the teachers’ use of teaching aids in HUTECH. One factor is the time needed for teachers to prepare such materials. In order to have effective teaching materials for their lessons, teachers have to spend time seeking, designing and selecting the appropriate teaching aids. However, with heavy teaching loads, teachers may have little spare time to invest in preparing visual and modern teaching materials for their classes. Another factor which may also discourage the teachers’ use of teaching aids is the teachers’ skills in using ICT and technical equipment (see Chapter 7, section 7.4.2). This result is consistent with the finding of Dang (2011) who claimed that teachers’ non-use of ICT in language teaching is due to their limited literacy of ICT. The study by Gao (2012) in higher education in China revealed that one factor hindering the use of technology in English teaching was that the teachers lacked confidence using the technology. She points out that although the teachers advocate the use of technology in English classes, they do not know how to apply it effectively. As summarized by Capper (2003), in her article referring to K-12 classroom teachers, teachers’ limited technical knowledge, their insufficient time and their satisfaction with current teaching approaches prevent them from integrating technical advances into teaching practices. In order to improve the use of teaching aids by teachers, a range of actions are recommended. First, a reduction in the classroom hours and rise in time allocated for preparation will allow teachers more time to invest in preparing quality
teaching materials for their lessons. Second, there should be training programs put in place for teachers to gain confidence in the use of technical aids, audio-visual equipment, and develop skills in selecting the appropriate audio-visual resources for the classroom activities (Mathew & Alidmat, 2013). In order to do this successfully, teachers should not only be provided with the technology and infrastructure but also with the education of how to use and apply them, particularly the ICT skills (Peeraer & Van Petegem, 2011).

According to Peeraer and Van Petegem (2011), “Vietnam and other emerging developing countries could now make a difference and aim to go beyond an access and skills based approach, striving instead for integration of ICT education as a tool for creative learning” (p. 981).

A particularly problematic teaching aid for teachers in language classes is the use of authentic language teaching materials. Ming and Jaya (2011), highlight the lack of authentic materials as a factor that hinders the quality of English teaching. It is also a question of context, what is ‘authentic’ in western context may not be ‘authentic’ in a Vietnamese context (Hiep, 2007). The study of Ton and Pham (2010) reveals that both teachers and students believe that students use English more with non-native speakers than with native speakers in real life, outside the classroom. However, they also identify the lack of teaching materials using varieties of English other than British and American English. This situation is also true at HUTECH, as currently, *American Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2009) is the main English syllabus, which includes textbooks and audio-recordings in American English. Therefore, finding appropriate English teaching materials is a challenge for English teachers, including teachers in HUTECH. In the researcher’s viewpoint, it would be beneficial to have a range of materials for a Vietnamese context. This could be done through the employment of specialists who are responsible for designing or providing appropriate teaching aids and resources.
9.4.2. **Teachers’ teaching styles.** The interviews with the managers and the class observations showed some interesting results regarding teachers’ teaching styles. As pointed out by Manager 1:

> I am not totally satisfied with English teaching at HUTECH, especially the way some teachers conduct their lessons. It is not interesting. It does not help to arouse students’ interest and motivate students. (Interview excerpt M1.15.07.2012.155)

The class observations showed that most teachers did not use warm-up activities to arouse students’ interests and lead students into the new lesson. Only some teachers used warm-up activities, but the activities were not “warm” enough to create an exciting atmosphere to motivate students. Through the warm-up activity demonstrated by the teacher in Class 1 (Chapter 8, section 8.3.1.3), it was revealed that, the teacher could have made the students more interested by employing better warm up activities. For instance, she should have shown the two pictures of the two actions or activities which represented the two tenses ‘the present perfect’ and ‘the present perfect continuous’, then asked questions and elicited the answers from the students. Or, she should have asked the students to play a game about the tenses and then step-by-step lead them into the new lesson.

The class observations also revealed that most teachers did not use games or songs in their lessons to make students interested (Chapter 8, section 8.3.1.1), and that the lecturing style was still predominantly used (Chapter 8, section 8.3.1.2). Communicative activities were limited, and classroom atmosphere was not exciting (Chapter 8, section 8.3.2, section 8.3.3).

This shows that the classroom atmosphere in most English classes in HUTECH is not engaging as the teachers still use the traditional lecturing style. This finding concurs with the previous study conducted by Tomlinson and Dat (2004) who observe that traditional lecturing methods are widely used in Vietnam. Tomlinson and Bao also reveal
that teachers’ perceptions of students’ learning styles often do not agree with the students’ preferences. The teachers perceive that passive students will not engage in communicative teaching techniques, so the teachers keep on using the traditional grammar-translation method and the lecturing style. The students, however, indicate that they prefer to participate in communicative activities like pair work and group work which require them to use language, explore problems and exchange ideas with their friends instead of studying in traditional whole-class settings.

From the interviews with teachers, it is clear that some teachers also identify students’ passive learning style at HUTECH as a hindrance. As indicated by Teacher 6:

Students are not positive in learning. They are passive, and some of them lack a basic English background. It is hard for teachers to teach. (Interview excerpt T6.29.05.2012.62)

However, the result from the observations shows that the students are not totally passive, but their limited English ability and their lack of confidence in using oral English prevent them from active participation in classes (see Chapter 8, section 8.3.11). In the questionnaires, students expressed their desire to study with teachers who know how to motivate students and make students interested in learning through interesting activities. Students also expressed their expectations that university leaders will have more programs or activities for students to improve their communicative English (see Chapter 5, section 5.11.1, and 5.11.2). These results above indicate that teachers underestimate their students’ abilities to engage and desire to participate. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers implement more communicative teaching style and persist with this style to make the classes more engaging.

While teacher misunderstanding is one factor that makes teachers more likely to use traditional methods with teacher-centered approaches at HUTECH, it would be remiss
to ignore the many other influential institutional factors, such as the crowded classrooms with unequal students’ English proficiency levels, the tests and examinations without speaking components, the insufficient teaching time, and the limited teacher training and professional development.

The prevalence of traditional lecturing styles may also be attributed to the teachers’ busy schedule. According to Harman et al. (2010), the salaries for teaching staff in higher education in general in Vietnam are still low, and therefore, the teachers have to take other casual or part-time jobs after hours. However, this may not be the case of HUTECH teachers, because as revealed by most teachers in the interviews, the salary in HUTECH is higher than many other universities, especially when compared with public universities in Vietnam. Although the teachers rate the salary in HUTECH as higher than other universities, they still spend extra time teaching in other institutions to increase their income. Teacher 10 revealed:

Now I am teaching at two other universities, in addition to this university, as I want my family income to be assured. (Interview excerpt T10.15.06.2012.93)

This may result in the teachers having little time for lesson preparation and may also lead to the preference of traditional methods and lecturing style in their teaching. According to Tran et al. (2014), as many EFL teachers want to increase income by teaching extra hours, they do not have time and energy to prepare enjoyable learning lessons for their students. If this is the case, what solution should be taken to encourage teachers to invest more time and efforts for the teaching in HUTECH? One suggestion besides adjusting the system-related factors such as class size, students’ English proficiency levels, teaching time, tests and exams is that the HUTECH leaders should also examine other teacher-related factors such as teacher recruitment, teacher assessment, teacher training and professional development in order to increase the teacher quality because “teachers play a key role in
changes to teaching methodology and contribute to improvements in the quality of education, especially EFL teachers who have to meet the needs and standards of English as an international language” (Vo & Nguyen, 2010, p. 205).

9.4.3. Teachers’ personalities. The results from the students’ questionnaires indicate that the students are more concerned with the teachers’ personality traits than other factors such as teachers’ qualifications or teachers’ teaching methods (see Chapter 5, section 5.11.1). Personality traits in this research could also be considered similar to the term used by Barnes and Lock (2010) in their Korean study: rapport attributes. The current finding concurs with the study of B. Barnes and Lock which reveals that students focused more on the teachers’ rapport attributes than on the teachers’ delivery attributes. In considering these findings, it is important to take into account the research undertaken in New Zealand by Matsumoto (2011), who found that students with low levels of English proficiency tended to focus more on the teachers’ personality while the students with intermediate or advanced levels of English were likely to pay attention to the teachers’ teaching skills and knowledge.

In the researcher’s viewpoint, the above results are significant in relation to English teaching and learning because they show certain personality traits can improve students’ motivation. Besides the improvement of factors such as specific teaching skills and knowledge, the teachers need to focus more on the personality-related factors. As shown by Barnes and Lock (2010), these factors can make the students feel valued, encourage them to study, make them feel understood and help them to reduce their fears in study: fear of making mistakes, and fear of talking to foreigners (Barnes & Lock, 2010). As mentioned above by Matsumoto (2011) for students with low English proficiency, a teachers’ inter-personal skills, such as showing concern and consideration are as, if not more necessary and valuable than subject knowledge. This means, however, that in a class
with students of various English levels, a great level and range of skills and experience are required from the teacher. Different types and different levels of students require different strategies. It is recommended that teachers follow the suggestion of (Brown, 2007b) who states that teachers need to understand their students as well as how they learn as this will help teachers decide appropriate teaching methods and classroom activities which are most beneficial for students. This also includes an understanding of the impacts of personality traits on students’ motivation.

9.4.4. Types of teachers in English classes. The results from the students’ questionnaires show that most students preferred to study with a variety of EFL teachers, including native English speaking teachers, foreign teachers and local Vietnamese teachers. In the researcher’s view, learning with different EFL teachers helps students approach different teaching styles so that they would not feel bored and could also familiarize themselves with different accents which would be useful for them in real life communication. As the number of foreigners coming to Vietnam has increased in recent years, there is now a growing population in Vietnam of both non-native English speakers from countries such as Thailand, Japan and China, and native English speakers, from countries such as England, Australia and the United States. It is therefore important that English learners should be exposed to a range of different English accents. However, as currently, most non-major English classes in higher education are being conducted by Vietnamese local teachers, it will be difficult to meet this requirement. It is important that universities are aware of this situation, and consider the needs of their students, hiring a range of foreign English teachers to teach at their institutions.
9.5. Student-Related Factors

9.5.1. Students’ attitudes. The study reveals some interesting results about the attitude of HUTECH students towards EFL learning. The results from the students’ questionnaire, alongside findings from the interviews with both teachers and managers indicated that the students’ attitudes toward English are a major concern (see Chapter 5, section 5.9, Chapter 6, section 6.4.6). As indicated by one teacher:

About non-major English students, I think they are not interested in English study. Their attitude for English learning is not good, although most of them know that English is necessary for their future jobs. (Interview excerpt T11.20.06.2012.78)

The finding concurs with the previous studies which point out that the students’ negative attitudes are one of the barriers to the implementation of effective English teaching and learning (Chen & Goh, 2011; Luu Trong, 2011; Ming & Jaya, 2011). This result has significant implications to EFL teachers at HUTECH in particular and other EFL teachers in general. If teachers are aware of the students’ attitudes toward English, they can apply appropriate strategies to help improve students’ attitudes toward English. For example, teachers could assign tasks which align with students’ interests, and tasks which are appropriate for students’ abilities, that encourage students to participate. Teachers may also gradually improve students’ attitudes with enthusiasm and patience.

9.5.2. Students’ motivation. The questionnaire results indicated that the majority of students are motivated to study English because they believe it will be useful for their future (see Chapter 5, section 5.8). This result concurs with the study conducted in China by Pan and Block (2011) who state that the career opportunities which English can bring is the main motivation for students to learn English.
Although the majority of the students realized the benefits of learning English for their future, this did not always match the effort students put into their English study. 62.9% of the students in the survey of this study admitted that they did not prepare for their classes (see Chapter 5, section 5.9). This result matches the managers’ and the teachers’ statements that they are not satisfied with the students’ efforts toward English (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.6; see Chapter 7, section 7.3.3, section 7.3.7).

The results from interviews with the teachers, however, reveal some interesting perspectives on students’ motivation to study English. According to the teachers, while the majority of the students perceive English to be useful for their future, some students do not admit the importance of English for their future.

This explanation of the teachers reflects the study conducted in Korea by Byun et al. (2010) which indicates that some students do not invest much time and effort into their English classes because they do not think English is important for their field of study and future career. Another explanation for this contradictory finding might be that in higher education, many students have to study basic knowledge that they have already studied at high schools. While this might be helpful for some sections of the student cohort, especially those with low English levels or who may have lost this basic knowledge, many students feel it is a waste of time, money, and energy, and this makes them feel bored and lose motivation (Linh, 2007). In addition, some other reasons for students’ low motivation were also mentioned by teachers. One observation is that students from less developed regions such as from the countryside, or remote areas, have lower English proficiency than students from developed regions such as major cities (Chen & Goh, 2011), and that students with lower English ability lack confidence when studying in the same class with better students (Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). As a result, it can be said that the placement tests are essential and need to be applied soon in HUTECH so that the students can study in
appropriate classes and their motivation and efforts for English study can be increased. In addition, as discussed in section 9.4, the role of teachers is also important in increasing students’ motivation. By creating lessons which can arouse students’ interests and meet the students’ perceived needs, teacher can also help students develop motivation for learning.

9.5.3. Learners’ roles. The study results also raised some interesting findings regarding the roles and responsibilities of learners in English classes. In response to the question about what HUTECH should do to help improve their English, students expressed their expectations to have a good environment for English improvement in HUTECH. The students recommended the establishment of English improvement programs or activities such as English clubs and English speaking contests where they have opportunities to practise English speaking, share ideas and learning experiences with their friends (see Chapter 5, section 5.11.2). The class observations also indicated that the students themselves are not totally passive. This observation would seem to concur with the previous studies which pointed out that Vietnamese learners are not completely passive any more (Mai & Iwashita, 2012; Tin Tan, 2010; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). Instead of studying in traditional whole-class settings, they prefer to participate in communicative activities which enable them to use the language to express themselves, explore problems and exchange ideas with their friends to acquire knowledge effectively (Mai & Iwashita, 2012). However, although the students are not completely passive any more, and they prefer to participate in communicative activities, there are still a number of de-motivating factors preventing them from being more active in English classes. The first factor may be similar to the Chen and Goh (2011) finding, that students’ low English proficiency and an associated lack of confidence is an obstacle to active participation in English classes. It is also important to consider some other factors already discussed in this chapter, such as exam-oriented teaching, crowded classes and students’ unequal English proficiencies, as
these might also hinder the application of learner-centered approaches, and therefore hinder the students’ active role in English classes in HUTECH. Activeness is a very important factor to make better learners because when learners actively manage their study, they can have more opportunities to access knowledge, through various sources, such as teachers, friends, libraries, activities outside classes. In order to facilitate the active role of learners in English classes, learner-centered approaches should be implemented in HUTECH (Gilmore, 2011). In this situation, the results from the study conducted by Dang (2006) might have some implications. According to Dang, there are four important elements contributing to the successful implementation of a learner-centered approach: the context, the curriculum, the teachers, and the learners. The first element, the context, is created by national policies and universities’ policies, with the aim of reducing class size and providing quality resources to create a supportive environment. The second, the curriculum, needs to incorporate learning materials and learning activities designed with teachers’ and students’ contributions, and should be relevant to the learners’ needs, interests and abilities. Third, there should be qualified and experienced teachers who are confident in choosing appropriate teaching methods and performing their roles in accordance with a learner-centered approach. Last but not least, the learners must be aware of their roles in the language learning process, as their activity plays an indispensible part in the successful implementation of learner-center approaches.

It was indicated by the three participant groups in this study that learners’ autonomy at HUTECH is still limited. Therefore, in order to improve motivation, and learning outcomes for students, it is important to enhance learners’ autonomy at HUTECH. When students were asked about their English study at home and their lesson preparation before classes, the majority of students admitted that they did not often perform such activities. Some students even admitted that they never study at home and never prepare
for classes (see Chapter 5, section 5.9). Learner autonomy is very important in addressing these issues. Instead of depending too much on teachers, and receiving knowledge in a passive way from teachers, students should be encouraged to be independent learners and given skills to manage their study confidently. As pointed out by Breen and Candlin (1980), and Richards and Rodgers (2001), in order to become independent, active and autonomous learners, students also need to take responsibility for their role in learning, by actively participating in class activities and learning procedures, contributing as much as they can in interaction activities and actively seeking opportunities to improve their knowledge.

9.5.4. Students’ opportunities to practise English outside class time. The results from the students’ questionnaires indicated that students’ two most common outside class activities to improve English were listening to English music and learning at private language centers (see Chapter 5, section 5.2). Regarding the number of students attending private language centers in addition to their university classes, Ngan (2004) stated that it was primarily because students were not satisfied with the quality of English teaching at their school or university. Ngan’s finding, along with the findings in this study, paint a concerning picture regarding the quality of English teaching at schools and universities.

The results from the student survey also revealed that activities which require speaking and communication in real life situations, such as going to English clubs or chatting with friends were only mentioned by a small number of students (see Chapter 5, section 5.2). This is consistent with the teachers’ viewpoint that there are limited communicative activities for students outside class time in HUTECH. As explained by the teachers, students used to have an academic playground of sorts, provided by the English clubs at HUTECH. English clubs used to be held regularly and were sponsored by the university. Recently, however, there have been no funds for this activity. Consequently, the
English clubs cannot be held regularly, which decreases students’ opportunities for oral English improvement outside class. As explained by Hiep (2007), students’ opportunities to practise English outside classes are limited due to the lack of authentic English speaking environments, as Vietnamese students do not have the need to speak English to each other in daily communication. This hinders them from improving their English competency. Therefore, creating English environments for Vietnamese students in order to increase their opportunity and their need to use English is really necessary and needs to be considered by universities’ leaders, education policy makers and EFL teachers.

In general, the study results indicated a number of agreements and discrepancies among the three participant groups. Managers, teachers and students showed positive evaluation towards the syllabus, the adequate facilities and equipment. However, all these three groups shared the view that the class sizes were large, and the students’ attitudes, motivation and efforts for English learning were limited. There were some differences in the viewpoints of managers and teachers about curriculum, leaders’ support and teachers’ teaching methods in HUTECH. While the managers expressed favorable attitudes towards the curriculum and leaders’ support, the teachers showed opposite perspectives. While the teachers expressed satisfaction about their teaching methods, the managers were not satisfied with the methods used by the teachers. It was also shown that although the current study was conducted in a Vietnamese context, many of the results concurred with the results of previous studies conducted in other EFL countries, such as Taiwan, China, Korea, Nigeria, India. This indicates that there are a number of EFL countries facing the same difficulties and problems in EFL teaching and learning, such as: large class sizes, domination of Grammar-Translation Method, teachers’ inadequate use of teaching aids, lack of speaking component in English tests and exams. However, one noticeable difference is that none of the previous studies found by the researcher investigated the
leadership as well as the balance between financial benefits and education quality. Therefore, the results from the study in HUTECH revealed new aspects which needed to be considered in relation to EFL teaching and learning. The results indicate that there should be more considerations from HUTECH leaders about how to balance financial benefits and education quality, more meetings between leaders, managers and teachers to reach agreements in how to provide a quality English teaching and learning at HUTECH.

9.6. Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the methodology employed in this study may be perceived in relation to the non-probability sampling technique. The representativeness of the samples and the generalisability of the findings in this study is not guaranteed. However, because this is an Exploratory concurrent embedded case study, the results are valuable in uncovering the factors affecting EFL teaching and learning in HUTECH. First and foremost, the results are important in understanding how to improve English teaching and learning in HUTECH. The results might also be applicable for other educational institutions which have similar characteristics, organization and management structures.

In addition, the validity and reliability of this study would be increased if each type of data were triangulated through various data collection techniques. For example, in hindsight, it would have been advantageous to interview students after the questionnaire so as to gain deeper insights and explore further explanations for the results obtained in the student questionnaire. However, this additional methodological stage was difficult for a number of reasons. In the Vietnamese culture, students often feel hesitant to talk about their teachers directly in conversations. This study required students to give their opinions and evaluations about their university, about their teachers’ enthusiasm, as well as their teachers’ teaching styles and methods. At the time of research design, the researcher held
concerns that it might be uncomfortable for students to talk about these sensitive aspects openly through interviews. However, after the questionnaire data was analyzed, the advantages of follow up interviews became apparent. This study identified a useful starting point for further research into students’ perspectives of EFL at HUTECH.

Furthermore, consideration needs to be acknowledged in relation to the researcher’s position in this study as an insider, as the researcher is also a teacher at HUTECH. However, the researcher has tried to acknowledge subjectivity and strive for objectivity, to enhance validity and reliability of the data. Strategies employed have been discussed in Chapter 4 about Research Design.

9.7. Recommendations for Future Research and Researchers

Because English teaching and learning in HUTECH is currently of interest and concern to HUTECH leaders, and the program can be changed and revised upon the university leaders’ requests, it is recommended that research related to EFL teaching and learning there should be conducted every four or five years to ensure that a constant monitoring and evaluating process occurs. In addition, an investigation of the perspectives from HUTECH graduates and employers would also contribute a valuable dimension to understanding the issues involved in EFL teaching and learning in the future.

Furthermore, an investigation of the student teacher training programs at pedagogy universities needs to be explored. The quality of student teacher training programs must impact on teachers’ teaching performances in their future career. Therefore, this relationship needs further research in the EFL area. The evaluation of higher education professional development programs related to EFL teaching practices requires further research.
9.8. Conclusions

The results of this mixed methods study revealed both positive and negative factors influencing the English teaching and learning at HUTECH.

The positive factors influencing quality EFL teaching and learning, which were agreed on by all three participant groups (students, teachers and managers) are summarized below:

- Up-to-date and well-designed syllabus,
- Adequate facilities and equipment.

The major negative aspects which hindered the quality of EFL training are summarized as follows:

- Insufficient time for English subjects.
- Insufficient focus on students’ oral English improvements.
- Big class sizes discouraging the application of communicative activities including pair work, group work.
- Students’ unequal English proficiency levels which make it difficult for teachers to manage class activities and communicative teaching method, especially group work and pair work.
- The lack of speaking components in tests and exams which discourages the teaching and learning of oral English.
- The dominance of grammar teaching and traditional teaching styles and methods that discourages classroom interactions, and thus hinders students’ self-directed learning.
- The lack of teacher professional development which is an obstacle to the improvement of teaching staff competency.
- Limited support from the university leaders in relation to activities which
require financial assistance, which inhibits extra curricula English learning.

- The lack of foreign teachers, including teachers from native and non-native speaking countries, which does not provide students’ opportunities to familiarize with different accents and ways of English speaking.
- Students’ lack of self-directed autonomy in their own learning, which make a learner-centered approach difficult to implement.

Based on the findings, recommendations for the improvement of English training program in HUTECH are presented as follows:

- Increase the time for teaching English. This should be sufficient enough to develop students’ four macro English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Reduce the class size to motivate the use of communicative activities in classes.
- Apply English proficiency placement tests to group students into appropriate English proficiency level classes.
- Revise the testing and assessment content which will cover the four macro English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, by including speaking tests in the examinations.
- Encourage the teachers to use various teaching methods, especially the communicative approach which will help to improve students’ communicative competences.
- Introduce effective teacher professional development programs within the university.
- Provide more support from the university leaders, especially in aspects which require financial assistance such as: funds for English improvement activities outside class time, funds for seminars and workshops.
• Employ various types of teachers to teach EFL: local teachers and foreign teachers, including teachers from native and non-native speaking countries.

• Encourage more effort and autonomy from students through learner-centered teaching strategies, and frequent consultancy and advice from teachers.

During the years while this research study was being conducted, from 2011 to 2014, some strategies relating to the improvement of English training in HUTECH have already been implemented. This includes the development of appraisal policies, recruitment policies, and teacher professional development, facilities and equipment, international cooperation. However, there are still many challenges for HUTECH and many changes still need to be considered. During the interview period, the researcher also perceived positive attitudes from the managers for changes to the English training programs in HUTECH. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study will significantly contribute to this change process.

In addition, although this study provides results and discussions about EFL teaching and learning at HUTECH, these results and discussions are believed to be significant in broader contexts. As HUTECH is a university belonging to the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), and follows strictly the education policies and initiatives of the government, it is believed that what is happening at HUTECH also reflects a part of Vietnamese higher education. This study therefore reveals the challenges and opportunities, the limits and possibilities of English language teaching and learning in higher education in the context of emerging developing economies, as national government policies in these contexts seek to develop a skill-base, and human resources, to enable these economies to become more integrated, more successful in globalizing economic contexts. Vietnam, with its more open, “free” market engagement with WTO principles and regulation, and its one party, Communist political system of State planning and
direction of higher education, presents a particularly challenging context and set of institutional social, cultural, economic and political relations and practices. In this complex situation, the roles played by EFL teaching and learning in the planned modernization of higher education to improve international competitiveness become essential and require more considerations from institutional to governmental levels.

In addition, the concept of education quality is not only the concern of any sole university, or country, but also the consideration of almost all educational institutions. Therefore, the findings, discussions and recommendations of this study might not only be applicable to HUTECH but also significant to other educational contexts in Vietnam as well as other EFL countries and emerging developing economies. In order to improve the education quality, the eight mind frames for teachers and leaders noted by Hattie (2012) are worth to be taken into considerations. It is advised that we should be “evaluators, change agents, adaptive learning experts, seekers of feedback about our impact, engaged in dialogue and challenge, and developers of trust with all, and that we see opportunity in error, and are keen to spread the message about the power, fun, and impact that we have on learning” (p. 159).
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taxonomy/term/17/2262

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Appendices

Appendix A. Confirmation of Candidature Letter

RMIT UNIVERSITY

30th March 2012
Thi Hong Nguyen

Dear Hong,

Re: Confirmation of Candidature – approval
PhD (Research)

I am pleased to inform you that your application for Confirmation of Candidature has been finalised. Your supervisor has passed your Confirmation of Candidature without change.

I wish you well in your studies. Should you have any queries regarding the next stage of your Ethics application, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Mann on 9925 2974 or visit the website http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse?ID=6soox7ac00kxk

Kind regards,

Louise Prentice
Research Administrator
School of Education

Research Office
9925 7877
louise.prentice@rmit.edu.au
Appendix B. Approval Letter from HUTECH Vice Rector

Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology
144/24 Dien Bien Phu
Ward 25, Binh Thanh District
Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam
Phone: +84.8 3512 0783
Fax: +84.8 3512 0786
Email: hutoech@hcmhutech.edu.vn
Website: www.hutech.edu.vn

16/11/2011

To whom it may concern,

This is to certify that Hong Thi Nguyen is permitted to undertake a research at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology.

If further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Dr. Bui Xuan Lam, B.Eng., M.Eng., Ph.D
Associate Professor
Vice Rector

Phone: (84-8) 35124-484
Email: bxlam@hcmhutech.edu.vn
Appendix C. Ethics Approval Letter

RMIT University
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee
Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor
Phone: 9925-2974
Email: hrec@rmit.edu.au

10 January 2011
Ms Hong Thi Nguyen

Dear Hong,

Re: Human Research Ethics Application – Register Number CHEAN A-20090620-11/12

The Deputy Chair of the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN), Prof Joseph Sinuwai, reviewed your ethics application titled:

English teaching and learning in HUTECH University, Vietnam

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved at a Low Risk classification by the committee. This approval will be reported to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for noting.

Your ethics approval expires on 9 January 2015.

Please note that all research data should be stored on University Network systems. These systems provide high levels of manageable security and data integrity, can provide secure remote access, are backed up on a regular basis and can provide Disaster Recovery processes should a large scale incident occur. The use of portable devices such as CDs and memory sticks is invalid for archiving, data transport when necessary and some works in progress. The authoritative copy of all current data should reside on appropriate network systems; and the Principal Investigator is responsible for the retention and storage of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

You are reminded that an Annual/Final report is mandatory and should be forwarded to the College Ethics Officer by mid-December 2012. This report is available at http://www.rmit.edu.au/hs/ethics/annual_report.php or can be located by following the links under Policy at http://www.rmit.edu.au/hs/ethics.

Should you have any queries regarding your application please seek advice from the Deputy Chair of the College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN) Prof Joseph Sinuwai on (03) 9925 1744, joseph.sinuwai@rmit.edu.au or contact Lisa Mann on (03) 9925 2974, lisa.mann@rmit.edu.au

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Mann
Ethics Officer
DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN)

Co. Dr Wendy Warren, School of Education
Appendix D. Plain Language Statement and Consent Form

Appendix D1. Plain Language Statement

Dear students,

I am Hong Thi Nguyen, a PhD research student in the School of Education, Design and Social Context College at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. My thesis topic is “English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam”. My senior supervisor is Dr. Wendy Warren. My second supervisor is Associate Professor Heather Fehring. This project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

I am conducting a research study concerning English education, with the focus on the English teaching and learning in HUTECH University in Vietnam. The central research question of the project is: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH University?” In this project, I intend to investigate the perceptions of managers, teachers, and students as well as the classroom practice of English teaching and learning here. The participants of this project consist of students, teachers and managers of HUTECH.

It is expected that the results of the study will lead to a better understanding of the English Education practices in HUTECH and may lead to appropriate strategies to deal with these issues in the future. As a result, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Your participation is based on your willingness only.

As a student participant in my research, you would be asked to complete one set of questionnaires within approximately 15 minutes.

Besides that, some of you may be observed in your English class so that the researcher can investigate the classroom practice of English education. Each observation will last 45 minutes. Your involvement in the observations will not affect ongoing assessment/grades/treatment.

I assure you of the following:
- You will remain anonymous to everyone except myself and my supervisors;
- Any information provided by you will be used only within this project. Data may be published in seminars, journal articles or presented at conferences, but your name will not appear in these publications (pseudonyms will be used to protect anonymity);
- There are no perceived risks outside your normal day-to-day activities;
- Only my supervisors and I will have access to the raw data;
- All data will be securely stored at RMIT University Australia for five years after the completion of my PhD. After that, the information will be destroyed;

You have the rights to:
- Withdraw from participation at any time

Version #: 15/12/2011
- Have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- Have any questions answered at any time.

There is no direct benefit to you as a result of your participation but it may help to improve English Education in this University.

I am looking forward to your participation in the research. If you are willing to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood the above information by signing the accompanying consent form. For further information or should any clarification related to any aspect of this research is required, please contact Dr. Wendy Warren, Associate Professor Heather Fehring or myself at the addresses mentioned below.

Your participation and cooperation in this study is appreciated.

Thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Hong Thi Nguyen
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 3083, Australia
Phone:
Email:

English Department
Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology
144/24 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 25, Binh Thanh District
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
Phone:
Email: nguyenhong2310@yahoo.com.vn

Dr. Wendy Warren
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 3083, Australia
Phone: +(613) 9925 9459
Email: wendy.warren@rmit.edu.au

Associate Professor Heather Fehring
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria 3083, Australia
Phone: +(613) 9925 7840
Email: heather.fehring@rmit.edu.au
30 December, 2011.

Plain Language Statement

Dear teachers,

I am Hong Thi Nguyen, a PhD research student in the School of Education, Design and Social Context College at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. My thesis topic is “English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam”. My senior supervisor is Dr. Wendy Warren. My second supervisor is Associate Professor Heather Fehring. This project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

I am conducting a research study concerning English education, with the focus on the English teaching and learning in HUTECH University in Vietnam. The central research question of the project is: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH University?” In this project, I intend to investigate the perceptions of managers, teachers, and students as well as the classroom practice of English teaching and learning here. The participants of this project consist of students, teachers and managers of HUTECH.

It is expected that the results of the study will lead to a better understanding of the English Education practices in HUTECH and may lead to appropriate strategies to deal with these issues in the future. As a result, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Your participation is based on your willingness only.

As a teacher participant in my research, you would be asked to participate in an interview in about 30-45 minutes which will be audio recorded.

Besides that, some of you will be observed in your English class so that the researcher can investigate the classroom practice of English education. Each observation will last 45 minutes. Your involvement in the observations will not affect ongoing assessment/grades/treatment.

I assure you of the following:
- You will remain anonymous to everyone except myself and my supervisors;
- Any information provided by you will be used only within this project. Data may be published in seminars, journal articles or presented at conferences, but your name will not appear in these publications (pseudonyms will be used to protect anonymity);
- There are no perceived risks outside your normal day-to-day activities;
- Only my supervisors and I will have access to the raw data;
- All data will be securely stored at RMIT University Australia for five years after the completion of my PhD. After that, the information will be destroyed;

You have the rights to:
- Withdraw from participation at any time

__________________________
Version #: 15/12/2011

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- Have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- Have any questions answered at any time.

There is no direct benefit to you as a result of your participation but it may help to improve English Education in this University.

I am looking forward to your participation in the research. If you are willing to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood the above information by signing the accompanying consent form. For further information or should any clarification related to any aspect of this research is required, please contact Dr. Wendy Warren, Associate Professor Heather Feiring or myself at the addresses mentioned below.

Your participation and cooperation in this study is appreciated.

Thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Hong Thi Nguyen
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 3083, Australia
Phone:

English Department
Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology
144/24 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 25, Binh Thanh District
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Dr. Wendy Warren
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Associate Professor Heather Feiring
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria 3083, Australia
Phone: (613) 9925 7840
Email: heather.feiring@rmit.edu.au
30 December, 2011

Plain Language Statement

Dear managers,

I am Hong Thi Nguyen, a PhD research student in the School of Education, Design and Social Context College at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. My thesis topic is “English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam”. My senior supervisor is Dr. Wendy Warren. My second supervisor is Associate Professor Heather Fehring. This project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

I am conducting a research study concerning English education, with the focus on the English teaching and learning in HUTECH University in Vietnam. The central research question of the project is: “What are the factors affecting English teaching and learning in HUTECH University?” In this project, I intend to investigate the perceptions of managers, teachers, and students as well as the classroom practice of English teaching and learning here. The participants of this project consist of students, teachers and managers of HUTECH.

It is expected that the results of the study will lead to a better understanding of the English Education practices in HUTECH and may lead to appropriate strategies to deal with these issues in the future. As a result, I would like to invite you to participate in the research project. Your participation is based on your willingness only.

As a manager participant in my research, you would be asked to participate in an interview in about 30-45 minutes which will be audio recorded.

I assure you of the following:
- You will remain anonymous to everyone except myself and my supervisors;
- Any information provided by you will be used only within this project. Data may be published in seminars, journal articles or presented at conferences, but your name will not appear in these publications (pseudonyms will be used to protect anonymity);
- There are no perceived risks outside your normal day-to-day activities;
- Only my supervisors and I will have access to the raw data;
- All data will be securely stored at RMIT University Australia for five years after the completion of my PhD. After that, the information will be destroyed.

You have the rights to:
- Withdraw from participation at any time;
- Have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant;
- Have any questions answered at any time.

Version #: 18/12/2011
There is no direct benefit to you as a result of your participation but it may help to improve English Education in this University.

I am looking forward to your participation in the research. If you are willing to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood the above information by signing the accompanying consent form. For further information or should any clarification related to any aspect of this research is required, please contact Dr. Wendy Warren, Associate Professor Heather Fehrig or myself at the addresses mentioned below.

Your participation and cooperation in this study is appreciated.

Thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Hong Thi Nguyen
School of Education
RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 3083, Australia
Phone:
Email:

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144/24 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 25, Binh Thanh District
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Phone:
Email: nguyenhong2510@yahoo.com.vn

Dr. Wendy Warren
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RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, 3083, Australia
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Email: wendy.warren@rmit.edu.au

Associate Professor Heather Fehrig
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Phone: (+61) 9925 7840
Email: heather.fehrig@rmit.edu.au
Appendix D2. Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Prescribed Consent Form for Persons Participating in Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Observations

COLLEGE OF
Design and Social Context

SCHOOL/CENTRE OF

Education

Project Title:
English teaching and learning in HUTECH University

Name(s) of investigator(s):
(1) Hong Thi Nguyen

Phone:

(2)

Phone:

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire/observation involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which including details of the interviews or questionnaires or observations have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire or conduct an observation.
4. I give my permission to be audio taped/photographed
   ( ) Yes   ( ) No (delete if inapplicable)
5. I acknowledge that:
   a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
   b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.
   d) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study will form part of the PhD thesis to the School of Education at RMIT University but also may be published in journal articles or at conference presentations. Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).

Participant’s Consent

Name: ____________________________  Date: ________________________

(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/complaints/research

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Appendix E. Questionnaires

Appendix E1. Pre-pilot questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 1. Student’s personal information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where are you from?</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<td>b. Others. Please specify…………………..</td>
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<td>2. How old are you?</td>
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<td>a. 17-18</td>
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<td>b. 19-20</td>
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<td>c. Others. Please specify…………………..</td>
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<td>3. What is your study major?</td>
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<tr>
<td>( ) Interior Decoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Fashion Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Food Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What dictionaries do you use when studying English? You can choose more than one answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. English-Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Vietnamese – English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. English-English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Not use dictionaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Others. Please specify…………………..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 2. Student’s English background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. How long have you been learning English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. 1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 7-9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Others. Please specify……..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When did you start learning English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Others. Please specify…………………..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you ever lived or studied in foreign countries where you often use English for communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes, please specify the country………..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you often have opportunities to practice English outside classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please choose from the following list. (You can choose more than one answer)

- Listening to English programs or news in English
- Listening to English music
- Chatting with friends in English
- Writing emails or letter to friends in English
- Going to English clubs
- Studying English at the language centers
- Reading English newspapers or books
- Others. Please specify ……………

**b. No**

### SECTION 3. Student’s perspectives towards English training in HUTECH

9. In your opinion, the time amount for English subject in HUTECH is:
   - too much
   - enough
   - not enough

10. The number of students in your English class is:
    - too many
    - enough

11. The English level of students in your class is:
    - very equal
    - equal
    - unequal

12. The activity of teaching English for your study major is:
    - effective
    - ineffective

13. If your study major is taught in English, do you think it will help you improve English?
    - Yes
    - No

14. Do you like your study major is taught in English?
    - Yes
    - No. Please indicate reasons ……………

15. Facilities, equipment and teaching aids for your English class are:
    - enough
    - not enough
    - too poor

16. English syllabus is:
    - quite appropriate
    - appropriate
    - not very appropriate
    - inappropriate

17. Are the English tests and exams appropriate with the study programs?
    - Yes
    - No

18. Do you agree that English speaking tests help you improve your English speaking and communication skill?
    - Yes
    - No

19. Which skills and knowledge are usually taught most in English classes? (You can choose three answers)
a. Listening  
b. Speaking-Communication  
c. Grammar  
d. Vocabulary  
e. Reading  
f. Writing

20. Are pair work and group work activities often used in your English classes? 
   a. Very often  
   b. Often  
   c. Sometimes  
   d. Rarely  
   e. Never

21. Is your English teacher enthusiastic? 
   a. Yes  
   b. No

22. Your teacher’s methodology are:  
   a. easy to understand  
   b. normal  
   b. not easy to understand

23. Your teacher’s teaching style is:  
   a. interesting  
   b. normal  
   c. not interesting

SECTION 4. Student’s motivation for English learning

24. Is English necessary for your future career?  
   a. very necessary  
   b. necessary  
   c. not very necessary  
   d. not necessary

25. Evaluate your interest towards English subject.  
   a. very interested  
   b. quite interested  
   c. not very interested  
   d. not interested at all

26. Why do you study English?  
   a. for the tests and exams  
   b. useful for future career  
   c. like English  
   d. Others. Please specify ...............  

27. Your efforts for English study.  
   a. great efforts  
   b. normal  
   c. a few efforts  
   d. no efforts

28. Your preparation before English classes are:  
   a. often  
   b. not often  
   c. never

29. Your English study at home (including homework):  
   a. often  
   b. not often  
   c. never

30. Outside class, do you usually communicate in English?
31. Do you agree with this idea? “Students’ English speaking and listening skill is not good”
   a. strongly agree
   b. agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

32. Please list five attributes of an effective English teacher, in your point of view.

33. Please list five most important factors which help to improve your English.

SECTION 5. Questionnaire evaluation
34. Are there any ambiguous or unclear questions which you find difficult to complete?
   a. Yes. Please specify……..
   b. No
trả lời.
 a. English-Vietnamese
 b. Vietnamese – English
 c. English-English
 d. Not use dictionaries.
 d. Từ điển khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ …………………

PHAN 2. Nên tăng tiếng Anh của sinh viên
5. Bạn học tiếng Anh được bao lâu rồi?
 a. 1-3 năm  b. 4-6 năm  c. 7-9 năm  d. Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……
6. Bạn đã bắt đầu học tiếng Anh từ khi nào?
7. Bạn đã bao giờ sống hoặc học tập ở nước ngoài, nơi mà bạn phải thường xuyên sử dụng tiếng Anh để giao tiếp chưa?
 a. Có. Nếu Có, làm ơn ghi rõ tên nước đó………………
 b. Không
8. Bạn có thường có cơ hội để thực hành tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học hay không?
 a. Có  Ở lớp học, email bằng tiếng Anh
 b. Không

PHAN 3. Quan điểm của sinh viên về việc đào tạo tiếng Anh ở HUTECH
10. Theo ý kiến của bạn, lượng thời gian dành cho môn tiếng Anh của HUTECH là:
 a. quá nhiều  b. đủ  c. không đủ
11. Số lượng sinh viên trong lớp là:
 a. quá nhiều  b. đủ
12. Trình độ tiếng Anh của sinh viên trong lớp bạn là:
 a. rất đồng đều  b. đồng đều  c. không đồng đều
13. Hãy đánh giá việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành đối với bạn:
 a. hiểu quả  b. không hiểu quả
14. Bạn có nghĩ rằng tiếng Anh của bạn sẽ được cải thiện nếu như chuyên ngành học của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
 a. Có
b. Không
15. Bạn có thích chuyên ngành học của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
   a. Có
   b. Không. Làm ơn ghi rõ nguyên nhân………………….
16. Có sở thích vật chất, thiết bị và phương tiện hỗ trợ giảng dạy tiếng Anh trong lớp của bạn thô:
   a. đủ
   b. không đủ
   c. quá thiếu thốn
17. Giáo trình tiếng Anh thô:
   a. khá phù hợp
   b. phù hợp
   c. không phù hợp
18. Các bài thi và kiểm tra tiếng Anh có phù hợp với chương trình học hay không?
   a. Có
   b. Không
19. Bạn có đồng ý rằng hình thức thi vấn đáp tiếng Anh sẽ giúp cải thiện kỹ năng nói và giao tiếp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
   a. Có
   b. Không
20. Những kỹ năng và kiến thức nào được giảng dạy nhiều hơn cả trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn? (Hãy chọn 3 đáp án phù hợp)
   a. Nghe
   b. Nói-Giao tiếp
   c. Ngữ pháp
   d. Từ vựng
   e. Đọc
   f. Viết
21. Các hoạt động cặp/nhóm có thường được sử dụng trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
   a. Rất thường xuyên
   b. Thường xuyên
   c. Thỉnh thoảng
   d. Hiếm khi
   e. Không bao giờ
22. Giáo viên tiếng Anh của bạn có nhiệt tình không?
   a. Có
   b. Không
23. Phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên lớp bạn thô:
   a. dễ hiểu
   b. bình thường
   c. không dễ hiểu
24. Phong cách giảng dạy của giáo viên:
   a. gây hứng thú
   b. bình thường
   c. không gây hứng thú

PHAN 4. Dòng lực của sinh viên đối với việc học tiếng Anh
25. Tiếng Anh có cần thiết đối với bạn không?
   a. rất cần thiết    b. cần thiết    c. không cần thiết làm    d. không cần thiết
26. Đánh giá hứng thú của bạn đối với môn tiếng Anh.
   a. rất hứng thú
   b. khá hứng thú
   c. không hứng thú lắm
   d. hoàn toàn không hứng thú

27. Tại sao bạn học tiếng Anh?
   a. để đối phó với kiểm tra, thi cử
   b. vì tiếng Anh hữu ích cho tương lai
   c. vì thích tiếng Anh
   d. Nguyên nhân khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ ……………

28. Nỗ lực của bạn đối với việc học môn tiếng Anh
   a. rất nỗ lực
   b. bình thường
   c. ít nỗ lực
   d. không nỗ lực

29. Việc chuẩn bị bài trước giờ học tiếng Anh của bạn:
   a. thường xuyên
   b. không thường xuyên
   c. không bao giờ

30. Việc học tiếng Anh của bạn ở nhà (bao gồm bài tập về nhà):
   a. thường xuyên
   b. không thường xuyên
   c. không bao giờ

31. Bạn có thường giao tiếp tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học hay không?
   a. thường xuyên
   b. thỉnh thoảng
   c. hiếm khi
   d. không bao giờ

32. Bạn có đồng ý với ý kiến sau đây? “Kỹ năng nghe-nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên không tốt”
   a. hoàn toàn đồng ý
   b. đồng ý
   c. không đồng ý
   d. hoàn toàn không đồng ý

33. Hãy ghi ra 5 yếu tố cần thiết mà bạn mong muốn ở một giáo viên tiếng Anh

34. Hãy ghi ra 5 nhân tố quan trọng nhất có thể giúp bạn cải thiện tiếng Anh.

35. Có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào không rõ nghĩa khiến cho bạn khó trả lời hay không?
a. Có. Làm ơn ghi rõ câu nào/vì sao…….
b. Không
### SECTION 1. Student’s personal information

1. **Where are you from?**
   - a. Ho Chi Minh City
   - b. Others. Please specify…………………..

2. **How old are you?**
   - a. 17-18
   - b. 19-20
   - c. Others. Please specify…………………..

3. **What is your study major?**
   - ( 1 ) Business Administration
   - ( 2 ) Information Technology
   - ( 3 ) Environment
   - ( 4 ) Biology
   - ( 5 ) Electricity
   - ( 6 ) Mechanical
   - ( 7 ) Banking/Finance/Accounting
   - ( 8 ) Construction
   - ( 9 ) Interior Decoration/Fashion Design
   - ( 10 ) Food Science

4. **What dictionaries do you use when studying English?**
   - a. English-Vietnamese
   - b. Vietnamese – English
   - c. English-English
   - d. Mix of these above dictionaries
   - e. Not use dictionaries

### SECTION 2. Student’s English background

1. **How long have you been learning English?**
   - a. 1-3 years
   - b. 4-6 years
   - c. 7-9 years
   - d. Others. Please specify………

2. **When did you start learning English?**
   - a. Kindergarten
   - b. Primary school
   - c. Secondary school
   - d. High school
   - e. Others. Please specify ………………………

3. **Have you ever lived or studied in foreign countries where you often use English for communication?**
   - a. Yes.
   - b. No

4. **Do you often have opportunities to practice English outside classroom?**
   - a. Yes
   - Please choose from the following list. (You can choose more than one answer)
     - (1) Listening to English programs or news in English
     - (2) Listening to English music
     - (3) Chatting with friends in English
     - (4) Writing emails or letter to friends in English
     - (5) Going to English clubs
     - (6) Studying English at the language centers
SECTION 3. Student’s perspectives towards English training in HUTECH
1. In your opinion, the time amount for English subject in HUTECH is:
   a. too much
   b. enough
   c. not enough
2. The number of students in your English class is:
   a. too many
   b. enough
3. The English level of students in your class is:
   a. very equal
   b. equal
   c. unequal
4. If some subjects in your study major are taught in English, do you think it will help you improve English?
   a. Yes
   b. No
5. Do you like if some subjects in your study major are taught in English?
   a. Yes
   b. No. Please indicate reasons …………………
6. Facilities, equipment and teaching aids for your English class are:
   a. enough
   b. not enough
   c. too poor
7. English syllabus is:
   a. quite appropriate
   b. appropriate
   c. not very appropriate
   d. inappropriate
8. Are the English tests and exams appropriate with the study programs?
   a. Yes
   b. No
9. Do you agree that English speaking tests help you improve your English speaking and communication skill?
   a. Yes
   b. No
10. Which skills and knowledge are usually taught most in English classes? (You can choose three answers)
    a. Listening
    b. Speaking-Communication
    c. Grammar
    d. Vocabulary
    e. Reading
    f. Writing
11. Are pair work and group work activities often used in your English classes?
    a. Very often
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
d. Rarely
e. Never

12. Is your English teacher enthusiastic?
a. Yes
b. Normal
c. No

13. Your teacher’s methodology is:
a. easy to understand
b. normal
c. not easy to understand

14. Your teacher’s teaching style is:
a. interesting
b. normal
c. not interesting

SECTION 4. Student’s motivation and efforts for English learning

1. Is English necessary for your future career?
a. very necessary b. necessary c. not very necessary d. not necessary

2. Evaluate your interest towards English subject.
a. very interested
b. quite interested
c. not very interested
d. not interested at all

3. Why do you study English?
a. for the tests and exams
b. useful for future career
c. like English
d. Others. Please specify .............

4. Your efforts for English study.
a. great efforts
b. normal
c. a few efforts
d. no efforts

5. Your preparation before English classes is:
a. often
b. not often
c. never

6. Your English study at home (including homework):
a. often
b. not often
c. never

7. Outside class, do you usually communicate in English?
a. usually
b. sometimes
c. rarely
d. never

8. Who do you like to teach you English?
a. native English teachers
b. Vietnamese teachers
c. foreign teachers in general, not care where they are from.
d. mix of these above teachers
SECTION 5. Factors which help students improve English
1. Please list five attributes of an effective English teacher, in your point of view

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2. Please list five most important factors which HUTECH should do to help to improve your English

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SECTION 6. Questionnaire evaluation
Are there any ambiguous or unclear questions which you find difficult to complete?
a. Yes. Please specify…….
b. No

PHẦN 1. Thông tin cá nhân
1. Bạn đến từ đâu?
a. TP Hồ Chí Minh
b. Nơi khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ………………..

2. Bạn bao nhiêu tuổi?
a. 17-18
b. 19-20
c. Tuổi khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ………………

3. Bạn học chuyên ngành gì?
(1) Quản trị kinh doanh
(2) Công nghệ thông tin
(3) Môi trường
(4) Sinh học
(5) Điện-Điện tử
(6) Cơ khí
(7) Tài chính/Ngân hàng/Kế toán
(8) Xây dựng
(9) Trang trí nội thất/Thiết kế thời trang
(10) Công nghệ thực phẩm

4. Bạn sử dụng những từ điển nào để học tiếng Anh?
a. Anh-Việt
b. Việt-Anh
c. Anh-Anh
d. Kết hợp các từ điển trên
e. Không sử dụng từ điển

PHẦN 2. Nên tăng tiếng Anh của sinh viên
1. Bạn học tiếng Anh được bao lâu rồi?
   a. 1-3 năm  b. 4-6 năm  c. 7-9 năm  d. Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……….

2. Bạn đã bắt đầu học tiếng Anh từ khi nào?

3. Bạn đã bao giờ sống hoặc học tập ở nước ngoài, nơi mà bạn phải thường xuyên sử dụng tiếng Anh để giao tiếp chưa?
   a. Có.
   Nếu Có, làm ơn ghi rõ tên nước đó……………………
   b. Không

4. Bạn có thường có cơ hội để thực hành tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học hay không?
   a. Có  
   Làm ơn chọn những ý bên dưới đây. (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một)
   (1) Nghe chương trình hoặc bản tin tiếng Anh.
   (2) Nghe nhạc tiếng Anh
   (3) Nói chuyện bằng tiếng Anh với bạn bè, người thân.
   (4) Viết thư, email, … bằng tiếng Anh
   (5) Tham gia câu lạc bộ tiếng Anh
   (6) Học tiếng Anh ở trung tâm Anh ngữ
   (7) Đọc sách/báo tiếng Anh
   (8) Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……………………
   b. Không

PHAN 3. Quan điểm của sinh viên về việc đào tạo tiếng Anh ở HUTECH
1. Theo ý kiến của bạn, lượng thời gian dành cho môn tiếng Anh của HUTECH là:
   a. quá nhiều  b. đủ  c. không đủ

2. Số lượng sinh viên trong lớp là:
   a. quá nhiều  b. đủ

3. Trình độ tiếng Anh của sinh viên trong lớp bạn là:
   a. rất đồng đều  b. đồng đều  c. không đồng đều

4. Bạn có nghĩ rằng tiếng Anh của bạn sẽ được cải thiện nếu như một số môn chuyên ngành của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
   a. Có  
   b. Không

5. Bạn có thích một số môn chuyên ngành của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
   a. Có  
   b. Không. Làm ơn ghi rõ nguyên nhân………………

6. Cơ sở vật chất, thiết bị và phương tiện hỗ trợ giảng dạy tiếng Anh trong lớp của bạn như thế nào?
   a. đủ  
   b. không đủ  c. quá thiếu thốn

7. Giáo trình tiếng Anh có phù hợp với bạn không?
a. khá phù hợp
b. phù hợp
c. không phù hợp làm
d. không phù hợp

8. Các bài thi và kiểm tra tiếng Anh có phù hợp với chương trình học hay không?
   a. Có
   b. Không

9. Bạn có đồng ý rằng hình thức thi và đánh điểm tiếng Anh sẽ giúp cải thiện kỹ năng nói và giao tiếp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
   a. Có
   b. Không

10. Những kỹ năng và kiến thức nào được giảng dạy nhiều hơn cả trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn? (Hãy chọn 3 đáp án phù hợp)
   a. Nghe
   b. Nói-Giao tiếp
c. Ngữ pháp
d. Từ vựng
e. Đọc
f. Viết

11. Các hoạt động cấp/nhóm có thường được sử dụng trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
   a. Rất thường xuyên
   b. Thường xuyên
c. Thỉnh thoảng
d. Hiếm khi
e. Không bao giờ

12. Giáo viên tiếng Anh của bạn có nhiệt tình không?
   a. Có
   b. Bình thường
c. Không

13. Phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên lớp bạn thì:
   a. dễ hiểu
   b. bình thường
c. không dễ hiểu

14. Phong cách giảng dạy của giáo viên:
   a. gây hứng thú
   b. bình thường
c. không gây hứng thú

PHẦN 4. Động lực và nỗ lực của sinh viên đối với việc học tiếng Anh
1. Tiếng Anh có cần thiết đối với bạn không?
   a. rất cần thiết  b. cần thiết  c. không cần thiết làm  d. không cần thiết

2. Đánh giá hứng thú của bạn đối với môn tiếng Anh.
   a. rất hứng thú
   b. khá hứng thú
c. không hứng thú làm
d. hoàn toàn không hứng thú

3. Tại sao bạn học tiếng Anh?
   a. để đối phó với kiểm tra, thi cử
   b. vì tiếng Anh hữu ích cho tương lai
c. vì thích tiếng Anh
**4. Nỗ lực của bạn đối với việc học môn tiếng Anh**

| a. rất nỗ lực |
| b. bình thường |
| c. ít nỗ lực |
| d. không nỗ lực |

**5. Việc chuẩn bị bài trước giờ học tiếng Anh của bạn:**

| a. thường xuyên |
| b. không thường xuyên |
| c. không bao giờ |

**6. Việc học tiếng Anh của bạn ở nhà (bao gồm bài tập về nhà):**

| a. thường xuyên |
| b. không thường xuyên |
| c. không bao giờ |

**7. Bạn có thường giao tiếp tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học hay không?**

| a. thường xuyên |
| b. thường xuyên |
| c. hiếu khách |
| d. không bao giờ |

**8. Bạn muốn học tiếng Anh với giáo viên nào?**

| a. Giáo viên bản xứ đến từ các nước nói tiếng Anh. |
| b. Giáo viên Việt Nam |
| c. Giáo viên nước ngoài nói chung, không phân biệt đến từ nước nào. |
| d. Kết hợp các giáo viên trên |

**PHẦN 5. Những nhân tố giúp sinh viên cải thiện tiếng Anh**

1. Hãy ghi ra 5 yếu tố cần thiết mà bạn mong muốn ở một giáo viên tiếng Anh

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Hãy ghi ra 5 nhân tố quan trọng nhất mà nhà trường cần làm để có thể giúp bạn cải thiện tiếng Anh.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PHẦN 6. Đánh giá bằng câu hỏi**

1. Có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào không rõ nghĩa khiến cho bạn khó trả lời hay không?

| a. Có. Làm ơn ghi rõ câu nào/vi sao……. |
| b. Không |

Appendix E3. Main questionnaire

**SECTION 1. Student’s personal information**

1. Where are you from?
   a. Ho Chi Minh City
   b. Others. Please specify…………………

2. How old are you?
   a. 17-18
   b. 19-20
   c. Others. Please specify…………………

3. What is your study major?
   (1) Business Administration
   (2) Information Technology
   (3) Environment
   (4) Biology
   (5) Electricity
   (6) Mechanical
   (7) Banking/Finance/Accounting
   (8) Construction
   (9) Interior Decoration/Fashion Design
   (10) Food Science

4. What dictionaries do you use when studying English?
   a. English-Vietnamese
   b. Vietnamese – English
   c. English-English
   d. Mix of these above dictionaries
   e. Not use dictionaries

**SECTION 2. Student’s English background**

1. How long have you been learning English?
   a. 1-3 years           b. 4-6 years             c. 7-9 years     d. Others. Please specify…….

2. When did you start learning English?
   a. Kindergarten
   b. Primary school
   c. Secondary school
   d. High school
   e. Others. Please specify ………………………

3. Have you ever lived or studied in foreign countries where you often use English for communication?
   a. Yes.
   If Yes, please specify the country…………………
   b. No

4. Do you often have opportunities to practice English outside classroom?
   a. Yes
   Please choose from the following list. (You can choose more than one answer)
   (1) Listening to English programs or news in English
   (2) Listening to English music
   (3) Chatting with friends in English
   (4) Writing emails or letter to friends in English
   (5) Going to English clubs
   (6) Studying English at the language centers
(7) Reading English newspapers or books  
(8) Others. Please specify……………..

b. No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 3. Student’s perspectives towards English training in HUTECH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In your opinion, the time amount for English subject in HUTECH is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The number of students in your English class is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. too many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English level of students in your class is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. very equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. unequal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If some subjects in your study major are taught in English, do you think it will help you improve English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you like if some subjects in your study major are taught in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No. Please indicate reasons ………………..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Facilities, equipment and teaching aids for your English class are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. too poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. English syllabus is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. quite appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. not very appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are the English tests and exams appropriate with the study programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you agree that English speaking tests help you improve your English speaking and communication skill?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Which skills and knowledge are usually taught most in English classes? (You can choose three answers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Are pair work and group work activities often used in your English classes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Very often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
d. Rarely
e. Never

12. Is your English teacher enthusiastic?
a. Yes
b. Neutral
c. No

13. Your teacher’s methodology is:
a. easy to understand
b. neutral
c. not easy to understand

14. Your teacher’s teaching style is:
a. interesting
b. neutral
c. not interesting

### SECTION 4. Student’s motivation and efforts for English learning

1. Is English necessary for you?
a. very necessary       b. necessary       c. not very necessary       d. not necessary

2. Evaluate your interest towards English subject.
a. very interested
b. quite interested
c. not very interested
d. not interested at all

3. Why do you study English?
a. for the tests and exams
b. useful for future career
c. like English
d. Others. Please specify ……………

4. Your efforts for English study.
a. great efforts
b. neutral
c. a few efforts
d. no efforts

5. Your preparation before English classes is:
a. often
b. not often
c. never

6. Your English study at home (including homework):
a. often
b. not often
c. never

7. Outside class, do you often communicate in English?
a. usually
b. sometimes
c. rarely
d. never

8. Who do you like to teach you English?
a. native English teachers
b. Vietnamese teachers
c. foreign teachers in general, not care where they are from.
d. mix of these above teachers
SECTION 5. Factors which help students improve English
1. Please list five attributes of an effective English teacher, in your point of view

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2. Please list five most important factors which HUTECH should do to help to improve your English

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SECTION 6. Questionnaire evaluation
Are there any ambiguous or unclear questions which you find difficult to complete?

a. Yes. Please specify……..
b. No

PHẦN 1. Thông tin cá nhân
1.Bạn đến từ đâu?
a. TP Hồ Chí Minh
b. Nơi khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……………….

2. Bạn bao nhiêu tuổi?
a.17-18
b.19-20
c. Tuổi khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……………….

3. Bạn học chuyên ngành gì?
(1 )Quản trị kinh doanh
(2 )Công nghệ thông tin
(3 )Môi trường
(4 )Sinh học
(5 )Diễn-Diện tử
(6 )Cơ khí
(7 )Tài chính/Ngân hàng/Kế toán
(8 )Xây dựng
(9 )Trang trí nội thất/Thiết kế thời trang
(10 )Công nghệ thực phẩm

4. Bạn sử dụng những từ điển nào để học tiếng Anh?
a. Anh-Việt
b. Việt-Anh
c. Anh-Anh
d. Kết hợp các từ điển trên
e. Không sử dụng từ điển

PHẦN 2. Nên tăng tiếng Anh của sinh viên
1. Bạn học tiếng Anh được bao lâu rồi?
   a. 1-3 năm  b. 4-6 năm  c. 7-9 năm  d. Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ……..
2. Bạn đã bắt đầu học tiếng Anh từ khi nào?
   e. Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ …………………
3. Bạn đã bao giờ hoạt học tập ở nước ngoài, nơi mà bạn phải thường xuyên sử dụng tiếng Anh để giao tiếp chưa?
   a. Có.
   Nếu Có, làm ơn ghi rõ tên nước đó………………
   b. Không
4. Bạn có thường có cơ hội để thực hành tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học hay không?
   a. Có
   Làm ơn chọn những ý bè dưới đây. (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một)
   (1) Nghe chương trình hoặc bản tin tiếng Anh.
   (2) Nghe nhạc tiếng Anh
   (3) Nói chuyện bằng tiếng Anh với bạn bè, người thân.
   (4) Viết thư, email bằng tiếng Anh
   (5) Tham gia câu lạc bộ tiếng Anh
   (6) Học tiếng Anh ở trung tâm Anh ngữ
   (7) Đọc sách/báo tiếng Anh
   (8) Khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ………………
   b. Không

PHẦN 3. Quan điểm của sinh viên về việc đào tạo tiếng Anh ở HUTECH
1. Theo ý kiến của bạn, lượng thời gian dành cho môn tiếng Anh của HUTECH là:
   a. quá nhiều
   b. đủ
   c. không đủ
2. Số lượng sinh viên trong lớp là:
   a. quá nhiều
   b. hợp lý
3. Trình độ tiếng Anh của sinh viên trong lớp là:
   a. rất đồng đều
   b. đồng đều
   c. không đồng đều
4. Bạn có nghĩ rằng tiếng Anh của bạn sẽ được cải thiện nếu như một số môn chuyên ngành của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
   a. Có
   b. Không
5. Bạn có thích một số môn chuyên ngành của bạn được giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh?
   a. Có
   b. Không. Làm ơn ghi rõ nguyên nhân………………
6. Cơ sở vật chất, thiết bị và phương tiện hỗ trợ giảng dạy tiếng Anh trong lớp của bạn như thế nào?
   a. đủ
   b. không đủ
   c. quá thiếu thốn
7. Giáo trình tiếng Anh có phù hợp với bạn không?
a. khá phù hợp
b. phù hợp
c. không phù hợp làm
d. không phù hợp

8. Các bài thi và kiểm tra tiếng Anh có phù hợp với chương trình học hay không?
a. Có
b. Không

9. Bạn có đồng ý rằng hình thức thi văn đáp tiếng Anh sẽ giúp cải thiện kỹ năng nói và giao tiếp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
a. Có
b. Không

10. Những kỹ năng và kiến thức nào được giảng dạy nhiều hơn cả trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn? (Hãy chọn 3 đáp án phù hợp)
a. Nghe
b. Nói
c. Ngữ pháp
d. Từ vựng
e. Đọc
f. Viết

11. Các hoạt động cá nhân hay nhóm có thường được sử dụng trong lớp tiếng Anh của bạn không?
a. Rất thường xuyên
b. Thường xuyên
c. Thỉnh thoảng
d. Hiếm khi
e. Không bao giờ

12. Giáo viên tiếng Anh của bạn có nhiệt tình không?
a. Có
b. Bình thường
c. Không

13. Phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên lớp bạn thì:
a. dễ hiểu
b. bình thường
c. không dễ hiểu

14. Phong cách giảng dạy của giáo viên:
a. gây hứng thú
b. bình thường
c. không gây hứng thú

PHẦN 4. Động lực và nỗ lực của sinh viên đối với việc học tiếng Anh

1. Tiếng Anh có cần thiết đối với bạn không?
a. rất cần thiết
b. cần thiết
c. không cần thiết làm
d. không cần thiết

2. Đánh giá hứng thú của bạn đối với môn tiếng Anh.
a. rất hứng thú
b. khá hấp dẫn
c. không hấp dẫn làm
d. hoàn toàn không hấp dẫn

3. Tại sao bạn học tiếng Anh?
a. để đổi phó với kiểm tra, thi cử
b. vì tiếng Anh hữu ích cho tương lai
c. vì thích tiếng Anh
d. Nguyên nhân khác. Làm ơn ghi rõ …………..

4. Nỗ lực của bạn đối với việc học môn tiếng Anh
   a. rất nỗ lực
   b. bình thường
   c. ít nỗ lực
   d. không hề nỗ lực

5. Việc chuẩn bị bài trước giờ học tiếng Anh của bạn:
   a. thường xuyên
   b. không thường xuyên
   c. không bao giờ

6. Viêc học tiếng Anh của bạn ở nhà (bao gồm bài tập về nhà):
   a. thường xuyên
   b. không thường xuyên
   c. không bao giờ

7. Bạn có thương giao tiếp tiếng Anh ngoại lớp học hay không?
   a. thường xuyên
   b. thỉnh thoảng
   c. hiếm khi
   d. không bao giờ

8. Bạn muốn học tiếng Anh với giáo viên nào?
   a. Giáo viên bản xứ đến từ các nước nói tiếng Anh.
   b. Giáo viên Việt Nam
   c. Giáo viên nước ngoài nói chung, không phân biệt đến từ nước nào.
   d. Kết hợp các giáo viên trên

PHAN 5. Những nhân tố giúp sinh viên cải thiện tiếng Anh
1. Hãy ghi ra 5 yếu tố cần thiết mà bạn mong muốn ở một giáo viên tiếng Anh

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                        -----------------------------
                        -----------------------------

2. Hãy ghi ra 5 nhân tố quan trọng nhất mà nhà trường cần làm để có thể giúp bạn cải thiện tiếng Anh.

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                        -----------------------------
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                        -----------------------------

PHAN 6. Đánh giá bảng câu hỏi
1. Có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào không rõ nghĩa khiến cho bạn khó trả lời hay không?
   a. Có. Làm ơn ghi rõ câu nào/vì sao………
   b. Không
Appendix F. Interview Questions

Appendix F1. Questions for teachers

1. How long have you been teaching English totally?
2. Have you been teaching English in the same place or different places?
3. How long have you been teaching English in HUTECH?
4. Where did you graduate? And when?
5. When you were an English student, what was your favorite learning style?
6. What is your opinion of the recent English curriculum in HUTECH?
7. How do you evaluate the recent syllabus used in HUTECH?
8. What is your favorite teaching methodology?
9. What teaching aids support you most in your English teaching?
10. What is your opinion about facilities and equipment for English teaching and learning in HUTECH?
11. What do you think about the support from HUTECH managers for English training?
12. What do you say about HUTECH students’ attitude towards English subject?
13. If some students say that they are not motivated to learn English, what will you do to help them?
14. What do you think should be done by HUTECH to improve teacher recruitment and to attract good teachers?
15. What do you think the ideal English training program would be like?
Appendix F2. Questions for managers

1. How long have you been in management position related to English teaching and learning?
2. How long have you been teaching English?
3. Have long have you worked in HUTECH?
4. Where did you graduate? And when?
5. Do you think English subject is important to students in HUTECH? Why?
6. What do you know about the facilities for English training in HUTECH?
7. What do you know about the recent English curriculum in HUTECH?
8. What do you know about the current syllabus for English training in HUTECH?
9. What have you noticed about English teaching in HUTECH?
10. What do you think should be done to improve teacher recruitment and to attract good teachers?
11. What do you think should be done for professional development?
12. How do you evaluate English teaching and learning activity in HUTECH?
13. What is your role in supporting the English improvements of HUTECH students?
14. What strategies do you think should be made to improve English teaching and learning in HUTECH?
Appendix G. Interview Schedule for Teachers and Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration (minutes)</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>07/04/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>40:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>19/04/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>46:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>25/04/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>40:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>18/05/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>38:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>23/05/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>38:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>29/05/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>47:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>03/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>49:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 8</td>
<td>06/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>43:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 9</td>
<td>09/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>39:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher10</td>
<td>15/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>59:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher11</td>
<td>20/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>55:00</td>
<td>Audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher12</td>
<td>28/06/2012</td>
<td>Staff room</td>
<td>38:00</td>
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Appendix H. Class Observation Notes

Class:
Teacher’s name:
Time:
Number of students:
Teaching aids:
Teaching methods:
Teaching and learning procedures:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Teacher’s instructions and activities</th>
<th>Students’ activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
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Researcher’s comments:
Appendix I. Class Observation Schedule

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<th>Instruments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
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<td>19/04/2012</td>
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<td>Teacher 4</td>
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<td>28/04/2012</td>
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## Appendix J. Tables of Quantitative Data

### Table 1: Respondents’ hometown

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<td>2.9</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
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Table 2: Respondents’ ages

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Table 3: The time students started their English learning

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Table 4: The length of time students learned English

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<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td>4-6 years</td>
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<td>7-9 years</td>
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<td>80.1</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>95.6</td>
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<td>96.3</td>
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<td>13 years</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>98.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.4</td>
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Table 5: Students’ opportunities to live or study overseas

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Table 6: Types of dictionaries students use for English study

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<th>Cases</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
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<tr>
<td>English - Vietnamese</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese - English</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English - English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of the above dictionaries</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not use dictionaries</td>
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<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>107.4%</td>
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Table 7: Students’ opportunities to practise English outside classes

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<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
Table 8: English practice activities outside classes

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<th>Cases</th>
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<th>Col Response %</th>
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<td>12.2%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music in English</td>
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<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting with friends, relatives in English</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters, emails in English</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining English clubs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English at foreign languages centers</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading books/articles in English</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching films in English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing part-time jobs which requires English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing games in English</td>
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<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English vocabulary through labels, signs in English</td>
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<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Table 9: Students’ evaluation of the syllabus

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<td>34.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not very appropriate</td>
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<td>29.8</td>
<td>96.3</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: The helpfulness of using English as a medium of instruction in some major subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Students’ support for the use of English in teaching major subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Reasons for which students do not like their major subjects taught in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for which the students do not like their major subjects being taught in English</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to keep up with classmates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand lessons</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs are difficult</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of failing the exams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of lessons will be affected</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English ability is not good enough</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers can not teach the lessons well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Time allocated for English subject in HUTECH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14: English skills and knowledge being taught in classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English skills and knowledge being taught in classes</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Teachers’ enthusiasm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Students’ opinions about teachers’ teaching style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interesting</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Teachers’ teaching methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy to understand</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not easy to understand</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18: The use of pair work and group work in English classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Types of teachers who students prefer to study with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers from native English</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese teachers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign teachers in general</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of teachers</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Students’ opinions about facilities and equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too poor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21: Number of students in English class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Students’ English levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very equal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23: Students’ interests toward English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite interested</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very interested</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested at all</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: The necessity of English to students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very necessary</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very necessary</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 25: Reasons for studying English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for English studying</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For exams and tests</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because English is useful for future</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because students like English</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The requirement of current part time jobs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To watch movies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For entertainment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To study abroad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>102.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 26: Effort for English learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much effort</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little effort</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effort</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 27: Students’ lesson preparation before classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 28: English study at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29: Communication in English outside class time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30: The appropriateness of the tests’ content with the course’s content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>85.3</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 31: The role of the speaking tests in the improvement of students’ English speaking and communication skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected factors in an English teacher</td>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>Col Response %</td>
<td>Col Response %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic, friendly and humorous</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good pronunciation, clear voice</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting teaching style and effective teaching method</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amusement ability to make lively and comfortable classes</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern, respect, understand students</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Young and good looking</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on teaching various skills for students</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Check students' work regularly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use English as instruction in classes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>2.5%</td>
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<td>Native English speaking teachers</td>
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<td>1.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a passion for teaching job</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair in assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good at technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Vietnamese and English culture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High qualifications and overseas study</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>369.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 33: Students’ expectations about HUTECH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations about the university</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
<th>Col Response %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open high quality classes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and equipment</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clubs and activities relating to English improvement</td>
<td>146</td>
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<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly environment</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>More time for English</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More practice and regular students’ work check</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful and listen to students’ ideas</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable tuition fees</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication in English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find opportunities for students to travel abroad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classify students in levels</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have connection with enterprises and companies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university’ signs should be in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use English in teaching and learning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>404.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K. Sample of Textbook Pages

American Headway, book 2 (Soars & Soars, 2009)

11 What if …?

STARTER 1 Who is the leader of your country? Who do you think is the most important leader in the world? Why?
2 What would you do if you were leader of the world? Share your ideas with the class. Whose ideas do you think are best?

THE GLOBAL VILLAGE
Second conditional
1 Read about the global village. Complete the sentences below with the verbs in the box.

would live would be would control wouldn’t have wouldn’t know

If the world were a village of 100 people …
1. There [would be] 60 Asians, 14 Africans, 12 Europeans, 8 Latin Americans, 5 North Americans, and 1 from the South Pacific.
2. Fifty-one would be male and 49 female.
3. Eighty ___ ___ in poor housing.
4. Fifty wouldn’t have enough food.
5. Twenty-four ___ ___ any electricity. (And most of the other 76 would only use it at night.)
6. Seventeen ___ ___ how to read.
7. Seven would have access to the Internet.
8. Five ___ ___ 32% of the village’s money.
9. Only one would have a college education.
10. One person ___ ___ every year, but two babies would be born.

2 Ask and answer questions about the global village with a partner.
• How many people… be women?
• How many people… live in poor housing?
• …everybody have enough food?
• …most people have electricity?
• How many people … be very rich?
• …most people have access to the Internet?

The Global Village

The world currently has a population of over 6 billion, and it is growing by over 200,000 every day. Ten countries each have more than 100 million people. And China and India both have over a billion. Such big numbers aren’t very easy to imagine. But what if we imagined the population of the world as a village of just 100 people? What would this global village be like?
GRAMMAR SPOT

1. Look at these two sentences. Which describes the real world? Which is imagined?
   China and India have over a billion people.
   If the world were a village of 100 people, 51 would be male, and 49 female.
2. Notice that was can change to were in the if clause.
   If the world were a village, ... (You can also say if the world was a village, ...)
3. Read these sentences. Which sentence is more probable?
   If I have time, I'll (will) ... 
   If I had a lot of money, I'd (would) ...
Which tenses are used in the if clauses? How are the result clauses formed?

PRACTICE
Discussing grammar

1. Work with a partner. How many sentences can you make from the chart?

   If I were you, I’d travel the world.
   I’d travel the world.
   I wouldn’t travel the world.

   a politician, the answer, you, the time, a 550 bill, in a big city.

2. Put the verbs in the correct form.
   1. If I _______ (be) rich, I ______ (travel) around the world.
      First I _______ (go) to Canada, then I _______ (go) to New York.
   2. If he _______ (work) harder, he _______ (have) more money.
   3. I _______ (go) to work if I _______ (feel) better, but I feel terrible.
   4. If I _______ (can) speak perfect English, I _______ (not be) in this classroom.
   5. What _______ you _______ (do) if a stranger _______ (give) you $1 million?
   6. What _______ you _______ (say) if I _______ (ask) you to marry me?

   If I were you...

3. We can give advice using If I were you, I’d...

   Work with a partner. Give these people advice.
   1. I found a wallet in the street.
      If I were you, I’d take it to the nearest police station.
   2. I don’t like my sister’s boyfriend.
   3. I had an argument with my mother.
   4. I never have enough money.
   5. My neighbors make a lot of noise.
   6. I really need to exercise more.

   

Unit II - What if...?
WHO KNOWS?

might

1. Look at the pictures of Nisa and Victor. They are both students. Where are they from? What differences do you think there are between their lives?

2. (a) Listen to Nisa and Victor talking about their ambitions and complete the texts.

3. Answer the questions.
   1. Who is certain about what they want to do? Who is not?
   2. Who is more ambitious? What makes you think this?
   3. Where does Nisa live? What does her parents do?
   4. What does Victor enjoy studying?
   5. Who wants to live in another country?
   6. What jobs are they thinking of doing?

4. What are some of Nisa’s plans and ambitions?
   - She’s taking her high school exams next year.
   - a job in an office in town.
   - to college.
   - save some money.
   - an architect.

5. What are some of the possibilities in Victor’s life?
   - He might go to art school.
   - a designer.
   - Spanish language and literature in college.
   - in the U.S. for a while.

---

Nisa Isaacs, 14
Cape Town, South Africa

I live with my parents in a shantytown outside the city. My parents collect old newspaper and junk to sell. They don’t make much money, so we’re poor. But I’m going to change all that.

I love school. I’m studying very hard because I want to do my high school exams next year. Then I want a job in an office in town. But that isn’t my main ambition. I really want to go to college. So I want to save some money.

I’m planning to be an architect. Then I can build my parents a proper house.

---

Victor Lopez, 16
Monterrey, Mexico

I’m studying for my high school diploma, but I’m not sure what I want to do for a while. I love doing art at school, so I might go to art school.

That would be fun. I like art and I want to be a designer.

But I also enjoy Spanish language and literature, so I might go to college. I might not pass my tests. Do we add a with he/she/it? Do we use do/does in the negative?

---

GRAMMAR SPOT

1. Might means the same as perhaps... will.
   “What are you doing tonight?”
   “I don’t know. I might go out, or I might stay at home.”

2. Might is a modal auxiliary like can and must.
   I might go to art school.
   I might not pass my tests.

   Do we add a with he/she/it?
   Do we use do/does in the negative?

   Grammar Reference 11.2 p. 134
PRACTICE
Discussing grammar

1. Work with a partner. Choose the correct verb in the sentences.
   1. A What’s for dinner? B We’re having / we might have lamb. It’s in the oven.
   2. A What time are we eating? B Don’t worry. It’ll be / it might be ready before your TV show.
   3. A Who’s eating with us? B I’ve invited Jerry, but he’ll be / he might be late. It depends on the traffic.
   4. I’m going into town tomorrow. I’m having / I might have lunch with Jo at 1:00.
   5. A Are you going to take a winter vacation this year? B I am / I might. I haven’t decided yet.

   [CD] 27 Listen and check. Practice the conversations.

Possibilities

2. Make conversations with your partner about these future possibilities. One of you isn’t sure about anything.

   What kind of car are you going to buy?
   Well, I might get a Hyundai or a Toyota.

   1. A What kind/car/buy? B Hyundai / Toyota
   2. A Where/on vacation? B Canada / Mexico
   3. A What/have to eat? B steak / order a pizza
   4. A Who/going to the dance with? B ask Tony / ask Richard
   5. A What/do it/won the lottery? B give it all away / travel the world

   [CD] 27 Listen and compare. What else do the people say?

3. Ask and answer questions with a partner about your possible future plans...
   • after class • on the weekend
   • this evening • for your next vacation

LISTENING AND SPEAKING
At a crossroads in life

1. Look at the picture. What do you do at a crossroads? What do you think the expression “at a crossroads in life” means? Can you give any examples?

2. [CD] 24 Listen to three people who have reached a crossroads in their lives. Complete the chart.

   Andy 31 Lucy 23 Maureen 68

   What has happened? What choices do they have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Lucy</th>
<th>Maureen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   [CD] 27 Listen again and check your answers. What reasons do they have for and against their possible choices?

   What do you think?

   What would you do if you were … ?
   • Andy • Lucy • Maureen

   Discuss each situation with a partner, and then with the class. Does everybody agree what they should do?

3. [CD] 25 Listen to Andy, Lucy, and Maureen a year later. Were they right?

   WRITING Writing for talking. p. 109
READING AND SPEAKING

Supervolcano

1 Discuss the questions.
   1. What famous volcanoes are there in the world? How many can you name?
   2. Are they active or extinct? What do you know about them?

2 What do you think a “supervolcano” is? Read the first half of the article about them. Check the highlighted words in your dictionary. Mark the sentences true(✓), false(✗), or don’t know (?)
   1. A supervolcano is a volcano that has recently erupted.
   2. Not many people know that Yellowstone Park is a supervolcano.
   3. Yellowstone Park is an extinct supervolcano.
   4. About 40 supervolcanoes have been found on our planet.
   5. The most recent eruption of a supervolcano was in Yellowstone Park.
   6. It is unlikely that another supervolcano will erupt.

3 Read the second half of the article. Check the highlighted words, and put the events in the correct order.
   If Yellowstone volcano erupted, …
   - There would be no summer in Europe.
   - 87,000 people would die immediately.
   - The tropical forests would die.
   - Iceland might start to help feed the world.
   - Warmer countries would have famines.
   - Only 10% of our sunlight would reach the earth.
   Check the answers in class, and then read them aloud to a partner.

4 Read the last part of the article. Why is there no need for us to worry?

5 What do these numbers refer to in the article?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 million</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>9,000</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>74,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

What do you think?
- Where do you think there might be other volcanic eruptions in the future?
- Do you think scientists will one day find ways of stopping these disasters? How best could they help us?
- If an eruption did happen, what do you think you could do to try to survive? Work in groups, and think about food, housing, heating, and clothing. Tell the class your ideas.

86 Unit 11 - What if…?
EVERYDAY ENGLISH

Exclamations with so and such

1. Read and listen to the sentences.

   I was excited. I was very excited. I was so excited!

   Do you think so is used more in written or in spoken English? What effect does it have?

2. Look at the sentences. When do we use so, such a(n), each, so many, and so much?

   I was so surprised.
   We had such terrible weather!
   It was such a shock!
   There were so many problems!
   He has such crazy friends!
   We had so much work!

   Grammar Reference 11.3 p. 135

Music of English - sentence stress

Read these sentences aloud. Underline the main stress.

I was so worried! It's such a nice day! We had so much fun!

CD12 Listen, check, and repeat. Practice saying the sentences in Exercise 2.

3. Complete the sentences in A with so, such a, such, so many, or so much. Then match them with the sentences in B.

   A   B
   1. Their house is ____________.
      I could eat for days.
   2. There were _________ people at the party.
      I don’t know where it all went.
   3. I’m _________.
      You really didn’t have to.
   4. Jane and Pete are _________ nice people!
      She understands every word I say.
   5. I’ve spent _________ money this week!
      There was nowhere to dance.
   6. A present! For me? You’re _________ nice!
      Thank you so much for inviting us.
   7. We had _________ great time!
      But I can’t stand their kids.
   8. Molly’s _________ smart dog!
      I don’t know how they live in it.

CD13 Listen and check. Practice the exclamations.

4. Use so and such.

   What can you say …?
   • about your friends or family
   • at the end of a long trip
   • when you finish an interesting book with a sad ending
   • if you go around a friend’s new apartment
   • at the end of a wonderful meal
   • in a fight with your boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife
Vocabulary and Speaking

Literal phrasal verbs

1 Phrasal verbs consist of a verb + adverb/preposition. Some phrasal verbs are literal.

I want to go away and travel. (= go + away)
Take off your coat. (= take + off)
She gave away all her money. (= give + away)

2 Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

out at down on back

1. Put _______ something warm. It's cold today.
2. There's some ice cream in the freezer. Can you get it _______?
3. Dave! Come here and sit _______ next to me.
4. Look _______ the countryside. Isn't it beautiful?
5. When are you going _______ to your country?

3 Do or act out the actions to a partner. Can your partner guess the phrasal verb?

pick (something) up
look for (something)
turn (something) off
lie down
turn around
try (something) on
throw (something) away

4 Complete the sentences with a phrasal verb from Exercise 3.

1. I'm _______ my glasses. Have you seen them anywhere?
2. I like these jeans. Can I _______ them _______?
3. You shouldn't drop trash on the ground! _______ it _______.
4. Don't put _______ the newspaper. I haven't read it yet.
5. If you don't feel well, go and _______.
6. "Do you like my dress?" "Let me see. _______. Yes. Very nice."
7. Why are all these lights on? _______ them _______.

Idiomatic phrasal verbs

5 Some phrasal verbs are idiomatic.

I can't finish this crossword. I give up! (= quit)
The plane took off. (= leave the ground)
Let's put off today's meeting till next week. (= postpone)

6 Do or act out the actions. Can your partner guess the phrasal verb?

look up a word
my car's broken down get along with (somebody)
run out of milk
Look out!

7 Complete the sentences with a phrasal verb from Exercise 5.

1. I've _______, so I can't have any cereal.
2. Can I _______ in your dictionary?
3. My boss is a great guy. I _______ well _______ him.
4. Oh, no! Our car's _______, and there isn't a gas station for miles!
5. _______. There's broken glass on the floor.

Talking about you

Complete the sentences with one of the phrasal verbs on this page in the correct form.

1. How do you _______ your parents?
2. When did you last fly somewhere? Did your flight _______ on time?
3. Do you _______ all your trash, or do you recycle some of it?
4. When did you last _______ something _______ in a clothes store? Did you buy it?
5. When you see litter in the street, do you _______ it _______?
6. Have you ever _______ gas? What did you do?
7. If you won a lot of money, would you _______ any of it _______? To who?