

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS'  
BELIEFS AND LEARNING PREFERENCES  
AND  
NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND  
TEACHING PRACTICES**

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by  
**Truong Sa NGUYEN**  
School of Education  
University of Leicester

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between foreign language learning beliefs and preferences of 2 Vietnamese learners and beliefs and practices of 2 Native English speaking teachers in a private English school in Vietnam. The learners were not satisfied with learning English in public schools and had many expectations on the course and the teachers while the teachers had to make their learners pleased. Beliefs were reviewed as determinations of actions; beliefs entail knowledge, values, and attitude, and relate closely to identity and experience. The researcher adopted an interpretivist paradigm and three qualitative methods: Repgrid interview, Stimulated recall interview, and The COLT as an observation schedule. The interview data was coded inductively with content analysis method to build up the subjects' beliefs and belief systems. Then, the systems were compared to find the relationships between their beliefs. To see how their beliefs related with learning preferences and teaching practices, the researcher analysed what they said and made use of the video record of their classroom activities; besides, the teachers' beliefs were compared with the timing calculation of the activities in their classes. The results showed that beliefs about language learning affected strongly the participants' preferred ways of teaching and learning and there were tight matches between the teachers' beliefs and actions in class. There were influences of beliefs of the teachers and learners on each other, they were not direct influences but through their interpretations of the classroom events. However, the influences from the teacher were much clearer. After the course, the learners' preferences and beliefs about some learning activities were changed and became more reflective. They also started to recognize the benefits of different ways of learning English. Meanwhile, the teachers' interpretation of their learners' expectations, learning preferences, and levels strongly affected what and how they taught.

**Key words:**

*beliefs, actions, preferences, native teacher, foreign language learning*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CELTA: | Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults |
| CLT:   | Communicative Language Teaching                    |
| EFL:   | English as a Foreign Language                      |
| GT:    | Grammar Translation                                |
| LLB:   | Language learning belief                           |
| NT:    | Native English speaking teacher                    |
| NNT:   | Non-native English speaking teacher                |
| NS:    | Native speaker of English                          |
| NNS:   | Non-native speaker of English                      |
| PES:   | Private English Schools                            |
| TESOL: | Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages |

## TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| T             | Teacher  |
| L             | Learner (not identified)   |
| LL            | several learners at once or the whole class                                  |
| L1, L2        | an identified learner  |
| <u>Word</u>   | Speaker emphasis   |
| ((...))       | Actions/body languages   |
| (.)           | Very short untimed paused  |
| (2.0)         | Interval between utterances  |
| ° ... °       | Utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk |
| [ ...         |  |
| [ ...         | overlap utterances   |
| ↑             | Marked shifts into higher pitch in the utterance following the arrow         |
| <i>Italic</i> | Inaccurate pronunciation   |
| [th]          | Pronunciation  |

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Research background and problem**

"Vietnam's linguistic history reflects its political history." (Denham, 1992, p. 61). Foreign interventions and the subsequent use of foreign languages (FL) as the national or official language overwhelmed most of the nation's 4000-year history. Vietnam not only longed and fought to find its own national language, but also had to use FL for national development (Do, 2006). Until the twentieth century, the nearly simultaneous, direct involvements in Vietnam of powers such as China, France, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States exerted various profound influences on language attitudes, language change, and language choice and use (Do, 2006). Therefore, Vietnam's language education has been directly influenced by its relationships with China, France, Russia, and the US (Wright, 2002). However, under centuries-long Chinese domination, Vietnamese culture and education include a strong Confucian heritage.

When Vietnam's open-door policy came into existence in 1986, for the first time the country witnessed a new change in diplomatic relations with the call for cooperation with every nation regardless of political differences. The adoption of a free, market-oriented economy helped attract a considerable number of English-speaking visitors and business people to Vietnam (Denham, 1992). Social demands have forged the emergence of English as the language for broader communication and cooperation. English has thus gained its role as the main FL taught and used in the country (Do, 2006; Wilson, 1993a, b). As a result, private English schools (PESs) have been mushrooming to serve this increasing demand.

In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), as recorded by HCMC Education and Training Department, from 2008 to 2009, the number of PESs jumped from 166 to 207 and the number of language learners increased from 659.200 to 721.824, accounting for 63% of the total number of learners in the private educational sectors (Nhan Dan News). Teaching in these private schools is primarily designed to develop communicative competence, with few curricular demands and pressure of examinations. When students are treated as customers, and the market in English education becomes more competitive, then serving learners' beliefs and expectations becomes the goal of PESs. These PESs can choose their own up-to-date teaching materials and types of assessment in order to attract good business in English language provision. Many of these courses taught by native English-speaking teachers (NTs), operate in the evenings, teach both adults and children, and offer a communicative approach and training for international assessment (IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC) of the four-macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Different from public schools, learners at PESs are normally much freer to choose when and what program to study, and have the right to change class or complain when they are not pleased with their classes. In this environment, NTs can teach in small classes with up to fifteen students in each, and are given much power to choose the methods they want to teach, but the primary requirements for them are satisfying the learners' expectations, maintaining their attendance rate during the course, and ensuring a high rate of re-registration for the next course. Besides, the payment for them is definitely much higher than for their Vietnamese counterparts.

Meanwhile, in the public sector, the main FL is English, though other languages such as French and Chinese are also offered in some schools. English is taught as a compulsory subject in more than 10 school years from secondary to university level. Besides, the primary grade students in some developed areas have had to start learning English very early in recent

years. According to the Ministry of Education and Training's statistics (2006), 67% of students in lower secondary schools and 86% in upper secondary schools study English for at least three hours a week, and time for English class is even higher when they go up to tertiary level. During their time at university, non-major students of English are normally required to have 200 hours of English. However, the outcome is still not as good as the authorities, educators, and learners expect (Utsumi & Doan, 2009). In the public schools, there are overly crowded classes, poor equipment, controlled teaching materials, and many inadequately trained teachers (Le, 2011). Despite the need for oral communication skills, teacher-centred, book-centred, and grammar-translation methods are still widely used and the students are still receiving knowledge of English directly from their teachers (Denham, 1992; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Le, 2002; Tomlinson & Bao, 2004; Pham, 2005; Sullivan, 2000; Le & Barnard, 2009). In addition, the public curriculum is exam-driven, being geared to the written examination of grammar, reading and translation (Denham, 1992). Perhaps, with such exam-driven instruction and teacher-centred method, the students may achieve high grades in examinations, but fail to communicate effectively in real-life situations, and feel embarrassed, confused, and lacking in confidence when communicating (Hoang, 1999; Hoang, 2000; Le, 2011). Besides, because of institutional hierarchies and the lack of learner feedback policies, the students have never articulated or accounted for their learning difficulties (Tomlinson & Bao, 2004).

In such a context, Vietnamese learners seem to believe that they should be taught in another way, not to pass exams (Tran & Baldauf, 2007; Utsumi & Doan, 2009; Le, 2011) and an increasing number of them are likely to go to PESs for extra English class with the expectations to be taught in "magical" ways, with opportunities to learn with native English-speaking teachers to improve their English. Sahin (2005) noticed this tendency by stating that

NTs are becoming models of good language teachers in non-English-speaking countries because of their fluency and accuracy in their mother tongue, and employing NTs has become the only standard way to solve the shortage of qualified English teachers; having an NT "has become a trump card for schools that are in competition with other schools to attract more students" (p. 31). Therefore, tuition fees paid for such classes are very high, especially in classes with 100% of the class by NTs.

A large number of learners of different ages, social backgrounds, and linguistic competences are seeking ways of learning/teaching to satisfy their common expectations and communicative goals in language learning, rather than simply deciding to switch to an environment that suits their individual learning styles, strategies, or practices. Thus, it seems that learners are evaluating traditional ways of teaching/learning as insufficient and have their own beliefs about how English should be learned and taught. Consequently, a study into language learning beliefs (LLBs) in this context will make an interesting angle from which to examine what happens to learners and NTs in an EFL setting when the students are exposed to more communicative ways of teaching, when they learn with high expectations without being under compulsory curriculum constraints. Meanwhile, there is strong pressure for the NTs, who were trained to teach communicatively but have no experience in EFL learning, to accommodate to learners' beliefs about how they learn, and how they should be taught.

## **1.2. Context of the study**

AMA (approval to use the real name for academic purpose was gained from the school) has its origin in AITMA (American Information Technology & Management Association dating back to the 1960s in the USA). Vietnam was one of its first destinations with the foundation of American Academy Vietnam ([www.ama.edu.vn](http://www.ama.edu.vn)).

As advertised on the website, in 2010, AMA signed a contract with Cleverlearn HCM, one of the leading English training schools in Vietnam, to provide training materials and management procedures for the improvement of English teaching in 6 branches of Cleverlearn HCM. Courses officially delivered in the curriculum include: Summer Fantasy, CleverKid (English for children), CleverTeen (English for teenagers), General English, Business English, IELTS, and TOEFL iBT. AMA has become official partner of British Council, Cambridge Vietnam, TESOL Global, Cambridge ESOL of Michigan University, Ton Duc Thang University, HCMC University of Medicine, RMIT University Vietnam, and St. John International University.

AMA has over 80 teachers, and the criteria for teacher recruitment are that teachers must be highly experienced and knowledgeable about EFL students and have TESOL or CELTA certificates. Besides, the teachers are advertised as being patient, dedicated, and have a passion for the educational career. After being recruited, a teacher can teach the given course book and the syllabus in the ways he/she prefers as long as the learners get on well with the class. However, as advertised, the teaching method of the school aims to give students more time to interact with native teachers, break through communication barriers such as shyness or hesitation, develop language skills, especially listening and speaking, and practice pronunciation with NTs. In addition to correcting grammatical and writing errors, the school also ensures that the teachers emphasize on-the-spot memorisation and practice, resulting in the fastest and clearest outcomes from each session. For learning facilities, each AMA branch provides a Movie room with modern projector, screen and sound system, learning center with a library of updated course books, reference books, materials, CDs and VCDs for students, Lab room with computers installed with English learning software for the optimal benefits of students. Each classroom is equipped with an LCD, a computer, a CD player, an



air conditioner; and there are from ten to fifteen separated chairs (a small individual desk is attached in each chair to allow mobility) arranged in a horseshoe layout in each class.

From the policies and facilities, it can be inferred that the school is trying to provide an interactive learning environment, encouraging communication in language class, and is ready to please the needs and preferences of different learners. The current learners of AMA are various, from young learners, teenagers, to adult learners; they can be still students or have a job. Coming to the school, firstly, they discuss with the school's consultants their personal needs, then they are arranged to take a placement test, and they are assigned to a class based on their needs, their test results, and their available time.

### **1.3. Research aim/Objectives**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between students' and their native teachers' LLBs in PESs. My study of LLBs will focus on understanding the interrelations between teachers' and learners' beliefs in the setting of a PES in HCMC, Vietnam; and AMA was chosen for the fieldwork (see section 3.8 for the rationale).

I examine the learners' beliefs and preferred ways of learning, how they might influence their teachers' beliefs and ways of teaching, and how the teachers' beliefs might affect their practices and in turn influence the learners' beliefs and learning preferences. Besides, this study also investigates whether and how learners change their preferences and expectations, and therefore either adjust or suspend their beliefs as a result of participating in the class.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

The general question addressed in this study is: What is the relationship between Vietnamese students' beliefs and preferences and native English-speaking teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in a PES in Ho Chi Minh City?

This question can be answered by addressing these specific questions.

1. What are the learners' beliefs? How do these beliefs influence their preferred ways of learning?
2. What are the teachers' beliefs? How do these beliefs inform their ways of teaching?
3. How does the learning experience with the particular teacher influence the learner's belief?
4. How do the teachers' beliefs about learners influence their classroom teaching?

### **1.5. Importance/Value of the study**

Practically, the study's result is intended to help private schools in Vietnam and other similar contexts to enhance their competitiveness in the market and serve their learners better. In addition, the results will be universally available for EFL teachers to have a raised awareness of the nature and effects of the relationships between teachers' and students' beliefs.

Theoretically, this empirical study will contribute to the current literature by relating not only teachers' with learners' beliefs but also teachers' beliefs with their on-going practices.

### **1.6. Definitions of terms**

#### **Actions:**

In Activity Theory (Leont'ev, 1974), actions are goal-directed behaviours and activities; they are conscious as one holds goals in mind (Dickinson, 1985; Nardi, 1996). This implies that reflective thought initiates and controls the actions. However, in line with Broadbeck (1963), *action*, as I use it in this study, is an umbrella term to cover both conscious and goal-directed behaviours derived from experience following training or self-development

(Dickinson, 1985; Leont'ev, 1974; Nardi, 1996), and unreflective automatic behaviours learned through socialization (Ajzen, 1991; Dickinson, 1985; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1991); both are also referred to as "practices" (Johannessen, 1988; Reckwitz, 2002).

### **Attitude:**

Definition of attitude and how it is related to value and beliefs are presented in section 2.1.3.

### **Beliefs:**

Pajares (1992) defined belief as an "individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316). In section 2.1.1 there is a discussion on the similarities and differences between beliefs and knowledge.

### **Communicative language teaching (CLT):**

Brown (1994) noted that CLT is based on a broad theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. CLT can, from a multidisciplinary perspective, be seen to derive from linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research (Savignon, 2007), and this broad theory has generated many ways of understandings, descriptions, and uses.

Canale and Swain (1980) contended that communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Savignon (2002) emphasized that CLT puts the focus on the learner: "Learner communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals in terms of functional competences" (p. 3). She proposed five components of a communicative curriculum that includes language arts, language for a purpose, personal second language

(L2) use, theater arts, and beyond the classroom. Breen and Candlin (1980, p. 98) set out the essentials of a communicative classroom that "becomes the meeting place for realistically motivated communication-as-learning, communication about learning, and meta-communication".

Overall, the common agreement is that there is a need for meaningful communication that supports the language learning process, and thus, classroom activities should focus on learners' real communication. Some of its main principles are use of authentic language in the classroom tasks, cooperation among students, emphasis on context and meaning, and emphasis on learning centered activities and teacher's coaching role (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richard & Rodgers, 2001).

### **Constructs:**

Constructs are personal interpretations and assessments of the environment (Coshall, 2000). They are "the discriminations which a person makes" (Fromm, 2004, p. 145). Kelly (1955) and Fransella and Bannister (1977) described that a construct emerges when a person makes senses of a way that two or more things are alike and thereby are different from a third or more things. Hence, each construct involves two poles, one at each end of its dichotomy.

### **Declarative and procedural knowledge:**

Johnson (1996) and Lightbown and Spada (2006) noted that *declarative* knowledge is *knowing that* and *procedural* knowledge is *knowing how*. I employed the former term to describe the participants' perceptions of the roles of learning vocabulary and grammar and the latter one to refer to their beliefs about the competence in the four-macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

### **English as a Foreign Language (EFL):**

"The role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. government, business, industry) within the country" (Richards *et al.*, 1992, pp. 123-124)

### **Element:**

If constructs are an individual's opinions or ideas about a particular aspect of reality, then the entities that they hold these opinions about are referred to as "elements" (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). In other words, elements are nouns and verbs: specific people, objects, events or activities (Stewart & Stewart, 1981) that an individual uses to interpret and assess his/her environment. In my study, elements are classrooms activities collected by myself and elicited from the participants.

### **Expectation:**

*Expectation* in this study is defined as desires or wants of language learners. Expectation is a form of belief (Gardner, 1988; White, 1999; Barcelos, 2000; Bordia *et al.*, 2006) as it is also based on a person's previous language learning experience, goals, and needs, and may influence how individuals react, respond, and experience in practice (White, 1999; Barcelos, 2000). Bordia *et al.* (2006) reviewed the literature and noted that there are some significant similarities between consumer expectations and those of language learning. When students spend a substantial sum of money on learning English, they want the acquired knowledge to meet certain goals; based on their goals, students would expect to learn certain aspects of the language more than others (White, 1999).

### **Grammar Translation (GT):**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), "Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this

knowledge to the task of translating texts. It hence views language learning as consisting of little more than memorising rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language" (p. 5). Some characteristics of this method are that reading and writing are the major focus, words are taught through bilingual word lists and memorisation, sentence is the basic unit of practice, accuracy is emphasized, and grammar is taught deductively.

### **Knowledge:**

Knowledge is "undefeated justified true belief" (Lehrer & Paxson Jr, 1969, p. 225) that, like scientific concepts, formulas, objective facts, requires general or group consensus regarding the validity and appropriateness (Abelson, 1979; Goodman, 1988; Woods, 1996). A discussion of beliefs and knowledge will be conducted in section 2.1.1.

### **Language learning beliefs:**

In section 2.2.1, different terms and definitions for LLBs are listed and related.

### **Language learning strategies:**

Language learning strategies are specific actions (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Wenden, 1986a) that "a student chooses to deal with a specific learning task in the light of its perceived demands" (Entwistle *et al.*, 1979, p. 368). Strategies are recognized as subsets of learning styles (Cohen, 1996; Rossi-Le, 1995; Schmeck, 1988), learning styles influence the strategies a person uses (Brown, 2000). Ehrman *et al.* (2003) noted that "learning styles and learning strategies are often seen as interrelated. Styles are made manifest by learning strategies." (p. 315). Nevertheless, strategies differ from learning styles in that they are more teachable (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) and deal with specific conscious actions (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Wenden, 1986a).

### **Language learning styles:**

Language learning styles are "cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1979, p. 4).

### **Language learning preferences:**

Learning preferences or preferred ways of learning are "an individual's propensity to choose or express a liking for a particular instructional technique or combination of techniques" (Sadler-Smith, 1997, p. 52)

### **Language teaching styles:**

Language teaching style can be defined as "the sum total of instructional activities, techniques, and approaches that a teacher feels most comfortable using when he or she is in front of a class" (Cooper, 2001, p. 301)

**Native English speaker (NS):** In section 2.3.2, there are definitions of a NS.

### **Native English-speaking teacher (NT):**

Based on the definitions of a NS, *Native English-speaking teacher*, in my study is defined as a teacher of English who uses English as a native language and was born, grew up, and was educated in an environment where English won the mother tongue.

## **1.7. Conclusion and overview of chapters**

In chapter 1, I introduce the research rationale, my objectives, and the research questions. I argue that it is significant, especially from a practical perspective, to study the relationship between learners' beliefs and preferences and NTs' beliefs and practices in the context of private schools in Vietnam.

Chapter 2 is the literature review, which discusses the nature of beliefs and LLBs, and their relations with other psychological concepts, as well as teachers' and learners' beliefs

about language learning. In this chapter I also summarize critically previous studies into LLBs in the light of their purposes, methods, and results. Chapter 3 is the detail of my research design, chapter 4 offers my results, chapter 5 represents discussion and interpretation of the findings, and chapter 6 is the conclusions and implications.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK and LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent interest in examining LLBs is reflected in a number of studies (Barcelos, 2003; Barkhuizen, 1998; Bernat, 2008; Borg, 2006; Horwitz, 1988). As the literature reports that beliefs can both facilitate and hinder the effect of teaching on learning (Barcelos, 2003; Bernat 2008; Kern, 1995; Pajares, 1992), an awareness of beliefs is crucial to language-classroom pedagogy (Bernat, 2007, 2008). However, defining beliefs is not a simple task. *Belief* is a "messy construct" (Pajares, 1992) that is used interchangeably in the literature with *pedagogic principles* (Breen *et al.*, 2001), *theories for practice* (Burns, 1996), *personal theories* (Sendan & Roberts, 1998), *conceptions of practice* (Freeman, 1993), *images* (Johnson, 1994), or *maxims* (Richards, 1996), or *BAK* (Beliefs, Attitudes, Knowledge) (Woods, 1996). There are considerable overlaps among the terms in that they highlight the personal nature of cognition, the role of experience and identity, and the way in which actions and cognition are mutually informing (Borg, 2006). However, there is an assumption that beliefs are the best determinants of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives (Dewey, 1933; Rokeach, 1968). In this section, firstly, I discuss the nature of beliefs, and then I conduct a brief literature review of the LLBs of students and teachers.

#### **2.1. The nature of beliefs**

##### **2.1.1. Beliefs and knowledge**

The main confusion with the concept of beliefs revolves around the distinction between knowledge and belief (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs are propositions (Borg, 2001; Woods, 1996); a belief is a "mental state which has as its content a proposition that is accepted as true by the

individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others" (Borg, 2001, 186), so disagreements can be accepted (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1985; Woods, 1996) and thus beliefs often come with evaluations and affective components connecting to self-identity (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Woods, 2003). In addition, compared to knowledge, beliefs rely more on episodes of personal memory, images from past events, and experience (Abelson, 1979; Goodman, 1988; Nespor, 1985); beliefs are "forms of thought that are not based on evidence but on opinions, traditions, and customs" (Barcelos, 2000, p.33). However, beliefs are relatively static and less dynamic compared to knowledge that can be changed more easily through well-grounded arguments. When beliefs change, according to Nespor, "it is more likely to be a matter of a conversion or gestalt shift than the result of argumentation or a marshalling of evidence" (p. 321). Moreover, beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in terms of being predictors of actions (Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992).

Despite the differences, knowledge is an inevitable integral component of beliefs (Borg, 2006; Hickman, 1998; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968; Wenden, 1999; Woods, 2003). First of all, this can be seen when a belief becomes identical and commonly known through the socialization process which socially and culturally differentiates one group of people from others. Belief and knowledge together then turn into a shared belief called a "cultural belief" (Gardner, 1988; Greif, 1994). Pajares (1992) asked "what truth, what knowledge, can exist in the absence of judgment or evaluation?" (p. 310). Sharing this view, Barcelos (2000) and Hickman (1998) noted that beliefs must be seen in connection with knowledge. Woods (2003) conceptualized knowledge as beliefs with the greatest consensus, the greatest demonstrability, and the least personal identification. Dewey (1983) pointed out that if we discard beliefs as separated from knowledge and from our ways of acting, we will be missing

important aspects that beliefs bring with them. Hence, we cannot separate knowledge from beliefs and from our actions (Dewey, 1906, 1983), and in this study, knowledge and beliefs are seen as interrelated.

### **2.1.2. Beliefs and actions**

According to Bandura (1997), beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions people make and people tend to act according to their beliefs. Clusters of beliefs form action agendas (Ajzen, 1991; Pajaras, 1992). Williams and Burden (1997) affirmed that even if a person acts spontaneously or unconsciously, "such actions are nevertheless prompted by a deep-rooted belief that may never have been articulated or made explicit" (p. 56). When we make up our mind what to do, based on beliefs we form an intention, with such intention we move to act (Aune, 1990). However, in fact, a person's beliefs both shape and are shaped by actions (Barcelos, 2003; Borg, 2006; Haney *et al.*, 2002; Nardi, 1996), or more exactly, by a person's assessment of the result of his/her actions (Haney *et al.*, 2002). From these evaluations, a person may adjust and adapt his/her actions, change his/her attitudes, and/or beliefs. Barcelos (2000) claimed that it is not a cause-effect relationship but a relationship where understanding contextual constraints helps understanding beliefs. As Tabachnick and Zeichner (1986) noted, "greater consistency between belief and behaviour was the result of an interactive process between individuals and organizational constraints and encouragements." (p. 95). Hence, a person's actions are not necessarily in accordance with his/her beliefs (Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996).

### **2.1.3. Beliefs, values, and attitudes**

An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manners" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112). It is "a

psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavour" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). While an attitude is a "predisposition to like or dislike" (Krosnick *et al.*, 2005) and represents a person's degree of positive or negative view or judgment, positiveness and negativeness are the two sole variables of a value. Values are "abstract ideas" and "deeply rooted beliefs" that represent a person's ideal models of conduct (Rokeach, 1968). Concepts of values such as truth, beauty, freedom, happiness, etc. are different from person to person (Rokeach, 1968); one person may value beauty as the most important, others may value truth, or freedom. In the literature, attitudes and values are characterised as types of beliefs (Pearson *et al.*, 2003; Rokeach, 1968); to believe, as Dewey (1906, p. 113) noted, is "to ascribe value, impute meaning, and assign import".

#### **2.1.4. Beliefs, belief system, and belief change**

Seeing beliefs outside of a broader *belief system* is unwise and unproductive (Pajares, 1992). It means that we may not be able to conceptualize beliefs exactly without putting them in a belief system. Rokeach (1968) defined a belief system as "an organization of beliefs varying in depth, formed as a result of living in nature and in society" (p. 10). According to Rokeach, the belief system, in any particular area, is formed of the five following types of beliefs.

**"Type A: Primitive beliefs, 100% consensus":** The most central beliefs that are learned by direct encounter with the object of beliefs, reinforced by a unanimous social consensus. These beliefs constitute basic truths, have taken-for-granted characters, and are nearly impossible to change.

**"Type B: Primitive beliefs, Zero consensus":** Similar to type A but its maintenance does not seem to depend on its being shared with others; they are ego centered and internally formed.

**"Type C: Authority beliefs":** "An expanding repertoire of primitive beliefs ... when the believer discovers at any moment that a particular belief he had heretofore believed everyone else believed ... is not shared by everyone" (p. 9). This forces the believer to go through a discrimination involved in determining which authorities to trust and which not to trust.

**"Type D: Derived beliefs":** Trusted facts derived from authority sources.

**"Type E: Inconsequential Beliefs":** Arbitrary matters of taste.

In this system, beliefs are ordered along a "central-peripheral dimension"; each belief carries with it three components: *cognitive component* (represents a person's knowledge), *affective component* (affects positive or negative evaluation on the object of belief, or the belief itself), *behaviour component* (leads to some actions when it is suitably activated) (Rokeach, 1968). The earlier a belief is incorporated the more difficult it is to alter, and the more resistant it is likely to change (Kane *et al.*, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968).

Although most beliefs are resistant to change (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Rokeach, 1968; Woods, 2003), changes in more central beliefs will "produce greater changes in the rest of the belief system than changes in less central beliefs" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 23). Changing can occur during communication, in learning, in problem solving, etc. when the events do not meet a person's expectations and/or newly received indisputable facts contradict his/her current beliefs (Politzer & Carles, 2001; Harman, 1986).

Belief change is "the process by which a rational agent makes the transition from one belief state to another" (Elio & Pelletier, 1997, p. 420). Kuhn's (1970) and Posner *et al.*

(1982) theorized the change as "conceptual change" when one conceptual worldview is assimilated with or accommodated by another (Kuhn, 1970; Posner *et al.*, 1982). In their arguments, for a belief to be changed, contradictory information must be integrated and the individual must be dissatisfied with his/her existing beliefs. "Assimilation" happens when new information is incorporated into existing beliefs in the belief system. If a person is unable to assimilate the new belief, "accommodation" takes place, the existing belief is replaced or reorganized, and thus, "accommodation" requires a more radical effect. Hence, beliefs change can be called the *restoration* or *revision of consistency* in the belief system (Harman, 1986). However, distinguishing between assimilation and accommodation seems not to be helpful, especially when the purpose is measuring or tracking changes in beliefs. Studies have shown that change is neither necessarily to be immediate, complete, and quantifiable nor to give up a belief (Freeman, 1989). Change is more comprehensively to alter its *degree* (Politzer & Carles, 2001) or its *structure* (Borg, 2006; Sendan & Roberts, 1998) - the manner in which it functions in the belief system.

#### **2.1.5. Beliefs are contradictory**

Beliefs are naturally and internally contradictory (Barcelos, 2003; Dewey, 1933; Peirce, 1878; Rokeach, 1968). Beliefs look both ways (Dewey, 1906); "to disbelieve a proposition is to believe its contradictory" (Stout, 1891, p. 449). Dewey (1933) defined belief as forms of thought that "cover all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet we are confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future" (p. 6). Thus, beliefs can be "blind", "unreasoned", or can be the results of tutoring, or reflecting on experience.

As Barcelos (2000) and Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) pointed out, beliefs both

resist and are open to changes. Pintrich *et al.* (1993) (in Barcelos 2000) called beliefs conceptions. On the one hand, current conceptions potentially constitute a momentum that prevents those conceptions from changing, but they also provide frameworks that an individual can use to interpret and understand new, potentially conflicting information (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). Besides, conflicts might occur, especially when new beliefs are not consistent with a person's experience, or when a person does not have enough time to evaluate new beliefs (Dewey, 1933). Dewey (1933) named such conflict a *split* – a case when acceptance of a belief and refusal of its logical consequences come together. This notion is important for inferring beliefs from actions as "no one can use two inconsistent mental standards without losing some of his mental grip" (Dewey, 1933, p. 138). A person might pretend to get on well with commands or activities in a particular context, yet his/her real beliefs are kept unchanged.

#### **2.1.6. Espoused beliefs and beliefs in action (enacted beliefs)**

Argyris and Schon (1974) noted that an individual's *theories of action* include an *espoused theory* and a *theory-in-use*. Espoused theory is what is said or, upon request, stated to others; the theory that, however, actually governs actions is *theory-in-use* which may or may not be compatible with his/her publicly stated theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974). *Theories* in this sense and *beliefs*, as discussed earlier, like *images* (Johnson, 1994), and *maxims* (Richards, 1996) are different terms to describe similar concepts (Borg, 2003, 2006). A person might act in accordance with or different from his/her stated or espoused beliefs (Borg, 2001; Dewey, 1933; Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996, 2003). Aune (1990) added that to believe is "to have a disposition to affirm something to oneself and to use the proposition affirmed as a premise when reasoning, practically or theoretically, about a wide

variety of interrelated subjects" (p. 250). As a result, beliefs should be inferred from what a person says and does (Borg, 2001; Rokeach, 1968; Stout, 1891; Woods, 1996).

However, Strauss (2001) remarked that both kinds of beliefs are implicit, they are between the lines of what people do and say and thus it is not easy to conclude whether a particular belief is "espoused belief" or "belief in action" and it is not wise to see them as two separate components. Besides, beliefs are better seen as existing at *degrees* of consciousness (Harman, 1986; Politzer & Carles, 2001) rather than as solely conscious or unconscious (Collins, 1969; Britton, 1998), so it seems to be hard to differentiate "conscious beliefs" and "unconscious beliefs" in the study of gaps between beliefs and actions as both of them can inform actions (Bourdieu, 1987). However, as only purposive behaviours are explainable and describable with reference to the reasoning that brought them into practice (Aune, 1990), it is better to adopt the terms "blind" and "reasoned" to differentiate kinds of belief. It is assumed that a person can be aware of all of his/her beliefs yet cannot always give a reason for a particular belief when asked. The "blind" and "reasoned" terms seem to be compatible with the definition of belief as a proposition, and the contradictory nature of belief. Consequently, both examining "espoused beliefs" and asking a person to explain reasons underlying his/her actions, and differentiating between beliefs based on personal experience and localised thinking and beliefs based on knowledge derived from research findings can help to achieve a fuller picture of beliefs and the possible gaps between his/her beliefs and actions.

#### **2.1.7. Beliefs, experience, identity**

According to Dewey (1938) and Barcelos (2000), experience is not a mental state; experience is the interaction, adaptation, and adjustment of individuals to the environment. Individuals find meanings in the situations they live in by modifying and adapting while



solving problems. People do this by continuously connecting between past and current experiences in the context in which they are interacting (Dewey, 1938; Barcelos, 2003). Meanwhile, since "beliefs help individuals to identify with another group and form groups" and "identity is socially constructed in interaction with others" (Barcelos, 2003, p. 192), there is a strong relationship between belief, experience, and identity (Barcelos, 2003; Borg, 1998; Dewey, 1938; Gee, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In a given context, identity is defined as being recognized, as "a certain kind of person" or a member of a "Discourse" (Gee, 1996, 1999, 2000). A *Discourse* with capital 'D' is:

"a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network, or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful role." (Gee, 1996, p. 131)

To be recognized as a member of a Discourse, a person must speak and act, think and feel according to the values and viewpoints shared within the Discourse (Gee, 1990); Ovens (2002) named this a *discourse community* and Lave and Wenger (1991) called this a *community of practice*; that is "a group created by the collective practices of its contributing members" (Ovens, 2002, p. 506). Ovens (2002) added that *discourse community* can be subcategorized into *local discourse community* (such as an educational institution) and *global discourse community* (a more generic collective concerned with the ideals of reflection).

As Gee (2000) noted, an individual's identity is a combination of five compounds: his/her "natures" and what he/she is "born with" (N Identity); something an institution creates and upholds (I Identity); characteristics that are interactionally recognized by others (D Identity), and the distinctive practices and experience he/she has had within a Discourse community or "affinity group" (A Identity). An individual's identities are often not fully consistent with each other (Gee, 1989, 1990), and how a person accepts, contests, and negotiates identities in

terms of whether he/she will be seen primarily as N-, I-, D-, or A-Identities may be different from context to context (Gee, 2000). Within sociocultural approaches, which highlight the role of social context in understanding human activity (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978), identity is not a fixed, invariant attribute of the individual but all people have multiple identities connected to their memberships and actions in various contexts in society (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Gee, 1996, 1999, 2000; Gieve & Clark, 2005; Ricento, 2005; Tajfel, 1981). In other words, an individual's identity is not only reflected in a particular context but also involves the sum of all the groups of which he/she is a competent and acknowledged member (Riley, 2006).

#### **2.1.8. Summary:**

Based on the literature reviewed, beliefs present the following characteristics:

- Beliefs entail knowledge, which constitutes shared beliefs in a community, but the affective and evaluative component make beliefs different from knowledge.
- Beliefs are contradictory, context-specific, and they direct actions. These actions are self-evaluated; from these evaluations, a person may adjust and adapt his/her actions, change his/her attitudes, and/or beliefs.
- Beliefs are interwoven with values and attitudes, and have to be inferred from discourse and actions.
- Beliefs in a belief system are organized along a central-peripheral dimension without a clear border. The later a belief is added into the system, the outer it is organized, and the less fixed it is. Beliefs change happens during social interaction and experience.

In summary, beliefs are social, cultural, but also individual; unique, but also shared; rational and emotional; diverse, but also uniform (Alanen, 2003; Dufva, 2003; Barcelos,

2000, 2003). Consequently, for the purpose of my study, as NTs and Vietnamese EFL learners belong to different discourse communities, *Discourse community Theory* (Killingsworth, 1992; Ovens, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000) helps in understanding their beliefs, how their beliefs, actions, and behaviours are formed and shared within each community, and which different types of social pressures shape their actions.

## **2.2. Approaches to studying LLBs**

### **2.2.1. Different terms and definitions for LLBs**

| <b>Terms</b>                              | <b>Definitions</b>  |
|---|---|
| Folklinguistic theories of learning       | “Ideas that students have about language and language learning” (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 294)   |
| Learners’ philosophy of language learning | “Beliefs about how language operates, and, consequently, how it is learned” (Abraham & Vann, 1987, p. 95)   |
| Beliefs                                   | “Opinions which are based on experience and the opinions of respected others, which influence the way they [students] act” (Wenden, 1986a, p. 5)  |
| Metacognitive knowledge                   | “The stable, statable although sometimes incorrect knowledge that learners have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process; also referred to as knowledge or concepts about language learning or learner beliefs; there are three kinds: person, task and strategic knowledge” (Wenden, 1986b, p. 163) |
| Cultural beliefs                          | “Expectations in the minds of teachers, parents and students concerning the entire second language acquisition task” (Gardner, 1988, p. 110)  |
| Learning culture                          | “A set of representations, beliefs and values related to learning that directly influences [students’] learning behaviour” (Riley, 1997, p.122)   |

Table 1: Some definitions of LLBs (adapted from Bacerlos, 2000, p. 43)

Table 1 presents a summary of definitions of LLBs in the literature. Despite some

significant correlations, definitions of beliefs in general education and LLBs are likely to be independent constructs (Mori, 1999; Wenden, 1999). In language education, beliefs are called *propositions about pedagogical theories* (Woods, 2003), *cultural beliefs* (Gardner, 1988), *learning culture* (Riley, 1997), *learners' philosophy of language learning* (Abraham & Vann, 1987), *beliefs* (Wenden, 1986a), *metacognitive knowledge* (Wenden, 1986b), or *folklinguistic theories of learning* (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995). According to Freeman (1991), "the issue is not the pluralism of labels, but the recognition of the phenomenon itself." (p. 32). Barcelos (2000) summarized that these definitions refer to the nature of language and language learning and emphasize the social nature of beliefs. However, each of them does not reflect well a combination of individual factors such as learning experience(s), values, identity, and goal(s).

Barcelos's (2003) study shows that LLBs are experiential, dynamic, socially constructed, paradoxical, changeable, and contextually situated. Based on the nature of beliefs and for the purposes of this paper, LLBs are defined as an individual's propositions about ways that benefit his/her goals in language learning; LLBs are shaped by everyday learning activities, knowledge, learning contexts, and may evolve. LLBs can be "blind", "unreasoned", or can be the result of tutoring or reflecting on experience.

### **2.2.2. Approaches to LLBs**

Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) noted that the diversity of theoretical frameworks in language learner beliefs studies "creates a rich tapestry of complementing studies" (p. 7), and points to the researchers' differences in ontological and epistemological assumptions that are clearly reflected in their research paradigms (Bernat, 2007, 2008). Barcelos (2000, 2003) and Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) grouped the studies into three approaches based on their

definitions of belief, methodology, and relationship between beliefs and actions: the normative approach, the metacognitive approach, and the contextualized approach.

#### ***2.2.2.1. The Normative Approach:***

Holliday (1994) used the term 'normative' to refer to studies on culture that see students' culture as explanation for their behaviours in class. Studies within this approach see beliefs as indicators of cause-effect laws. Bernat (2008) categorised the studies as "cognitive approach" research which sees the properties of the mind as being relatively static. Beliefs are defined as "preconceived notions, myths or misconceptions", or "opinions and ideas" about language learning (Horwitz, 1987) and the scholars' goals are to describe and classify types of beliefs, and thus, they adopt quantitative research within a (post)positivist paradigm. The scholars often study students' beliefs (Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Horwitz, 1987, 1988) and the relationships between teachers' and students' beliefs (Kern, 1995; Griffiths, 2007; Spratt, 1999). Most of the studies used the BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) (Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995; Yang, 1992), a 34-item questionnaire developed by Horwitz (1985, 1987) which examines learners' beliefs in five major areas: FL aptitude, the difficulties of language learning; the nature of language learning, motivations, and strategies. This pioneering instrument set the ground for subsequent research studies that also adopted structured instruments to analyse different dimensions of beliefs. Other scholars adapted and used modified versions of the BALLI (Yang, 1992; Mantle-Bromley, 1995), or self-developed questionnaires (Cotterall, 1995; Kuntz, 1996b; Mori, 1997), or combined questionnaires and/or self-report, and interview to validate the questionnaire (Cotterall, 1995), but a questionnaire was still the main instrument. These normative studies often used a large number of participants in ESL

contexts and examined not only their beliefs about English learning (Horwitz, 1987; Yang, 1992; Cotterall, 1995) but also learning other languages such as German (Horwitz, 1988), French (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995), Swahili (Kuntz, 1996b), Japanese (Mori, 1997), or Spanish (Kuntz, 1996b). The results showed only small differences in LLBs between the different groups of language learners. Generally, these studies have shown that students hold a range of beliefs with varying degrees of validity, and that beliefs were shaped mainly by individual learner differences and partly by culture, and the context and had a profound influence on their learning behaviours and the strategies they used. Studies relating to learners' and teachers' beliefs showed that students seemed to favor a grammar-based approach, whereas their teachers preferred a more communicative classroom (Brown, 2009). Besides, teachers could cause changes in their students' attitudes towards languages and cultures (Mantle-Bromley, 1995), and there were different types of learners who hold contrasting sets of beliefs in which some would change over time towards the teacher's beliefs (Kern, 1995).

The normative approach, as in the studies above, can investigate large samples quickly and economically and provide direct evidence and general views of beliefs and their evolution. Nevertheless, the approach is cross-sectional and fails to provide an in-depth analysis and capture the complex nature of beliefs, how beliefs relate to knowledge, value, attitude, and experience. The instruments used are also not very strong in terms of validity as beliefs are inferred from respondents' choices that may be different from their true beliefs and what they actually do (Barcelos, 2003). In addition, the questionnaires do not refer to any specific learning task or situation; this may result in confusion as the participants may have little or no chance to figure out their beliefs by their own voices. However, it is worth noting

that this limitation is to be expected as the goals of the above-mentioned studies were mainly to describe, compare or contrast beliefs across groups.

#### **2.2.2.2. *The Metacognitive approach:***

The Metacognitive approach defines beliefs as "metacognitive knowledge" which is relatively stable but may change over time, and can be articulated orally (Wenden, 1999). Wenden (1987) characterised this "knowledge" as fallible (not always empirically supportable) and interactive (influential on and influenced by the outcome of a learning activity). The assumption is that "students' metacognitive knowledge constitutes their 'theories in action' that help them to reflect on what they are doing and to develop potential for learning" (Wenden, 1987, p. 112). One distinction explicitly presented in the metacognitive approach is that, while knowledge is viewed as "factual, objective information, acquired through formal learning", beliefs are viewed as "individual, subjective understandings, idiosyncratic truths, which are often value-related and characterised by a commitment not present in knowledge" (Wenden, 1998, p. 517). Some studies from this perspective were conducted by Donaghue (2003), Peacock (1998a), Wenden (1986b, 1987), and Yang and Kim (2011). The scholars commonly adopted semi-structured interviews, repertory grids, and a few studies may use questionnaires, but none of them used the BALLI.

Wenden (1986b) employed semi-structured interviews to investigate and classify the storable knowledge about language learning of twenty-five adults enrolled part-time in the advanced-level classes of the American Language Program at Columbia University. Her findings showed that the students were capable of considering retrospectively the following five dimensions of their language learning: the language, their proficiency in the language, the outcome of their learning endeavours, their role in the language-learning process, and

how best to approach the task of language learning. A year later, in 1987, she continued to use semi-structured interviews to report on learners' beliefs and to understand the relationship between their beliefs and learning strategies. The results showed that while communication strategies related to beliefs about using the language, cognitive strategies related to beliefs about language.

More recently, scholars have started to study the evolution of learners' beliefs. Amuzie and Winke (2009) employed Cotterall's (1999) scale to explore the effects of study abroad on beliefs changes of 70 English language learners in the United States. They then interviewed the participants about the reasons for changes in beliefs. The findings revealed that learners experienced changes in their beliefs on learner autonomy and the role of the teacher. Those with more time abroad had significantly more changes in their belief systems, suggesting that learning context and length of time influenced belief changes. Similar to Amuzie and Winke (2009), Yang and Kim (2011) also explored changes in LLBs in study abroad contexts. The data were collected mainly through pre- and post-interviews and monthly-collected journals. The findings suggested that the learners' beliefs were constantly evolving in accordance with their goals and learning experience, and this led to changes, remediation process, and qualitative differences in their learning actions. Changes in LLBs were also reported in studies with student teachers; for instance, Donaghue (2003) adopted repertory grid (RepGrid) to measure changes in student teachers' beliefs after a teacher training course. In fact, this was merely a pilot study to develop an instrument to elicit teacher's beliefs and assumptions, but changes in the trainees' beliefs were reported. The evidence of changes in LLBs in the studies above supports the view that beliefs are dynamic, socially constructed, and responsive to context.



While most scholars adopting the Metacognitive approach studied learners' beliefs, Peacock (1998a) compared learners' LLBs with those of teachers. He adopted both self-reports and semi-structured interviews to compare 158 students of English and 30 teachers in a Hong Kong university in the light of their beliefs about 'useful' activities for studying English. Interestingly, a considerable mismatch between learners' and teachers' beliefs was found. While the learners rated error correction and grammar exercises much higher, the teachers highly evaluated pair work and group work. This wide gap affected negatively on the learners' linguistic progress, satisfaction with the class, and confidence in their teachers.

A common approach in the studies above was avoiding forced-choice responses, allowing teachers and students to use their own language, elaborating, reflecting about their experience, and verbalizing their beliefs in their own terms. Although these beliefs studies, after all, may not aim to predict actual behaviour, beliefs were not inferred from actions in context, but only from intention and statements (Barcelos, 2000). Moreover, learners' responses would be affected by social desirability or ideals – the tendency to answer or give comments in a manner that would be viewed favorably and positively by others rather than saying what they really thought.

#### ***2.2.2.3. The Contextual Approach:***

Some scholars employing a contextual approach to investigate LLBs define it as a part of the culture of learning and contextual representations of language learning (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000; Nespor, 1985; Mak, 2011). In other words, beliefs are recognized as "part of students' experience and interrelated with their environment" (Barcelos, 2003, p. 21). Hence, LLBs should be described and interpreted with reference to the specific socio-psychological and practical context in which they occurred (Borg, 2006; Entwistle *et al.*, 2002). The

scholars within this paradigm use an "ecological perspective" and triangulation to obtain an emic view (Bernat, 2008). It does not necessarily rule out any particular type of research methods; these studies use a range of theoretical frameworks, types of data, and diverse forms of data analysis. Studies adopting this paradigm are often longitudinal and methods are varied. Nespor (1985) employed RepGrid, observation, and stimulated recall; Johnson (1992b) adopted stimulated recall interviews with videotaped classroom lessons; Johnson (1994) and Golombek (1998) combined written journal, observations, and stimulated recall reports; while Mak (2011) triangulated semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, field notes, classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews. Participants in most of these studies were student teachers or novice teachers; and the studies mainly categorised teachers' beliefs (Nespor, 1985), factors shaping or affecting beliefs (Johnson, 1992b; Johnson, 1994), or influences of beliefs on instructional decisions (Mak, 2011).

Nespor (1985) compared language teacher's beliefs with those of teachers in other disciplines. He concluded that teachers' beliefs were affected by subject matter conceptions, career influences, and experience in teaching practices. In Johnson's (1992b) study on 6 pre-service ESL teachers, their instructional actions and decision-making were affected by unexpected student responses, the desire to maintain the flow of instructional activities, the need to ensure student understanding, to increase student motivation and involvement, and to maintain control over instructional management. Then, Johnson (1994) studied 4 pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs from their narratives, intentions, and instructional practices during their practicum and found that pre-service teachers' instructional decisions during a practicum were based on images of teachers, materials, activities, and classroom organization generated by their own experience as second language learners.

Golombek (1998) examined how two ESL teachers' personal practical knowledge informed their practice. The researcher found that this knowledge informed the teachers' practices by filtering their experience so that they reconstructed it and acted according to the demand of a teaching situation and by giving physical form to their practices. Mak (2011) adopted a case study with a pre-service Chinese EFL teacher; several factors influencing the teacher's beliefs and instructional decisions were discussed: the participant's perceived need to survive and adapt to the institutional teaching cultures, the past learning experience, the tension between different beliefs, some culturally influenced beliefs, and exposure to teaching cultures and models of language teaching.

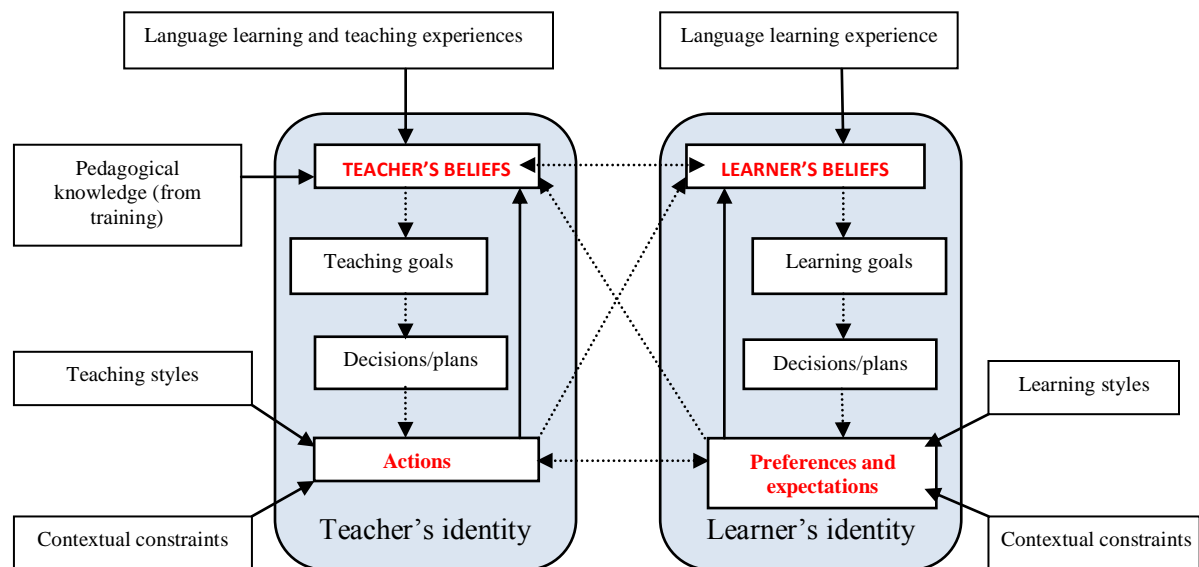
Besides studies of teachers' beliefs, there were also some studies investigating the relationship between learners' beliefs and their teacher's (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000; Polat, 2009). These studies all employed mixed-methods and most of them were conducted in ESL settings (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000). Generally, the scholars found that there were matches and mismatches between teachers and learners beliefs; learners' beliefs were shaped by learning contexts and there were influences of teachers' beliefs on those of their learners.

Studying beliefs in natural settings and using triangulation as in these studies provided large amounts of deep descriptive data and direct evidence of behaviours and actions. Case study and ethnography allowed Allen (1996), Barcelos (2000), and Nespor (1985) to view their situations from the perspective of an "insider", to explore a single context and individual in detail to understand the dynamic relations within that context. Hence, compared to normative/cognitive and metacognitive studies, the contextual approach results in a more credible and complete picture of beliefs. However, researchers need to be aware that the ability to apply the conclusions to other contexts is limited and the approach is more suitable for small samples. Consequently, a contextual approach emerged as being relevant to adopt

in my study because beliefs, as I argued earlier, are characterised as the causes of actions, being experiential, socially constructed, changeable, and contextually situated.

### 2.3. LLBs and the actions of teachers and learners

The literature on the relations between learners' beliefs and preferences and teachers' beliefs and actions and other different social and personal factors that affect them can be summarized as in *figure 1*.



**Figure 1:** The framework of the relations between learner's and teacher's beliefs and actions

In general, teacher's and learner's beliefs reflect their identities. Their beliefs shape their teaching/learning goals, decision, and strongly inform teacher's actions and learner's learning preferences and expectations. Their actions and preferences/expectations, in turn, in the role of experience, impact on their beliefs. However, their actions and preferences/expectations might also be affected by their teaching/learning styles and other contextual factors. In the literature, while students' beliefs are formed mainly through their language learning experience, teachers' beliefs come from both language learning and teaching experience, and pedagogical knowledge derived from inter-textual resources (books, lectures and

presentations, teachers, colleagues, and experts), most of which has been drawn from teacher training courses. In *figure 1*, there are different arrows connecting the concepts in the framework. These relations are going to be discussed, and at the end of this chapter, I will relate the literature to my context of study to argue why it is significant to investigate more deeply into the relationships visualised by the dash-arrows in the framework.

### **2.3.1. Identity in relation to beliefs and actions of teachers and learners**

In section 2.1.7, I discussed that every individual belongs to different social groups and has different types of identities, these identities are often not fully consistent with each other, and can be performed differently in different contexts. I also related this framework to the notion of Discourse and argued that Discourse Community Theory helps understanding teachers' beliefs and actions and learners' beliefs.

Learning, according to Cummins (2001), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Barcelos (2000), also involves the construction of identities. This is a kind of construction that is located in our social lives and in our interaction with others (Barcelos, 2000). Thus, identity is important for an understanding of LLBs (Breen, 1985; Barcelos, 2000; Cummins, 2001; Riley, 1999). Barcelos (2000) explained that identity is interrelated with learning and with beliefs, since beliefs help individuals to identify with another group and form groups and social systems. On the part of learners, Riley (1999) argued that their identity will be important for how they act. According to Breen (1985) and Norton (1997), learners engage in identity construction and negotiation through interaction with other learners and teachers in class. On the part of teacher, Cummins (2001) established a central role for teacher identity in bilingual and second language education. In Breen's (1985) characterisation, teachers and learners constantly judge each other as members who are supposed to teach and to learn. Learners and teachers try not only to learn the rules by which they are being judged, but also

to learn how to situate themselves within the group (Breen, 1985; Barcelos, 2000; Cummins, 2001). Drawing insights from philosophy, situated cognition, and applied linguistics, Barcelos (2000) argued that identity, learning, and beliefs are inseparable, identity is co-constructed in interaction with others, and learners and teachers act to have their identities and beliefs recognized in the interaction that takes place in a normative classroom. Therefore, the identity of an NT must be crucial to understand his/her beliefs and actions, in the next section I discuss the identity of being an NT and argue for the relevance of this concept to the questions of this study.

### **2.3.2. Native English-speaking teacher identity**

How to define a native speaker of English is controversial. According to Medgyes (2001), although a NS is traditionally defined as someone who speaks English as his/her native language, native speakerhood is an intricate concept, which includes birth, education, the environment in which the individual is exposed to English, the sequence in which languages are learned, levels of proficiency, self-identification, and political allegiance. According to Madgyes, A NS is someone who:

1. Is born in an English-speaking country
2. Has learned English during childhood in an English-speaking environment
3. Speaks English as a first language
4. Has a native-like command of English
5. Is capable of producing fluent, spontaneous speech in English that is characterised by creativity, and
6. Has the intuition to distinguish correct or wrong forms in English (Medgyes, 1999) (see also Cook, 1999; Davies, 1991, 2003; Medgyes, 1992; Stern, 1983 for more definitions and characteristics of NS)

Based on questionnaire-elicited self-reports with 325 teachers from 11 countries (86 percent of them were NNTs, the rests were NTs), Medgyes (1994) asked the participants to describe their behaviours and found that there are differences between stated teaching behaviours of NTs and NNTs (non-Native English-speaking teachers). From this distinction, he argued that NTs and NNTs are "two different species" who differ in terms of their language proficiency and a wide range of teaching behaviours, from their use of English to general attitude, attitude to teaching the language, and attitude to teaching culture (Medgyes, 1994; Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Language teachers are all aware of the crucial significance of native/non-native labelling to their professional status (Inbar-Lourie, 2006, p. 269). There is a stereotype that takes for granted that a native speaker is by nature the best person to teach his/her language (Cook, 1999) because "the more proficient in English, the more efficient in the classroom" (Medgyes, 1994, p. 347). Stern (1983) supported this view in stating that "the native speaker's competence or proficiency or knowledge of the language is a necessary point of reference for the second language proficiency concept used in language teaching" (p. 341). Thus, in language teaching, being an NT provides a person with better hiring opportunities, increased pay, and improved social status (Inbar-Lourie, 2006).

Although being a NNT is also beneficial in EFL contexts due to the unique cultural knowledge, English learning experience, and the students' native language (Medgyes, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999; Llurda, 2005a; Modiano, 2005), according to Medgyes's (2001) review of the literature in the controversy about NT and NNT, these have been deemed politically and linguistically incorrect terms. However, they are still widely used by both teachers and researchers today (Arva & Medgyes, 2000); Medgyes (2001) suggested the reasons were that "most teachers, as well as their students, do come from either English-speaking countries or non-English-speaking countries; most of them are either native or non-native speakers of

English” (p. 429). As a result, “the dichotomy, for all its shortcomings, should not be rejected, overlooked, or blurred, but rather subjected to close scrutiny” (Ibid, 2001, p. 429). Consequently, accounting for the native/non-native identity of teachers is important in my study of the relationship between Vietnamese learners’ beliefs and NTs’ beliefs and actions; especially when learners are not satisfied with their public school English classes taught by NNTs and go to PESs with an expectation to improve English with NTs. Besides, the identity of NTs will relate strongly with their beliefs and what they do while teaching. In section 2.3.6, I will continue to discuss the literature on learners’ beliefs about Native and Non-Native English-speaking teachers.

### 2.3.3. Teachers’ beliefs and actions

| Terms                        | Definitions/Descriptions   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Conceptions of practice      | “The actors’-in most instances teachers’-mental orientation towards their actions” (Freeman, 1993, p. 487)   |
| Images                       | General metaphors for thinking about teaching (Johnson, 1994)  |
| Maxims                       | Teachers’ individual philosophies of teaching (Richards, 1996)   |
| BAK                          | Teacher’s Beliefs, Assumptions, and Knowledge (Woods, 1996)  |
| Personal pedagogical systems | “Beliefs, knowledge theories, assumptions, and attitudes that teachers hold about all aspects of their work” (Borg, 1998, p. 9)  |
| Personal theories            | An underlying system of constructs that teachers draw upon in thinking about, evaluating, classifying and guiding pedagogic practice (Sendan & Roberts, 1998)  |
| Pedagogical knowledge        | “The teacher’s accumulated knowledge about the teaching act (e.g., its goals, procedures, strategies) that serves as the basis for his or her classroom behaviour and activities” (Gatbonton, 1999, p. 35) |
| Teachers’ cognition          | What teachers think, know and believe (Borg, 2006)   |

Table 2: Some terms and definitions/descriptions of teacher’s beliefs

Teacher’s beliefs about language learning are defined as *conceptions of practice* (Freeman, 1993), *images* (Johnson, 1994), *personal pedagogical systems* (Borg, 1998), and



*pedagogical knowledge* (Gatbonton, 1999), and *teachers' cognition* (Borg, 2006). These beliefs direct the ways they conceptualize teaching and themselves as teachers (Johnson, 1999), and influence the ways they teach (Borg, 2006; Davis, 2003; Donohue, 2003; Freeman, 1989; Kern, 1995; Mohamed, 2006; Pajares, 1992; Richards *et al.*, 2001; Smith, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997; Woods, 1996). In other words, a teacher's beliefs determine a range of classroom practices that he/she uses and/or is willing or is able to consider (Johnson, 1999; Mak, 2011). Language teaching can be seen as a decision-making process (Freeman, 1989). To explain the influences of beliefs on teaching, Woods (1996) theorized that teachers' beliefs and knowledge are strongly interwoven and both affect the teachers' decision in teaching. Johnson (1992b) remarked that "teachers interpret a teaching situation in the light of their beliefs about the learning and teaching of what they consider second language learning consists of; the result of this interpretation is what the teacher plans for and attempts to create in the classroom" (p. 69).

In education, the literature shows a strong shared conclusion that teachers' beliefs come from and are affected by their pedagogical knowledge and experience(s) as a learner and a teacher (Nespor, 1985; Woods, 1996; Borg, 1998). Learning experience discussed here covers both experience as a language learner and experience and knowledge from teacher training course(s) (Dreyer, 1998; Kinsella, 1995; Oxford & Lavine, 1992). A number of scholars found that teachers' instructional decisions are based on images of teachers, materials, activities, and classroom organization generated from their own experience as second language (L2) learners (Almarza, 1996; Numrich, 1996; Farrell, 1999; Johnson, 1994; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Freeman, 1989; Johnson, 1992a, 1992b; Richards & Nuna, 1990). Kinsella (1995) stated that "although there is probably some truth to the maxim that teachers teach the way they were taught, there is probably a lot more truth in saying that

teachers teach the way they learned best in school" (p. 170). As mentioned earlier beliefs are far more influential on actions than knowledge, thus as Kagan (1992), Nespor (1985), and Pajares (1992) noted, teachers' beliefs rooted in experience are more influential on their actions than their tutored beliefs. Davis (2003) supported this view in his argument that "teachers' deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or course book they follow" (p. 209). Thus, teaching is not, in practice, simply a process of applying knowledge of what to teach and how to teach to a practical situation; two teachers may have the same knowledge and training but may teach the same lesson in different ways as they always have their own reflections and goals about what to do.

However, teacher education also plays a crucial role in teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2006; Flores, 2001). Clark and Peterson (1986) agreed that teachers' theories and beliefs represent a rich store of knowledge, and argue that teachers make sense of their world and respond to it by forming a complex system of personal and professional knowledge. As discussed in section 2.1.1, knowledge is always an inevitable component of beliefs; in referring to beliefs as teachers' personal knowledge, Kagan (1992) argued that much of a teacher's professional knowledge can be more accurately regarded as belief. A number of studies have investigated the impact of training on pre-service teachers' beliefs (Almarza, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Richards & Pennington, 1998), and the impact of experience by comparing the beliefs and/or actions of more and less experienced teachers (Calderhead, 1981, 1983; Clark & Peterson, 1978; Johnson, 2003; Golombek, 1998; Nunan, 1992; Richards, 1998; Richards *et al.*, 1998; Tsui, 2003). The studies have shown that teacher's beliefs closely relate to their identities (Sakui & Gaie, 2003) and are affected by

pedagogical knowledge from teacher training, and early teaching experience (Borg, 2003; Johnson, 1992a; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Woods, 1996).

This review of literature has shed light on the complex relationship between beliefs and practices. Teachers' practices, or the ways teachers teach are sometimes regarded as "teaching styles" (Dreyer, 1998; Oxford & Lavine, 1992; Peacock, 2001). Hyman and Rosoff (1984) recognized teaching styles as observable actions such as how teachers question, introduce new ideas, use voice tone, organize the lesson and students, call on students, test students, and move around the classroom. Jonassen and Grabowski (1993) related teaching styles to "instructional strategies" which provide the overall plan to guide the selection of instructional tactics which facilitate learning; and tactics are teacher's activities in a lesson that facilitate a variety of instructional events. However, teaching styles are normally categorised as "natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of teaching" (Peacock, 2001, p. 7) and thus, the same as learning styles, can be treated as being closer to individual cognitive styles (as hard wired in the brain) than learned or preferred behaviours and actions that derived from experience as beliefs. In addition, Cooper (2001) suggested a list of teaching practices that relate to teachers' personality dimensions, but there is little empirical evidence in the literature on these relations (Rayner & Riding, 1997). Indeed, personality is normally treated as in the affective domain that deals with emotional dimensions of actions (Brown, 2000), thus, in contrast to beliefs, personality seems not to be affected by experience, knowledge and situational factors.

In the literature, a number of gaps are found between teachers' stated plans and what they carry out later in their classes (Bailey, 1996; Farrell, 2003; Richards *et al.*, 2001). Many contextual factors can affect what a teacher does in class (Borg, 2003; Borko & Shavelson, 1990; Burns, 1996; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Some examples of these

factors are listed as the physical layout of the class, class-size, prescribed curriculum, time constraints, high-stakes examinations, and influences of parents, schools, and governments. However, these contextual factors are reported as the main causes of these mismatches yet do not determine teachers' actions; instead, teachers' classroom actions are results of "constant interaction between teachers' pedagogical choices and their perceptions of the instructional context, particularly of the students, at any particular time" (Borg, 2006, p. 93). Woods (1996) used the terms "external" and "internal" for two types of contextual factors affecting teachers' actions. External factors are situational factors while internal factors are ones in the decision-making process, for instance, the internal structuring of decisions (temporal relation: earlier versus later decisions, and logical relation: more global versus more local decisions), and the relationship between the decisions. He emphasized that "contextual factors may interact with teachers' cognition in two ways; they may lead to changes in these cognitions or else they may alter practices directly without changing the cognitions underlying them" (Woods, 1996, p. 275). This latter scenario can lead to a gap between teacher's stated beliefs and actual actions (Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996).

In conclusion, teachers' actions, decision-making, and the changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs due to training are the most researched aspects of language teacher cognition. Studies comparing novice and more experienced teachers tend to focus on their differences in knowledge, and classroom actions rather than their beliefs. It seems that scholars have not studied much about the relationship between teachers' practices and beliefs – factors that affect actions strongly. Besides, most of the studies report the less immediate factors behind language teachers' decisions such as prior learning and professional experience, while the social and institutional contexts of classrooms seem to be neglected.

#### **2.3.4. Learners' beliefs and their ways of learning**

Students' beliefs are "opinion" (Wenden, 1986a), "a system of related ideas", "a part of a learner's store of acquired knowledge", and "an abstract representation of a learner's experience" (Wenden, 1998, p. 517). Barcelos (2000, 2003) and Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) argued that a learner's beliefs come from his/her previous learning experience. Noticeably, learners are not passive 'recipients' but to various degrees capable of reflecting on these experience (Dewey, 1938; Kalaja, 1995; Barcelos, 2003; Hosenfeld, 2003; Wenden, 1998). According to Larsen-Freeman (1998), "learners are complex constellations of behaviours, thoughts, feelings, social needs, experiences, strategies, and political needs, at the very least." (p. 211). Studies have pointed out that learners have their own ways of dealing with different classroom contexts (Allwright, 1984a, 1996; Breen, 1998; Kramsch, 1993; Woods, 1997); they manage their learning by constantly taking advantage of these contexts for their own learning purposes (Kramsch, 1993) and by constantly struggling to create their own meanings (Kramsch, 1993; Barcelos, 2000). Hence, what happens in learning should not be seen as something unilaterally in the hands of the teacher (Allwright, 1984b), as learners can also make decisions about how to achieve their learning goals (Woods, 1997).

Hosenfeld (2003) distinguished "emerging beliefs" from "stable beliefs" – the term Wenden (1998) used to define acquired knowledge that learners hold in mind in a stable state. In Hosenfeld's perspective, many of a second language learner's beliefs are "emergent", thus, most of his/her beliefs are viewed as changing and dynamic. A learner constructs some emerging beliefs, perceives them as new and acts upon them in learning activities; some emerging beliefs that are acted upon repeatedly will become a more stable part of a learner's belief system (Hosenfeld, 2003). Noticeably, the literature has shown a

noticeable correlation between learners' beliefs and their actions depending on *expectations* (McCargar, 1993; Kalaja, 2003; Horwitz, 1988; White, 1999), *learning preferences* (Barkhuizen, 1998; Peacock, 1998a) and *learning strategies* (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Riley, 1997; Yang, 1999; Victori & Lockhart, 1995). The range of strategies a learner uses is related to his/her beliefs (Wenden, 1986a; Abraham & Vann, 1987; Horwitz, 1988; Yang, 1999). In discussing this relationship, Wenden (1987) noted that whether an individual learner uses functional, communicative strategies or cognitive strategies depends on whether he/she believes in the importance of using the language or the importance of learning the language.

In the language learning literature, *learning styles* also affect classroom actions (Riding & Rayner, 2000; Riechmann & Grasha, 1974). Riding and Rayner (2000), in their literature review, evaluated the paradigms, measurement, strengths and weaknesses of widely-used models of learning styles and grouped them into four models of: learning processes, orientations to study, instructional preferences, and cognitive skill development. Among the models, as Riding and Rayner (2000) noted, the *instructional preferences* model of learning styles represents a markedly more dynamic model than the other groups. Because this model emphasizes the styles of both teachers and learners, and is grounded in the classroom from a number of interviews with teachers and learners (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Grasha, 2002) and related to the classroom procedures and the interactions, it presents "a social and affective perspective on patterns of preferred behaviours and attitude which underpin learning and academic context" (Riding & Rayner, 2000, p. 70). Another model of learning styles that was not mentioned in Riding and Rayner's (2000) work is "cultures of learning" – the concept which characterises learners as a single homogeneous group and points to different cultures as explanatory variables for learning behaviours. For instance, in Asia most

students are said to see knowledge as something to be transmitted by the teacher rather than to be discovered by themselves (Sato, 1982; Harshbarger *et al.*, 1986; Liu & Littlewood, 1997); or Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other learners, who as a group are seen as obedient to authority, passive in class and lacking the capacity for critical thinking (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b). However, other scholars argued that identities are not homogeneous across different classrooms, and it is not sufficient to see how culture affects a person's learning, but how a person performs his/her learning in different contexts (Miller, 1999; Gieve & Clark, 2005; Clark & Gieve, 2006).

Although learning styles can have influence on learning, it seems less relevant to relate any particular model of learning styles to study learners' beliefs as learning styles are closely related to and originate from *cognitive styles* (Brown, 2000; Curry, 1983), which are an individual's distinctive, typical, and habitual modes of problem solving (Cassidy, 2004; Hartley, 1998; Sadler-Smith, 1997). Thus, learning styles appear to be more resistant to the influence of external factors, whereas beliefs are more flexible and appear to be more open to examination.

One of my research questions investigates the relationship between learners' beliefs and their *preferred ways of learning* – a term that has not been defined clearly in the literature. To study learners' preferences in language learning, a number of scholars just simply asked the participants to rate sets of pre-chosen classroom activities (Barkhuizen, 1998; Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004; Peacock, 1998a, 2001; Spratt, 1999). Hence, to relate beliefs and *preferred ways of learning*, in this study the latter concept will be operationally defined as what the learners say they like/prefer to do when learning. Thus, teachers' *preferred ways of teaching* are what the teachers say they like/prefer to do when teaching.

### **2.3.5. The relationships between students' and teachers' beliefs**

To understand the relationships between students' and teachers' beliefs, it is necessary to look into the nature of the language classroom. As teachers and learners are social beings (Barcelos, 2000), the language classroom is a social setting in itself (Allwright, 1998). A number of studies have emphasized the social nature of the language classroom (Allwright, 1984a, 1998; Breen, 1985, 1996; Holliday, 1994), and the scholars strongly advocate that language learning is a social and cultural activity as language permeates all social relationships (Barcelos, 2000). As Allwright (1998) noted, classroom is a *co-presence* place where the teacher and students have to take account, in some ways or other, of the fact that they are not entirely alone there. In other words, in a language classroom, "language learning and teaching have to take place in the presence of others" (Allwright, 1984b, p. 125), and this social relationship influences what learning is and how it is done (Breen, 1998). In Breen's (1985) metaphor, the complexity of classroom life is similar to the variety of life forms in a coral reef, and in order to understand it, a person has to look under the surface rather than to stand outside. Each classroom accommodates individual and collective interpretations of activities, their purposes, and reasons; it means that in each classroom the teacher and learners continuously negotiate meanings and purposes, and thus mismatches in beliefs, attitudes, and values are inevitable (Holliday, 1994; Breen, 1998; Barcelos, 2000). Holliday (1994) explained that in a particular classroom, the teacher and students constantly adapt and readapt themselves to achieve their own purposes as well as to learn the classroom culture and its implicit rules. Because they share the same environment, it is important to see how this *co-presence* affects their beliefs (Barcelos, 2000).

In the literature, both teachers and learners are seen as *managers* of learning and as *doers* of learning (Allwright, 1984b, 1998). Ellis (2003) noted that:



"The teacher's on-line decision about how to conduct the discourse of a task reflects his/her 'theory-in-use'. ... On the learners' part, they reflect the language learning beliefs (Horwitz, 1987) they bring to the classroom and, more particularly, to a specific task. How teachers and learners conduct a task will be influenced, to a large extent, by their prior experiences of teaching and learning and their personal definitions of the particular teaching-learning situation." (p. 251)

As teachers are likely to be viewed as "experts" by students (Horwitz, 1988), teachers' beliefs reflected in methods, content, activities, assessments, and feedback can convey implicit messages to students about the subject, about learning, and can be perceived by learners as appropriate ways of dealing with the subject (Elbaum *et al.*, 1993; Kern, 1995). Importantly, teachers' and students' beliefs are grounded in their own experience, personal needs, and desires (Barcelos, 2000, 2003); while language teachers are often explicitly, intensively, formally, and deliberately taught pedagogical knowledge in education programs which have a strong and coherent theoretical and philosophical base (Borg, 2006), learners' beliefs and attitudes are often derived from their own previous, culturally situated, knowledge and experience (Claxton, 1996), most of which can be limited (Horwitz, 1990). Hence, different learners often come to classrooms with their unique learning experiences and different expectations for how language should be taught and learned (Barcelos, 2000; Barkhuizen, 1998; Bernat, 2008; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Horwitz, 1987, 1988). As a result, mismatches between students' and teachers' beliefs and their expectations of appropriate practices exist and are unavoidable (Barkhuizen, 1998; Griffiths & Judy, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2003a; Nunan, 1995; Williams & Burden, 1997).

During the last few decades, studies on those matches and mismatches have been numerous and varied in terms of scales and methods. Most such studies employed questionnaires (Cotterall, 1995; Davis, 2003; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995;

Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Mori, 1997; Riley, 2009), others used semi-structured/interviews combined with a questionnaire (Peacock, 1998a, 1998b, 2001; Wenden, 1987) while some contextualized their studies by using mixed methods and/or case study (Barcelos, 2003; Barkhuizen, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 1991). In general, some conclusions of these studies are as below:

- Language learning and teaching have great influence on each other (Barcelos, 2003; Horwitz, 1985, 1988; Kern, 1995).
- Potential sources of mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation are: cognitive, communicative, linguistic, pedagogic, strategic, cultural, evaluative, procedural, instructional, and attitudinal (Kumaravadivelu, 1991).
- Teachers and students interpret each other's beliefs and act based on those interpretations and their own beliefs (Barcelos, 2003).
- Teacher's beliefs can influence those of the students (Kern, 1995; Riley, 2009) explicitly when the teacher expresses his/her beliefs, or implicitly through his/her chosen methods and activities (Riley, 2009).
- Students tend to change their beliefs towards their teacher's beliefs (Kern, 1995), but students' beliefs can influence how teachers deal with them (Barcelos, 2000, 2003).
- Matches or mismatches of expectations can interfere with students' learning (Nunan, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Barcelos, 2000, 2003).
- Matches or mismatches of beliefs and actions may determine how well students get along with their learning process (Dreyer, 1998), their outcomes, confidence and satisfaction with the class (Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Peacock, 1998a, 1998b), willingness to participate in some learning activities (Horwitz, 1988; Schulz, 1996), their assessments of confidence in the teacher and degrees of motivation and efforts (Schulz, 1996), learning

strategies (Rees-Miller, 1993), their attitudes and perceptions about school and language learning (McCargar, 1993; Kennedy *et al.*, 2000; Dewey, 2004), and their self-efficacy (Matthews, 2010).

#### **2.3.6. Learners beliefs about Native and Non-Native English-speaking teachers**

In the literature, there is evidence (Scheuer, 2008; Timmis, 2002; Van den Doel, 2006) to suggest that EFL learners may be biased against NNTs and therefore do not wish to be taught by them. However, this does not mean that NNTs are always seen as inferior. Moussu (2006), in a longitudinal study, investigated the attitudes of ESL students in the USA towards their NNTs. The results showed that most students had a very positive attitude towards their teachers. In fact, learners' perceptions were both positive and negative towards NNTs and NTs. In studies in ESL contexts by Barratt and Kontra (2000), Ferguson (2005), Liang (2002), Kelch and Santana-Williamson (2002), Mahboob (2003, 2004), Moussu (2006), and Rao (2010), NTs are valued for language authenticity, oral skills, knowledge of culture, positive and humorous personalities, a more relaxed attitude towards error correction, and the use of new teaching methodologies. However, they are seen as lacking pedagogical and professional preparation, organization, and experience as English learners. Besides, they are reported as having poor knowledge of the local culture and educational values, poor understanding of students' learning difficulties, and poor teaching styles. Meanwhile, NNTs are preferred for their ability to empathize with students, a shared cultural background, ability to answer questions, and their stricter expectations. Based on these studies' findings, it appears that learners do not have a clear negative attitude towards their NNTs; experience, professionalism, and what happens in the language classroom is more important to learners than native language backgrounds and language skills of their teachers, and different contexts and variables could influence students' attitudes towards NS and NNS teachers. Meanwhile,

in other studies conducted in EFL contexts, learners also had a favorable attitude towards their NNTs (Ling & Braine, 2007) and expressed both the strengths and weaknesses of their NTs (Rao, 2010). Generally, scholars suggest that NTs and NNTs should be treated equally and note that, from students' perspective, NTs are just a preference, each side having their own strengths, and experience and professionalism are more important than native language backgrounds (Llurda, 2005b; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002, 2005, Pacek, 2005, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002, Moussu & Llurda, 2008, Rao, 2010). Nevertheless, it seems that the ultimate goal for a learner is to "sound like a native speaker" (González-Nueno, 1997, p.261), and a model of native speaker language is entrenched in their minds (Cook, 1999).

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

Beliefs can be deeply embedded, both resistant and open to change, and relate closely to identities, and an individual's identity is multiple and connected to their community memberships and actions in various contexts. In my context of study, Vietnamese learners are often described as passive in class and familiar with rote learning (Boss, 1983; Howe, 1993; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Dang, 2010), familiar with the Grammar Translation method (Denham, 1992; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Le, 2002; Tomlinson & Bao, 2004; Pham, 2005; Sullivan, 2000; Le & Barnard, 2009), and holding a number of misconceptions about language learning (Bernat, 2004). However, it is reported that they always expect to reduce their performance anxiety, to overcome their low self-esteem, to deal with their linguistic limitations and to have these limitations fulfilled, and to achieve a native speaker model (Tomlinson & Bao, 2004). Consequently, it is significant to study what happen when they walk out from state schools to PESs with a more learner-centered environment, very few constraints on testing, and more communicative ways of teaching; when they have high

expectations of the teacher and of the course but have not known how they would be taught; and when the teachers are NSs who are free to teach their preferred ways, but have to anticipate and deal with learners' preferences and beliefs in short courses without any experience of EFL.

Besides, the gaps in the literature are still quite obvious and the body of work tracing long-term effects of participation in language study is very small. Most previous studies were public school and university-situated or in ESL environments, and simply related beliefs with pre-chosen learning tasks without much accounting for learners' past experience and practices, and as the dashed arrows in *figure 1* demonstrate, how their beliefs and/or preferences and expectations relate with their teachers' beliefs and the way their teachers teach them. In regard to teachers, researchers have mainly related teachers' beliefs and actions with less immediate factors behind their decisions making such as prior learning and professional experience or focused on teachers' knowledge and classroom actions without much inference and relation to their own beliefs and their students' beliefs and preferences. Consequently, the following issues need to be investigated more deeply: (1) The extent to which teachers' beliefs inform their classroom actions and are affected by their students' beliefs, preferences, and expectations, and (2) the extent to which learners' beliefs, learning preferences, and expectations are affected by their teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, and (3) whether their belief systems allow the learners to see the benefits of different ways of teaching and learning, or whether they are simply studying under different constraints, instructions, and classroom activities which affect their preferences, attitudes, and expectations whatever their beliefs.

The next chapter is the design of my study. In this chapter, I will argue for the paradigms and research methods I adopted in my study. Then, I will describe the site, the participants, and my data collection and data analysis processes.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### 3.1. Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between the beliefs about language learning of two NTs and two Vietnamese students at a private English language center in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The literature shows that beliefs are social, cultural, but also individual and self-experience based; in addition, they are contradictory, interrelated with knowledge, value, and attitude; and beliefs relate strongly with identity and affect actions. Thus, in order to understand them, it is essential to look at the context of the classroom and how participants give meaning to their actions and to each other's actions and beliefs. The following questions, repeated here for convenience, guide this study.

1. What are the learners' beliefs? How do these beliefs influence their preferred ways of learning?
2. What are the teachers' beliefs? How do these beliefs inform their ways of teaching?
3. How does the learning experience with the particular teacher influence the learner's belief?
4. How do the teachers' beliefs about learners influence their classroom teaching?

### 3.2. Paradigm and research methods

#### 3.2.1. (Post)positivist paradigm vs. Interpretivist paradigm:

While research is "a process of systematic inquiry that is designed to collect, analyse, interpret, and use data to understand, describe, predict, or control an educational or

psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts." (Mertens, 1998, p. 2), a paradigm is "a way of looking at the world" (Mertens, 1998, p. 6), a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides choices of method (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a research paradigm emerges from the following three fundamental questions:

- The ontological question: (Question on the form and nature of reality)
- The epistemological question: (Question on the basis belief about knowledge)
- The methodological question: (What the researcher does to find out what she/he believes can be known)

Creswell (1994) and Creswell and Clark (2007) added that a research paradigm also includes

- The axiological question: (Question on the role of values) and
- The rhetorical question: (What is the language of research?)

Although the adopting of one term and rejecting others and the different ways of classifying seem to make the job of categorising educational and psychological research into distinctive paradigms a confusing task, two of the most common and contrastive categories of research paradigm are *(Post)positivist* vs. *Interpretivist* (Creswell, 1994; Mertens, 1998; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

### **3.2.1.1. *(Post)positivist***

From the (post)positivist's perspective, the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 1998), methods for studying the social world can be value-free, and explanations of a causal nature can be provided (Mertens, 1998). Ontologically, the positivists hold that a researcher can discover

the reality as it exists (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and the purpose is to explain, predict, control phenomena, and uncover truth. In this paradigm, the investigator is independent from what is being studied; he/she does not influence it nor is s/he being influenced by it (Creswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Meanwhile, post-positivism modifies a falsifiability criterion for truth. The postpositivists argue that a reality does exist but it cannot be known perfectly (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, 1998), therefore, researchers can discover "reality" within a certain realm of probability. Because it is believed that the theories, hypotheses, and experiences of the investigator can strongly influence what is studied (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994), the postpositivists hold that objectivity is the standard of research; thus, "the researcher should remain neutral to prevent values or biases from influencing the work by following prescribed procedures rigorously" (Mertens, 1998, p. 10). In contrast to the positivists, the postpositivists believe that they cannot "prove" a theory, but they can validate the result by eliminating alternative explanations (Mertens, 1998; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). However, methodologically, the two paradigms above employ the same methods of inquiry; that is, verifying hypotheses and precisely measuring variables through a process of experimentation, with time- and context-free, cause-effect laws. Inquiry is a deductive process with cause and effect assumption, and through validity, reliability, and objectivity (Creswell, 1994; Cresswell & Clark, 2007).

#### ***3.2.1.2. Interpretivist***

In the interpretivists' perspective, reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study (Creswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994); reality is socially constructed and open to change during the process of study (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994; Mertens, 1998). In other words, "the world and 'reality' are not objective and exterior, but



they are socially constructed and given meaning by people" (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994, p. 78). The purpose of inquiry is not gathering facts or measuring frequency, but describing and reconstructing the phenomenon (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994) or understanding the way in which the individual acts, and creates, modifies, interprets, understands his/her context of social practices (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Usher, 1996). In terms of epistemology, to "understand from within" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007), the researcher and what is researched are interactively linked (Creswell, 1994; Mertens, 1998). Thus, contrary to the (post)positivism paradigm, "the conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111) and research is a product of the researcher's values, and thus, the researcher cannot be independent of them (Mertens, 1998). Interpretive paradigm research is an inductive process, context-bound and focused on actions (Cohen *et al.*, 2007), and the results are judged through trustworthiness and authenticity criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### **3.2.2. Quantitative methods vs. Qualitative methods**

#### **3.2.2.1. Quantitative methods**

Quantitative methods are advocated by the positivist paradigm as the methods are suitable for testing a theory deductively to support or refute it (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2003; Golafshani, 2003). The methods involve the "use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fitted into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Validity and reliability in quantitative research depend on careful experiments, observations and instrument constructions such as surveys, questionnaires, and appropriate, standardized research tools (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Patton, 2002). In quantitative methods, the researcher tends to keep a distance from his/her object of study and to take steps to remove

bias (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). Meanwhile, he/she uses literature as a major tool to justify problems, and to identify questions and hypotheses.

Taking place in a time- value- free framework, quantitative research findings can be used to generalize to other situations and to test or validate already constructed theories. Moreover, it is useful when studying large numbers of people as the data collection and analysis is relatively quick. However, focusing on hypothesis testing rather than on hypothesis generation risks missing the occurrence of relevant phenomena; the researcher often imposes his/her perspective on the subjects rather than capturing, describing and understanding their world (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). The generalization of findings should be carried out with care as the "knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 19). In addition, as the positivist paradigm notes that the researcher can study without influencing the object or without being influenced by it, quantitative research studies often "fail" to meet ethical criteria (Busher, 2005; Churton, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2003), that is to be moral and confidential; causing no invasion, no harm, no deception to achieve validity and trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2003).

#### ***3.2.2.2. Qualitative methods***

Qualitative research falls into the interpretive paradigm as the methods recognize reality as multiple and constantly changing, socially and historically constructed; and knowledge claims are based on the meanings of individual experiences, inductively, in real contexts (Creswell, 1998; Cresswell & Clark, 2007). The qualitative researcher often "lives" within his/her fieldwork with intense or prolonged contact (Creswell, 1994), he/she uses methods such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, case studies,

and interview (Creswell, 2003). Unlike quantitative studies, in which the validity and reliability depend on instrument construction, in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Golafshani, 2003). The transferability and trustworthiness of a qualitative study are affected by the qualitative researchers' perspectives (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Golafshani, 2003) and "[hinge] to great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). A study's credibility is enhanced when the researcher actively searches for evidence that contradicts as well as confirms, thus helping explanations to be developed (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Silverman, 2000). Thus, qualitative studies are value-laden and biased (Creswell, 1994), and the researcher must have a critical subjectivity and a cultural awareness; he/she must develop a sense of trust in the community being observed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative data, as Guba and Lincoln (1994, 2003) hold, can "provide rich data into human behaviour", and are based on participants' own meanings (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). Besides, with the ontology of multiple, divergent reality and the epistemology that knowledge is socially constructed, qualitative research is often more ethical than quantitative research (Busher, 2005; Churton, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). However, the small scale focus on a specific individual or context often makes the findings lack strength in terms of generalizability to other people or settings (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). Compared to quantitative data collecting and analysing methods, qualitative methods generally take more time and the results are more easily affected by the researcher's biases (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

### **3.2.3. Paradigm and methods of the study:**

In LLB literature, as summarized earlier, most studies have adopted a (post)positivist paradigm, which normally uses Likert-scale, such as the BALLI (Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995) or other kinds of inventory (Allen, 1996; Cotterall, 1995; Kuntz, 1996a; Mori, 1997), to categorise learners rather than to understand beliefs. In these studies, the results obtained were key concepts and hypotheses determined beforehand with de-contextualized generalizations and without letting respondents construct their own beliefs (Barcelos, 2003; Dufva, 2003; Kalaja, 2003; Kramsch, 2003). Kramsch (2003, p. 110) noted that these studies have considered the product of beliefs rather than "the process by which believers ascribe opinions and worldviews to themselves or to others". In contrast, because of the nature of the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods, studies into LLBs within this perspective do not gather facts or measure frequency, but describe and reconstruct beliefs (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994) and provide rich data of actions, based on participants' own meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2003; Cresswell & Clark, 2007) in more ethical methods (Busher, 2005; Churton, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Although beliefs are constructed in various ways, the most important is through dialogic speech (Alanen, 2003; Kalaja, 2003; Kramsch, 2003; Dufva, 2003; Woods, 2003) in which beliefs emerge from beliefs holders' reasons for, and evaluations and judgments on activities and actions (Dewey, 1906; Dufva, 2003; Pajares, 1992). Moreover, while beliefs are related closely to identity, according to Kramsch (1993) and Barcelos (2000), language is a tool in the construction of identities. In other words, teachers and learners co-construct and negotiate their identities and beliefs as well as the culture of the classroom through language (Kramsch, 1993; Norton, 1997). Thus, inferring beliefs from classroom actions (Barcelos, 2003; Nespor, 1985) and from interviews (Wenden, 1986a, 1987; Peacock, 1998a) can help to capture the beliefs from the participants' views and practices in specific and natural contexts. However, adopting only qualitative

methods might also be problematic as beliefs can be held unconsciously and a person might act in accordance with or contrary to his/her actual beliefs (Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996).

Consequently, to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs, it is necessary to let individuals construct their beliefs through *discourse* (Kalaja, 2003; Dufva, 2003; Gee, 1989; Kramsch, 2003; Lantolf, 2000), and it is necessary to examine both *espoused beliefs* and *beliefs in actions/enacted beliefs*, and differentiate between "blind" and "reasoned" beliefs. Consequently, due to the nature of beliefs, and my research questions, and in order to track beliefs from other cognitive factors, an *interpretivist paradigm* and *three qualitative methods* of *repertory grid*, *stimulated recall*, and *observation schedule* were adopted.

#### **3.2.3.1. Repertory Grid**

Repertory Grid (RepGrid) is a research method developed from Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955). While it can be difficult for people to say what their beliefs are (Corporaal, 1991; Donaghue, 2003; Nespor, 1985), the method helps to elicit a person's cognition or part of his/her cognition by evaluating events, activities, and people related to his/her experience (Donaghue, 2003). In the form of a *semi-structured interview*, the method encourages informants to repeatedly build *constructs* from a given or elicited set of *elements*, which are normally specific people, objects, events, or activities (Kelly, 1955; Nespor, 1985) (see Appendix A for the *elements* used in this study). The informants do this by repeatedly and randomly taking 3 different elements from the set to discriminate the elements in each triad to group two similar elements, and to report the reasons for the similarity and/or differences (See Appendix B for the questions used in this process). The reasons will be used as a pair of bipolar constructs which they can be asked to rate, evaluate, compare, and

explain in further interviews. The aim of the interviews is to discover the underlying reasons that the subjects hold for categorising and classifying aspects of the elements in their everyday contexts (Solas, 1992); there are generally no explicit presuppositions about the reasons that the subjects may use to distinguish the elements being sorted (Nespor, 1985). This interview can generate both quantitative and qualitative data. This method deals with the cognitive/psychological orientation, thus, it is suitable for retrieving human cognition (Corporaal, 1991). Sharing this view, Fromm (2004) claimed that the technique “should provide an instrument with which it is possible to examine people’s subjective views openly and sensitively” (p. 76). In Donaghue’s (2003) and Kelly’s (1955) view, individuals are able to make hypotheses, test them, and then form personal constructs; the constructs are their own theories and beliefs – the ways of organizing and making sense of the world that will change and be adapted with experience. This is in accord with my definition of beliefs.

Taking all into account, RepGrid is an appropriate tool to encourage individuals to think and to talk about their beliefs (Corporaal, 1991; Donaghue, 2003; Nespor, 1985; Solas, 1992). Compared to other research methods, RepGrid is a less biased tool (Stewart & Stewart, 1981) with higher level of validity (Pervin, 1989). Hence, I adopted it in my study where the subjects were helped to build, evaluate, compare, and explain their constructs, and the data represent their "espoused beliefs" about language learning.

#### ***3.2.3.2. Stimulated recall***

Stimulated recall interview is an introspective method that represents "a means of eliciting data through the process involved in carrying out a task or activity" (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1) by inviting subjects to recall their concurrent cognitive activity when that event was going on (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Norman, 1983). It is argued that verbal

protocols taken while the person does a task will be informative, but incomplete (Norman, 1983) as all of a person's belief structures are not available to inspection, especially when some of those beliefs may be of a procedural nature (Norman, 1983); stimulated recall invites subjects to recall their concurrent cognitive activity during that event, normally prompted by a video or audio replay. According to Gass and Mackey (2000), the method can isolate particular events from a chain of unconscious actions to reveal the cognitions of the observed participant; the method helps to identify the organization of knowledge, and beliefs, and to determine if a particular cognitive process is employed. The method is relevant for studies into beliefs even in contexts with novelty, uncertainty and non-deliberative behaviour (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003). As it deals with moment to moment thought processes and decision-making (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003; Nespor, 1985), stimulated recall interview is a valuable source of gaining insight into teachers' and students' beliefs.

Based on the literature review in chapter 2, the reason for adopting stimulated recall method in my study comes firstly from the natural and internal contradiction of belief (Barcelos, 2003; Dewey, 1933; Peirce, 1878; Rokeach, 1968). In addition, individuals' theories of action include an espoused theory and a theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Thus, it is necessary to combine stated beliefs and beliefs in action to build up a person's belief system.

Besides, scholars have also pointed out that a person might act in accordance with or contrary to his/her actual beliefs (Donaghue, 2003; Nespor, 1985; Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996). In my study, what I sought was what the teachers and learners actually thought the reasons are for what they did, rather than what they thought they were expected to think. Thus, using stimulated recall helped the participants to make explicit and articulate the beliefs that guided their teaching and learning in real contexts. Using stimulated recall

helped the participants to make explicit and articulate the beliefs that guided their teaching/learning (See Appendix C for questions used in this process). In stimulated recall method, there are normally two stages: one for the observation of video recording and one for the stimulated recall interview. The combination of the two protocols was necessary to investigate beliefs in action.

#### **3.2.3.3. Observation schedule**

Observation offers opportunities to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Mason, 1996). Although the presence of the observer and technical device(s) might "curve" the subjects' daily actions (Nespor, 1985; Norman, 1983; Mason, 1996; Patton, 1987), by using observation, the researcher was able to record and had a direct view of what was taking place. He was also open-ended and inductive in collecting data because this method had the potential to yield more valid or authentic data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) and enabled the researcher to see everyday behaviours that otherwise might be taken for granted or escape awareness among the teachers and learners (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Patton, 1987, 2002). The literature review shows that beliefs are contradictory and can be unconscious, and the validity of interview data depends on the subjects' willingness and verbal skills (Basturkmen *et al.*, 2004; Kagan, 1990), their memory (Gass & Mackey, 2000), and quality of the video (Nespor, 1985), and whether or not they were trying to invent reasons to meet the demand of the interview (Freeman, 1991, 1994; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Norman, 1983). As a result, it would be more valid to enter their classes to observe what was happening than to "stand outside" (Mason, 1996; Patton, 1987) and use only the RepGrid method or ask them what happened in their class. Therefore, a more objective source of data should also be employed. To examine the teachers' teaching practices, I needed a reliable observation schedule to quantify their actions to compare what they actually did and what



they thought they did or expected to do in their classes. To do this, I employed the standardized schedule *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching* (COLT) (Allen *et al.*, 1984; Fröhlich *et al.*, 1985) to quantify the teachers' actions based on the recorded video, and compared the results with those from the interview data. This set of data was used as evidence for what actually happened in the classes, and the mood of the lessons (see Appendix E for the adapted COLT).

COLT is a standardized quantitative observation instrument which contains categories that describe activities taking place and the verbal interactions emerging within activities (Allen *et al.*, 1984; Fröhlich *et al.*, 1985). The original COLT scheme consists of two parts: Part A contains categories derived primarily from CLT in terms of the types of activities and episodes that take place. The scheme distinguishes between activity and episode; an episode is part of an activity but has different features from other episodes in the same activity. Although the concept of classroom activity is pedagogically meaningful, there is no clear and unambiguous theoretical definition for it. For this reason, in the COLT scheme, an operational definition containing five distinct parameters has been tentatively established. Each activity, including where appropriate the constituent subsections or episodes, is described with reference to the five parameters: activity type, participant organization, content, student modality, and material. Each parameter includes several subsections, some of which are hierarchically organized. They represent a combination of high and low inference categories. In Appendix E, each activity and communicative feature are explained and described. Part B uses the categories that describe the verbal interactions which take place within activities. Originally, Allen *et al.* (1984) and Fröhlich *et al.* (1985) used the parameters and their subsections to measure the extent to which an instructional treatment may be characterised as communicatively oriented. Thus, most fellow researchers employed the scale by counting the frequency of occurrence of each sub-category of six communicative

features: mother tongue/FL, information gap, length of discourse, feedback, discourse initiation, and uses of linguistic forms.

The COLT scheme was a suitable tool for me to adopt as it “[pays] closer attention to what teachers actually do” (Allen *et al.*, 1984, p. 232) and “[describes] as precisely as possible some of the features of communication” (Ibid, p. 233) in language classrooms (see Appendix E for the adapted COLT). As will be discussed in the later section, how I adopted and used the observation schedule depended very much on what the teachers had said in the interviews at the beginning of the courses. While I wanted to check whether the observed activities were as communicative as the teachers had claimed, Allen *et al.* (1984) noted that the COLT scheme enables us to clarify a number of issues which relate to CLT versus GT, that a combination of scores for the various categories in the scheme “will enable us to place each class at some point on a communicative continuum or scale” (p. 247). Moreover, my focus of observation was at classroom activity level. As a result, the schedule emerged as a relevant tool as it, compared to some others schemes used in language education such as *the Interaction analysis* Moskowitz (1968), *the Foreign Language Interaction Analysis System* (FLINT) (Moskowitz, 1971), *the Foci for Observation Communications Used in Settings* (FOCUS) (Fanselow, 1977), establishes classroom activity as the main unit of analysis.

My data collection schedule was as below.

| Length of data collection: 15 weeks (length of a course)<br>Number of participants: 2 teachers and 2 students (in two classes) |  |   |                      |
|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Methods  | Purpose  | Frequency   | Participants         |
| Repertory Grid   | Espoused beliefs   | Once: at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of the course   | Teachers             |
|  | Espoused beliefs<br>Whether the beliefs changed                        | Twice: at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week, and the end of the course   | Learners             |
| Stimulated recall  | Enacted belief<br>How students' beliefs, expectations, actions changed | 2 lessons per week for each class, 45-minute-observation per lesson, 10 to 90 minutes per interview depending on the available time of the informants | Teachers<br>Learners |
| Observation schedule   | Accurate description of classroom actions                              | 2 lessons per week for each class (using the video recorded for stimulated recall)  | Teachers             |

Table 3: Data collection schedule

### **3.3. The procedures**

The procedures for data collection and data analysis were as below:

#### **3.3.1. Repertory Grid interviews with the teachers and learners.**

Adapting the guide of Fransella and Bannister (1977), the first RepGrid interviews were conducted at the beginning of the courses with both the teachers and learners. In the first stage of the RepGrid interview, the subjects were given a set of elements describing teaching and learning activities (Appendix A). To develop "personal elements" (Goffin, 2002) for each participant, an in-depth interview was carried out with each subject. Using the given elements, each teacher was asked to describe the activities he/she knew and the activities he/she often used in his/her classroom that reflected his/her best teaching and what a visitor would see in his/her class on a typical day. Meanwhile, interviews with each student focused on what they had done in their previous language classes, and the learning activities that they evaluated as useful for their own learning, or felt were familiar or easy to get on with. The informants sometimes had problems with their memory or with pedagogical and SLA terms. In such cases I elicited whether he/she had been exposed to a particular learning activity, and the terms were discussed, explained, and checked to make sure that the subjects and the researchers perceived the terms in the same ways. The participants were also encouraged to add more activities if they liked. After the interviews, each subject had his/her own set of elements, but most of the elements in their list had been chosen from the list I gave them. Once the different sets of elements had been determined, each participant was helped to build constructs from their own set. In this stage, each subject was required to randomly take three different elements from the set, discriminate the elements in each triad to group two similar elements and report aloud the reason for this similarity and in what way the other element

was different; the two reasons were used as a pair of independent constructs (See appendix B for questions used in this process).

After that, combining the *Laddering technique* based on Personal Construct Theory (Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Jankowicz, 2004; Walkeraand & Crittenden, 2012) whereby an interviewer progressively elicits constructs to understand what a research participant means by a particular construct (Stewart & Stewart, 1981; Walkeraand & Crittenden, 2012), the participants were asked to evaluate their constructs and say to what extent each construct benefited them in language learning. The questions that were used were: *Now on this construct do you prefer this side or that side? Why would you prefer to be here than there? What are the advantages of this side in contrast to the disadvantages of that side as you see it?* The interviews were tape recorded and analysed to examine the participants' perspectives based on their reasons when discriminating the elements and evaluating their constructs. Based on the transcription of the interviewees' comments on their constructs, this method of conduction RepGrid provided rich qualitative data (Eden & Jones, 1984; Fromm, 2004; Goffin, 2002; Jankowicz, 2004). By analysing and coding the transcription using *content analysis* in RepGrid (Feixas *et al.*, 2002; Goffin, 2002; Green, 2004), the participants' "espoused beliefs" emerged.

At the end of the course, in the second RepGrid interview, the student informants were asked to look again at their elements from the first interview. The researcher asked them whether they wanted to add or to drop any elements from the list, and the same procedures were conducted again with each informant. When comparing the results between the "pre" and "post" RepGrid interviews, I had data on the participants' stated beliefs and whether those sets of beliefs changed after a given period.

### **3.3.2. Stimulated recall Interviews:**

Stimulated recall interviews were carried out every week and with various lessons during the data collection period. Taking the role of a non-participant observer, with the help of a video recorder, I recorded the teaching and learning activities of the participants. My video recorded how teachers were teaching and how the learners were learning in class. However, as the classroom activities were normally decided, conveyed, and organized by the teachers, the teacher participants were focused more by the camera. To make sure that the recording was minimally obstructive and to minimize any potential drawbacks, and because the school allowed only me to come into the class, I recorded the lesson myself and I often chose a seat in the corner of the classroom and used a small camera attached to a mini camera stand put on my table. Besides, I also needed to note the classroom events for the short interviews right after the lessons in case the teachers were not able to arrange time for long interviews on the next days. To prepare for the stimulated recall interviews, while watching the video myself after that, I took notes on the video episodes that I predicted would be interesting and significant to ask about to examine matches and/or clashes between beliefs and actions; most of the episodes exemplified classroom activities, the teacher's methods and techniques, and the learner's attitudes and participation in class. At the recall stage, I invited the teachers and learners to watch the video. When watching I paused at pre-chosen episodes and asked them to give reasons for their on-going actions (See Appendix C for questions used in the interviews). The participants were also encouraged to stop and give comments at any episodes they wanted to. When the teachers were not able to arrange time for a long interview, we spent from ten to fifteen minutes after their lessons to discuss quickly how they evaluated their lessons, their activities of the day, how their learners were learning, and whether or not they were satisfied with what they had done in class.

In the interview with the learners, I focused on operational indicators of engagement of the learners in the episodes through behaviours while learning such as maintaining eye contact with the teacher, taking notes, or showing un/willingness to participate in some other ways. Besides, I also allowed the learners to focus on their behaviours outside the class such as the kinds of self-study they engaged in to support the classroom lessons that they would not have done in high school, or certain previous activities that they had stopped performing. Table 6 in section 4.1 provides the total amount of data I gained for this study.

### **3.3.3. Transcription and quoting strategies:**

All of the interviews with Vietnamese learners were carried out in their mother tongue, then transcribed and translated into English; the interviews with the teachers were in English. To render interview excerpts into a more readable text, some researchers recommend that in transcription where it is not essential to have the exact linguistic form as it is in sociolinguistic studies, all hesitations, pauses, restarts, and asides can be dropped from the excerpts (Kvale, 1996; Roberts, 1997; Weiss, 1994). Thus, I have altered the interview transcripts in the following ways (based on Weiss, 1994, p. 197-198; Barcelos, 2000, 2003).

"Hum...", "erm...", "you know" have been eliminated from the quotes when used in the final writing of this study and false starts and unnecessary repetitions of a phrase were usually edited since they could be distracting to the reader. However, no word was added, changed, or substituted except to make the sentences less redundant. I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews myself and sent the transcription back to the participants once or twice a week to check the reliability of my transcription and to add any clarification/modification where necessary. To validate the Vietnamese-English translation text of the learners' interviews, I had them checked by one of my Vietnamese colleagues who is experienced in

teaching Vietnamese-English translation. Consequently, all participants' quotes are reported in English.

In presenting the interview quotes and discussions in the thesis, I used both an *integrative strategy* and an *excerpt strategy* (Emerson *et al.*, 1995). The integrative strategy "weaves together interpretation and excerpt" and "produces a text with minimal spatial marking – such as indentation or single spacing" (p. 179). This strategy is especially suitable to present longer, continuous quotes that can be recounted as one continuing story. In contrast, the excerpt strategy, visually marks quotes "off from accompanying commentary and interpretation, usually by indenting and/or italicizing" (p.179-180). This strategy lets readers assess the authenticity of the interpretations offered.

**3.3.4. Analysing the interview data** (see more at table 4: Data analysis strategies for the research questions)

Adopting the *content analysis* method (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Goulding, 1999; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002; Seale, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), with the help of the *NVIVO 7 software*, the data were analysed and coded inductively through a process starting from line-by-line analysis (open coding) to relating the open-codes to build themes/categories of beliefs based on valid inference, interpretation, and inductive reasoning. The data analysis started with reading all data repeatedly to achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the whole. Then, the data was read word by word to derive free codes (or free nodes as named in the NVIVO software) (Miles & Huberman, 1994) by first highlighting the exact words from the text that appeared to capture key thoughts or concepts. To do this, I approached the text by making notes of my first impressions, thoughts, and initial analysis. As this process continued, labels for codes

emerged; these codes came directly from the text in considering the focus of my study and the literature, and were used as an initial coding scheme (or a list of free nodes). A screenshot of how I made use of the package NVIVO 7 for my data storing and analysis is added in Appendix D. Codes were then sent backs to the participants together with a summary of their beliefs derived from the RepGrid for them to check again with me whether these codes represented their ideas/reasons/arguments. Unfortunately, I was not able to do this code-checking stage with one of the participant, Diana, as she had to go back to Australia right after the GE1 course. When the participants had agreed with all of the codes, they were sorted into categories based on how they were related and linked. These emergent categories were used to organize and group codes into meaningful clusters (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 2002) (or tree nodes). Then, these clusters were combined with their stated beliefs to build up their language learning belief system. After that, the belief systems of the teachers and the learners were compared for similarities and differences.

#### **3.3.5. Observation schedule:**

For the observation schedule, the teachers' classroom actions analysis was contingent on the results of the stimulated recall and RepGrid interview. It means that from the first RepGrid interview and some early stimulated recall interview results, I selected some areas that had potential for matches and/or mismatches between their beliefs and actions. They were:

- Types of interaction in class,
- The focus on different language skills, and vocabulary and grammar in each lesson,
- How teachers used material,
- The extent to which the classroom activities can be evaluated as communicative based on the criteria such as information gap and length of discourse.



Then I adapted the COLT scheme (Appendix E) to quantify the teachers' actions by categorising and timing the classroom activities they used. While there was no change in Part A of the COLT, the categories in part B and the original analysis strategy were revised to fit with the aims in my study. After the early interviews with the teachers, as they often mentioned the word "communication activity" and they seemed to be interested in information exchange, vocabularies and structures, and length of utterances in the activities, I wanted to check how communicative the activities were when the learners were using English orally in pair/group works or with the teacher based on these three categories. Therefore, I attached only three features *information gap*, *uses of linguistic forms*, and *length of discourse* from the COLT's part B with the activities in the COLT's part A to count the amount of time in the class in which the learners worked in activities practicing those features. Thus, for the analysis of both part A and part B, my focus was on classroom activities and actions, not classroom discourse, and I used check marks on those features describing the activities and noted the length of time on these. Not all activities consist of an exclusive focus on one category, but might also involve other features. Then, the result was arrived at by summing up the total class time on each activity and communicative feature and then comparing it to the total recorded time of the class. An example of how I coded two recorded lessons in 98 minutes using the COLT and an explanation for how I coded one sample activity can be seen in Appendix F.

Although classroom discourse was not the focus in COLD analysis, the interaction data obtained from the recorded video was also transcribed and examined to gain a more exact inference of the participants' beliefs and to demonstrate how the teachers taught in their class.

After processing the data, I used the strategies below to present the findings and to answer the research questions.

| Questions  | Strategies to answer the questions  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Question 1:</b> What are the learners' beliefs? How do these beliefs influence their preferred ways of learning?</p> <p><b>Question 2:</b> What are the teachers' beliefs? How do these beliefs inform their ways of teaching?</p> | <p><b>Combining</b> beliefs clusters from RepGrid interview (stated beliefs) and beliefs clusters from Stimulated recall interviews (enacted belief) to build up their belief systems</p> <p><b>Comparing</b> their belief systems and their learning/teaching preferences</p> <p><b>Comparing</b> teachers' beliefs with results from quantitative counting of the time of classroom activities by the COLT</p> <p><b>Demonstrating</b> by making use of the recorded video, Stimulated recall interviews, and interaction data.</p> |
| <p><b>Question 3:</b> How does the learning experience with the particular teacher influence the learner's belief?</p>   | <p><b>Relating</b> beliefs and actions of the teachers to the learners' beliefs, preferences, and expectations</p> <p><b>Comparing</b> the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> RepGrid interviews to see whether the learners change their beliefs, learning preferences, and expectations</p> <p><b>Checking</b> observable behaviour in video recordings against espoused beliefs preferences</p>   |
| <p><b>Question 4:</b> How do the teachers' beliefs about learners influence their classroom teaching?</p>  | <p><b>Relating</b> the teachers' beliefs and actions to how their learners learned in the classes</p> <p><b>Checking</b> observable behaviour in video recordings against espoused beliefs preferences</p>  |

Table 4: Data analysis strategies for the research questions

### 3.4. Role of the researcher

Several researchers have suggested that in qualitative studies the researcher is the instrument of investigation, the heart of the qualitative inquiry, or the "gendered, multiculturally situated researcher" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 23) whose "gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity" (p. 25). Qualitative study is normally conducted based on the interpretations of the researcher and on the close relationships that develop between the researcher and his/her data. Such

investigations require that the researcher makes explicit why the research aims were chosen, what the researcher's views are regarding the focus of the study and what relationships exist between the participants of the study and the researcher (Schram, 2003). Thus, it is appropriate for the researcher to make explicit his/her biases (Patton, 1990; Wolcott, 1994). Describing the researcher's perspective in this way, it is hoped, will help to achieve auditability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and to highlight any possible biases the researcher may introduce during the investigation, and in working towards the conclusions of the study.

I am studying the beliefs of Vietnamese learners and their English teachers. However, I am a Vietnamese learner of English myself. I spent 6 years studying English as a compulsory subject in Vietnamese public secondary and high schools. I am also a teacher of English as well as a teacher trainer; I have spent 6 years teaching English in private schools in HCMC and now I am in charge of training novice teachers of English. It was not easy for me to be totally unbiased about the perspectives and actions of the participants. However, any qualitative study is subject to researcher's bias to some extent, and I ensured that the results and interpretations were as trustworthy as possible (*see section 3.5*).

My role in the study was mostly that of a non-participant observer, especially when observing teachers and learners during their classes. However, as I was a language teacher myself, I hoped that I was viewed by the participating teachers as a colleague and the learners as a friend rather than an "expert". I guessed that if the participants viewed me as an expert, whether in their class or in the interviews with me, their responses and actions would be curved and/or they would not be confident while showing their beliefs. Besides, my study involves several ethical issues (*see section 3.6*) and some of the ethical dilemmas may not be solved easily. I was required to have a critical and skeptical perspective of participants' beliefs and actions. At the same time, I also needed to be able to empathize with them and

understand their perspectives. My choice was to pay attention to details that could reveal the participants' beliefs and actions while refraining from making value judgments. My goal was not to judge their beliefs and actions and I did not think it would be ethical to do so. Actually, the participants in my study admitted that they were uneasy in the first observed lessons and stimulated recall interview because taking part in a study was a new experience for them. But after that, the teachers said that when they realized my presence in their class was harmless, they were more confident when sharing their views about teaching and learning.

### **3.5. Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Trustworthiness and credibility of the study were ensured firstly by my prolonged engagement and observation of the classes to build trust with participants and check misinterpretation (Cresswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985); 15 weeks were spent following each participant in my study. Then, the research employed triangulation of research methods (using different sources of data: pre- and post-RepGrid, stimulated recall, fieldnotes). Besides, a member checking strategy (Garrison *et al.*, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999; Woods, 1996) was adopted in the RepGrid interviews to make sure what the terminologies meant to the informants, and in the transcription and coding stage (see section 3.4) to check the reliability of the data with the informants. In Padgett's (1998) recommendations, member checking is necessary as once the researcher does this, respondents are not only honored but valued as authoritative, and this can be an important step to limit researcher bias. Hence, attempts were made to limit conflicting perspectives and interpretation during data coding and analysis.

Besides, the audit trail technique (Bowen, 2009; Ezzy, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse *et al.*, 2002; Padgett, 1998) was used to ensure that the codes emerged directly from

the data, thereby allowing readers to follow or trace the findings back to the data. The audit trail is the systematic recording and presentation of information about the material gathered and the processes involved in a qualitative research project. The trail provides a means of ensuring that "concepts, themes, and ultimately the theory can be seen to have emerged directly from the data, thereby confirming the research findings and grounding them in the evidence" (Bowen, 2009, p. 207). Audit trail technique was employed in this study in that all quotations were tagged with the source of the data; the original Vietnamese transcripts of the translated quotations from Vietnamese participants were supplied. Hence, a person can follow the findings back to the data easily. In short, the study was designed in a way that the data can be interpreted through different lenses:

- *Lens of the researcher*: prolonged engagement and triangulation of research methods;
- *Lens of participants*: member check;
- *Lens of experts*: audit trail.

### **3.6. Ethical considerations**

According to Padgett (1998), we must incorporate ethical concerns into our pursuit of rigor. The researcher followed the BERA Ethical Guidelines (BERA, 2004) and Leicester University's (2006) Research Ethics Code of Practice to maintain privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and avoiding harm, betrayal, and deception not only to participants in terms of psychological pressure and physical danger but also to the class, and school in which they were teaching/studying (Burgess, 1989; Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Padgett, 1998). I adopted the following ethical strategies in the study.

- Informed consent to disclosure of purposes of research; the research methods, the data collecting process

- Obtaining permission from the school
- Ensuring the teachers and learners freely agreed to take part in this research
- Allowing them to withdraw at any time
- Disguising not only the names of the participants but the dates of the actions
- Data was kept confidentially. Storage and use of Data were undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

### **3.7. The pilot study**

To see how I could work with the RepGrid, stimulated recall, and observation schedule in practice, I piloted the methods with one GE3 class and one GE4 class at AMA.

#### **The chosen classes:** GE3 and GE4

Up to fifteen students were placed in each of the classes by the academic consulting staffs based on their placement test scores. Each syllabus comprised of 90 hours in total in 15 months; there were 3 classes a week; 2 hours per class. The levels were Elementary and Pre-intermediate and the course books used were World English 2 and World English 3 respectively.

#### **The teachers and the learners**

**Ms Beri:** Beri was an Australian, she was 28 years old. She held a BA in history, politics, and philosophy. She took a CELTA course in the USA and started teaching English from 2010.

**Thy:** She was Beri's student in the GE4 class, she was 20 years old and she was a university student of Tourism at that time. This was the first time she studied English in a private school; she wanted to study English for her future job.

**Mr. Paul:** Paul was 42 years old, he was an American. He had a BA in literature and a TESOL certificate. He had been teaching English in Vietnam for 4 years.

**Han:** Han was Paul's student in the GE3 class, she was 24 years old and she was a hotel receptionist. She took the course as she thought it was good for her job.

## **Results and Discussion**

Following the procedures in section 3.5, the pilot RepGrid interviews were with Paul and Han; the Stimulated interviews were with Beri and Thy, and the observation schedule were coded for 2 hours in each class. The summaries of the results from my pilot study are as below.

### **Paul and Han**

Results from the pilot RepGrid interviews show that in general, Paul and Han generated different sets of constructs. However, half of their constructs seemed to be similar, for example, *collective/group activity vs. individual activity*, *work with friends vs. work with teacher*, *learn the sound of language vs. learn the form of language*, etc. The participants also shared their preferences with these pairs of constructs and the reasons for those preferences. However, when I asked them to rate the constructs against the elements, I found that it was hard to relate the participants' belief system in this way of quantitative analysis as the participants had many different elements and constructs.

### **Beri and Thy**

The audio-recorded stimulated recall interviews were transcribed and sent back to the interviewees to check whether the transcripts were reliable, and for them to add explanation where they thought necessary. After that, inductive coding of those transcripts was conducted. After coding and analysing the lesson, some matches and mismatches between

the teacher's and the student's beliefs were categorised. I found that Thy shared her teacher's beliefs in some categories below:

- *Learning goal*: Both of them insisted that communication was the most important goal in language learning.
- *Mood/tone of the lesson*: Both of them agreed on four out of five subcategories; they were that learning must be low-stress, interesting, comprehensible, and motivated.
- *Declarative/procedural knowledge*: The teacher and the student believed that both knowledge of vocabulary/grammar and skills were important but in a lesson, speaking and listening should be the focus.
- *Error and correction*: Both of them believed that the teacher had to correct the learner's errors, especially the pronunciation errors.

However, the student seemed to have different beliefs from the teacher's on the following categories:

- *Communication criteria*: While the teacher guided students to meaningful communication, the student believed that fluency, accuracy, and being quick and coherent were important in speaking.
- *Interaction*: In the lesson, the teacher used student-student interaction as she thought it was important, but the student did not think she benefited much from such activity, she did not like to work with her partner as she would not learn much from working with one at the same linguistic competence. The student believed that teacher-student interaction was important as it made her more confident and the teacher could correct her when she made errors.



Results from the observation schedule revealed some interesting comparisons. Most of the time in the two classes was spent on "teacher to the whole class" and "students to students" interaction, "listening" and "speaking" activities, and "supplied material". Both of the teachers used direct and immediate feedback to amend pronunciation mistakes by learners.

The pilot study showed that it was possible to investigate students' beliefs and teachers' beliefs and actions by using RepGrid interviews, stimulated recall interviews, and observation data. However, the researcher needed to be skillful and experienced in running the methods to get rich and reliable sources of data. Some valuable experiences were drawn from the pilot. For example, in the RepGrid interviews, I realized that eliciting elements was time-consuming and not effective, especially with the students. Hence, in the study, instead of eliciting, I gave the participants a list of elements, discussed with them what each element meant, and asked them whether they wanted to add or remove any of the elements from the list; I also recognized that pairs of constructs in the form of 'A vs. B' was more meaningful and valuable for the latter rating and reasoning than the form of 'A vs. not A'. I had intended to analyse RepGrid quantitatively by asking the participants to rate their constructs against their elements, but I soon realized that it was hard to make comparison and contrast as, although they had some constructs in common, the informants had chosen different elements and generated many different constructs. Hence, I decided that it would be better to use their constructs to stimulate further belief statements; this method of RepGrid interview helped the informants to articulate their beliefs in more detail. When coding the interview data, I realized that some ideas were interesting but I did not have enough detail and evidence to make any inference or conclusion, thus, I needed to observe more extensively and to interview more intensively in my study. After doing the pilot study, it

became clear that longitudinal work with many interviews and much more classroom observation time would help in tracing the teachers' and learners' beliefs and their actions. This pilot study did not result in much change in my research design or research questions, but helped me considerably with the techniques required to conduct this research.

### **3.8. Rationale for choosing AMA as the fieldwork**

The site of this study is AMA, one of the most prestigious PESs in HCMC. Reasons for choosing this school related to practical issues, the purposes of my study, and the research questions. First of all, I was examining the relationship between learners' and their NTs' LLBs in a private language school, so compared to the other PESs in HCMC, choosing a school like AMA ensured two conditions: (1) the teachers were more qualified and there were courses that were taught 100 percent by NTs; and (2) the learners came to the school with a very high expectation, especially to learn with NTs and the dropout rate was low.

Secondly, to examine a group of learners and teachers in depth as well as to achieve extensive observation of classes, it was a good strategy to concentrate on just one school. It was hoped that in a private school where the focus was on teaching for business rather than teaching and learning for tests, and where students came voluntarily as customers with more power to express their own voices, attitudes, and expectations about learning, I would be able to gain more reliable and significant data.

#### **3.8.1. Description of the courses**

In AMA, The GE program is designed to meet learning demands of students from 18 years old to improve their communication skills. It covers several courses suitable for levels from Beginner, Basic, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Post-Intermediate and Advanced. The program uses the two textbook series, World Link and World Pass. Their

main contents are about American culture, lifestyle and customs scientifically arranged from Elementary to Advanced levels. The aims of the GE levels are to learn more vocabulary, pronounce accurately, and improve listening and speaking skills through communication activities in class. Hence, the chosen course books focus on communication skills comprehensively with a special emphasis on listening comprehension, fluent speaking, accurate pronunciation, and improving the accuracy of word choice, grammar, and writing in various fields, and broadening knowledge through different topics.

2 General English (GE) classes were observed from September 2011 to April 2012, reasons for choosing these classes are that:

- The courses were taught by NTs 100 percent of the class time
- In the classes, there were learners who had studied at public schools, but had no previous learning experience in private schools.

Table 5 below describes the summary of the 2 classes:

| Level                             | Duration | Length   | Course book             | Time table  | Lesson length | Class size |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>GE 1</b><br>(Basic)            | 90 hours | 15 weeks | World Link Introduction | Mon-Wed-Fri | 2 hours       | 12         |
| <b>GE 3</b><br>(Upper Elementary) | 90 hours | 15 weeks | World English 2         | Tue-Thu-Sat | 2 hours       | 15         |

Table 5: Summary of the 2 chosen classes

In AMA in HCMC and other PESs, each level is designed to be delivered in 12 or 15 weeks and different levels may be taught by different teachers; for this practical reason, I conducted my study of each class in a fifteen-week-course.

### **3.8.2. Description of the participants**

Using *purposive sampling* strategy (MacNealy, 1999; Patton, 1990) to look for participants who appeared to possess certain traits or qualities to answer research questions, I chose two learners and their two NTs in 2 General English classes at AMA. A small scale study like this aims at getting in-depth qualitative data of the participants' beliefs and actions. The criteria for choosing learners were that they must have at least six years experience in learning English in public schools (in secondary, high schools, and university) and that studying at a private school was a new experience.

For site access, I relied on one of my close colleagues who was a part-time IELTS teacher in AMA; I talked about my study plan to her and she introduced me to the Academic Head of the school. Some days later, we had a 30-minute discussion in which I clarified my purposes, my questions, sampling strategies, and data collection plan. Within 2 weeks of the discussion, the Academic Head arranged four new GE classes that were suitable for my study and helped me to arrange short appointments with the teachers. When I met the teachers at the school to show them my plan, they all agreed to help me and I started to come to their new classes to talk with the learners and invited the learners who met my sampling criteria to take part in the study. After they had agreed, I then invited the 2 teachers teaching their classes to participate. In this way, I was able to choose the two most suitable classes: the GE1 class of Diana and the GE3 class of David.

The four participants are described briefly as below.

#### **Diana (The GE1 Teacher)**

Diana was born in 1980 and she was an Australian. She gained a BA in Design from Monash University, a Culture Heritage Certificate, and a CELTA certificate from a Cambridge University course. She had been teaching English for 2 years in Vietnam, and her

favourite course was General English because she liked fun, games, and interaction in class. She believed that she was born to teach, teaching was her nature, and she dreamed to be a teacher from the early days of her schooling. Before coming to Vietnam, she had worked in a design firm for 6 years, for a museum for 2 years; she also studied a few modules in teaching college and did 1 month practice teaching in a Catholic high school where she taught graphic design. She was a full-time teacher at AMA.

### **Thao (The GE1 learner)**

Thao was 19 years old; he was a freshman of architecture in a university in HCMC. He had studied English in public schools in his hometown for 6 years, from grade 6 to grade 12. He came to AMA because he wanted to study with a foreign teacher. He hoped after the course, he could be more confident when speaking English, enriched his vocabulary, reinforced his grammar, and improved his listening and speaking and his communicative ability. From his view, English was an important language and because people used English to communicate with the world.

### **David (The GE3 Teacher)**

David was born in 1983 and he was an American. He was trained in Chicago and got a CELTA there. Before coming to Vietnam, he had some teaching and tutoring experience in America and Japan as a volunteer. He had been teaching English one and a half years in Vietnam and he perceived Vietnamese learners as being quieter but behaving better than learners in America. He was teaching two GE classes in AMA.

### **Duc (The GE3 learner)**

Duc was 19 years old; he was a university student of Business Administration. He had spent 8 years studying English in public schools in his hometown from primary to tertiary

grades. He was recognized as a talented student in English and took a provincial exam for gifted students when he was in high school. He came to AMA to study English because he thought a good command of English would be good for his job in the future. He chose the school for its reputation and quality, and he wanted to learn with NTs. He thought his foundation of grammar and vocabulary was acceptable, so he hoped to improve his listening and speaking skills after the course.

### **3.8.3. Rapport with the participants**

I had a good rapport with the school, the teachers, and learners in my study and by the time I finished writing this thesis we were still keeping in touch. As regards the school, while I was collecting data there, they asked me for help to tutor a group of 6 teenage learners for 2 weeks because their Vietnamese teacher was sick and the school was not able to arrange a new teacher at that time. I sometimes gave Diana a lift home after class and sent her flowers on Women's Day; David and I had dinner together occasionally as friends because he and I are the same age. With Thao and Duc, I sometimes helped them to look for learning materials they needed, and we went to the cinema together once. I did not take advantage of those situations to introduce any topic or ask any questions related to the study. However, if they spontaneously mentioned anything about language learning or the classes, I noted their comments in my mind and tried to add some questions to get fuller information in the stimulated recall interviews after their classes.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1. Introduction

The table below shows a summary of the data I collected from the two classes. As David and Duc did not have much time for interview, the data from GE3 class was not as rich as from the GE1 class.

|                                    | GE1 class                     |                               | GE3 class                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                    | Diana                         | Thao                          | David                        | Duc                          |
| <b>RepGrid interview</b>           | 60 minutes                    | 120 minutes                   | 40 minutes                   | 100 minutes                  |
| <b>Stimulated Recall interview</b> | 140 minutes/<br>12 interviews | 180 minutes/<br>13 interviews | 105 minutes/10<br>interviews | 120 minutes/10<br>interviews |
| <b>Video file</b>                  | 850 minutes (19 lessons)      |                               | 812 minutes (18 lessons)     |                              |

Table 6: A summary of the collected data

From this point forward, this chapter is presented in the order of GE1 and then GE3 class. Each class description follows a similar format. In each class, the research questions are discussed one by one. I first describe the learner's belief system and how these beliefs affected his preferred ways of learning. Secondly, I illustrate the teacher's belief system and how that system affected her/his preferred ways of teaching. The term "preferred ways of teaching/learning" or teaching/learning preferences, as used in my thesis, were the **activities** that the teachers and learners **said** they **liked/preferred** to do in class (see section 2.3.4). Next, I compare the teacher's stated beliefs and her/his actions. Finally, I relate the teacher's beliefs and actions and the learner's beliefs, learning preferences, and expectations. How I made use of the data for these findings was discussed earlier in table 4, section 3.3.

#### 4.2. GE1 Class: Thao and Diana

#### **4.2.1. Thao's beliefs vs. preferred ways of learning**

Thao had been studying English at public schools in his hometown for 6 years. He came to AMA because he wanted to study with foreign teachers. His goals of learning were being more confident when speaking English, enriching his vocabulary schemata, reinforcing his grammar, improving his listening and speaking, and his communicative ability. In his view, the function of learning a language was for communication. Although he did not state directly that he preferred CLT or grammar translation, his beliefs seemed to be closer to CLT. The constructs (in independent dimensions) generated in the first RepGrid interview with Thao are listed as below:

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - Thinking in mother tongue           | - Practicing receptive skills         |
| - Thinking in English                 | - Practicing language skills          |
| - Learning contextualized language    | - Learning grammar, vocabulary        |
| - Learning de-contextualized language | - Free activity                       |
| - Rote learning                       | - Controlled activity                 |
| - Learning/working individually       | - Classroom activity                  |
| - Learning/working in pairs/groups    | - Self-study activity                 |
| - Practicing productive skills        | - Learning in a fun/non-stressful way |

Being coded inductively from his underlying reasons for these constructs and from the stimulated recall interview data, Thao's belief system emerged in the following clusters:

##### ***4.2.1.1. Thao's beliefs about the goals of EFL learning.***

Firstly, Thao strongly believed that communication was the purpose of language and of learning a language. In justifying this, he said: "we use English to communicate with the world... not with Vietnamese people in real life". He preferred activities that he thought of as being useful for communication; and the concept of communication in his mind was "two or more people are talking with each other". Thus, as he stated, he liked to focus on listening and speaking skills. Besides, because he wanted to work with activities related strongly with



his communicative needs in real life, he preferred it when Diana gave materials or topics outside the course book. He also expected to be taught how to use non-verbal communicative strategies in some speaking tasks as he noted that body language was an important part of communication.

To be a successful communicator in English, Thao also believed that using language accurately was a goal of learning. He liked speaking activities developed from grammar drills from which he could "imitate the accurate language" in the drills. It was why Thao wanted to have all of the answer keys for the drills he undertook to be sure about his answers. In addition, Thao preferred to work with Diana since Diana could correct his pronunciation and grammatical mistakes; and he said that this was an important way to progress in learning. This belief also affected his attitude towards other learners when they worked in the same group. Recognizing himself as being more competent than the other learners in the class, he did not want to work with less competent partners as they could not correct him and he was afraid of being affected by their mistakes. Besides that, according to him, another goal of learning a language was gaining a native-like pronunciation. What he liked most about the course was that he was learning English with an NT in 100% percent of his class. In the course, he particularly liked pronunciation activities because, as he noted, being a Vietnamese meant that he was still pronouncing English in a Vietnamese model.

Noticeably, beliefs in this cluster reflected his identity as a Vietnamese learner of English in the sense of his desires and expectations when studying English, especially in how he was attracted by NT and what he believed an NT could do for him. It seemed that he had very high expectations of his GE1 course and the teacher. He liked the class because this was the first time he studied with an NT; he had many chances to listen and talk with a foreigner in

English. This belief seemed to derive from his beliefs about the nature of learning and the role of interaction with an NT that will be discussed later.

#### ***4.2.1.2. Thao's beliefs about the nature of language learning***

Thao strongly believed that anyone who wanted to use a FL well had to master both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge of that language. From many of his explanations for actions while learning, it could be inferred that he believed strongly in the role of grammar/vocabulary acquisition and the more practical value of listening/speaking skills compared to reading/writing skills.

As an EFL learner having spent many years in public school with traditional method, in Thao's belief, when learning a language, vocabulary/grammar played a vital role; without a good knowledge of vocabulary/grammar, a person could not be successful in learning English. Although, as he said, "getting good knowledge of vocabulary/grammar" and "improving listening and speaking skills" were his two important goals when coming to AMA, Thao believed that vocabulary/grammar was the basis for the skills, but the skills took the role of reinforcing this basis. Thao noted that as he was a learner, he had to "learn" the language first, and then he could "create" what he liked with the language. He noted:

[Receiving language is more useful than producing language because we are learning English; as a result, we have to spend much time on receiving, and after that, we can create what we like.]

“Em thích tiếp thu ngôn ngữ hơn tạo ra ngôn ngữ vì mình đang học tiếng Anh nên phải tiếp nhận nhiều, phải ưu tiên cho việc tiếp nhận, có tiếp nhận xong sau này mình mới tự tạo ra cái của mình được.” (Thao/1stRep)

Interestingly, he evaluated vocabulary a little bit higher than grammar. In his argument, a good knowledge of vocabulary was his priority in learning as vocabulary was the "basic tool" for learning grammar, and for listening and speaking. He noted that without vocabulary, people could not do anything with English. He said:

[Only when is our grammar better, our English will be better. Besides, we will speak fluently without any mistakes. When our English is error-free, the listener will find it easy when they listen.]

“Học ngữ pháp thì học anh văn tốt hơn, thể hiện mình nói tiếng Anh được, không nói cộc lốc, nói sai ngữ pháp, người nghe học dễ chịu khi nghe mình nói hơn.”

(Thao/1stRep)

Belief about the important role of vocabulary and grammar strongly affected his learning preferences. He noted that he liked activities in which there were new words or new grammar points. Among the classroom activities that he claimed as his preferences, he expressed a strong support for learning new words, doing grammar drills, listening to teacher's explanation for grammar rules. When asked for evaluation of activities such as playing games, songs, or reading text out loud, he disfavored them and the reason was that those activities did not involve "much learning" or "gaining input". By "input" he meant the "learning" of vocabulary/grammar. Noticeably, when stating his preferred strategies in learning vocabulary/grammar, he did not like rote learning but liked learning vocabulary with "real objects" because they supported his understanding and he could remember longer. Thao would also prefer it when the teacher explained grammar in reading texts and when he used grammar while speaking as "they [were] good ways to practise grammar". These beliefs also affected his attitude towards the course in some negative ways, for example, he thought that the content of the book was too easy and he could not learn many new words and grammar from it, the listening tasks in the book were also simple for him as well.

Thao also highlighted the role of practice in language learning. According to him, a language learner had to work hard because the more he practised the more skilful he/she became in mastering the language. He said that he needed more practice in speaking/listening in the class because these skills were his weaknesses. Moreover, believing that "learners should be confident and not be afraid of making errors", he always attempted to get over his

nervousness and to get confidence, and he saw communicating in the class as opportunities for him to do so. He wanted to have more chances to talk in front of the whole class to control his nervousness when talking in English with other people. Interestingly, for him, the act of using English was the act of "translating" Vietnamese into English and vice versa; so a better user of English meant that he/she had a quicker and more accurate translation process in his/her mind. Thao revealed that in class, especially in speaking tasks, there was always a lot of translation in his head, and whether he could form and express ideas or not depended much on the quality of these translations. Take reading tasks for another example, in most of the reading, he always needed more time to read and understand the texts than the time allotted by the teacher before answering the follow-up questions.

Interestingly, despite years learning English with traditional methods, Thao strongly believed in the benefits of interaction in learning language. For instance, in relating to a pair activity that required him to make a short interview with a partner sitting beside him, he commented:

[I like the task but it would be better if we have done it in another way, I would prefer if Diana let us go around the class and ask whoever I like, that way is definitely livelier]

“Em thích nhưng thích làm theo cách khác, đó là không ngồi tại chỗ nói mà nên đi qua đi lại, như thế tự nhiên hơn, sinh động hơn” (Thao/Sti./08-10).

Interaction, as he argued, was "the most effective ways" of learning compared to "self-study" and "public schools' ways of learning" where he often worked individually. When interacting, he could be "more confident", he could use English to "communicate", to produce language "output"; this way could help him to "remember vocabulary and grammar more easily and longer". Besides, when interacting, there were people who learned together, learned from each other, and corrected each other; he highly appreciated these characteristics in learning. He summarized his arguments as below:

[Working alone is also helpful, but in learning English working with other people is more effective... nobody knows everything, so in studying with friends we will learn from each other. It's also beneficial because there are people to communicate with, and to correct each other.]

“Làm việc một mình tốt nhưng học tiếng Anh phải theo nhóm mới hiệu quả hơn... vì có cái mình biết, có cái mình không biết, vậy nên nếu học với bạn mình sẽ có thêm nhiều hiểu biết. Còn giúp mình có người để giao tiếp, có những chỗ sai thì bạn mình biết, có thể chỉnh sửa cho mình.” (Thao/1stRep)

Thao saw PES is a special place to interact with NT. In his reasons, exposure to a good model of language was an initial condition for using language accurately, and NT represented such a perfect model of language. That was one important reason for him to choose the course as he emphasized that communicating with the NT helped him to practice many skills, to be familiar with talking with foreigners, and the teacher could correct his pronunciation and grammatical mistakes. He expressed his concerns about learning English in public schools because English was not taught communicatively and most of the class time learners just worked on paper; and most important, he did not interact with NS. When asked for an explanation of this, he noted:

[It must be talking with a NT, Vietnamese teachers don't have a native-like pronunciation. Talking with foreign teacher is the only way to help us to be confident in talking with other foreigners. We do not use English with Vietnamese people in real life]

“Phải là giáo viên nước ngoài mới được, người Việt Nam thì giọng không chuẩn, nói với người nước ngoài thì mình mới tự tin giao tiếp với người nước ngoài được, mình đâu có nói chuyện tiếng Anh với người Việt làm gì đâu.”

(Thao/1stRep).

Thus, he liked to study in a small class since it provided much more interaction with the NT, he felt more confident to ask the teacher, and it was easier for the teacher to teach him, to be close to him when he needed help. Thao believed that "listening to and understanding the teacher" was a main criterion to evaluate a successful class because only when he could understand the teacher, could he learn.

#### ***4.2.1.3. Thao's beliefs about learning activities***

In his belief, classroom activities should be authentic, varied, interesting, and learning tasks should not only be from the course book. He chose individual presentation, writing short passages, working in pair/group, and discussing with the teacher as his favourite activities. In his note, because English was an FL, we used English to communicate with the world, spoke English and communicated with foreigners, we used English to read newspapers and books written in English, and used English in jobs, thus learning activities should relate strongly with what he wanted, what he needed in life. This belief was presented quite clearly in his reasons for what he wanted to do while learning. Thao particularly liked activities in which he could use English communicatively; He reasoned that only in such activity could he be more confident and have personal ideas. He did not like "to be controlled in fixed activities", but the activities must be "flexible" enough for him to see himself in them because he did not like to "receive the knowledge without any expression". He claimed that:

[I want more speaking in the class because the speaking is still not enough. Last time when we talked about "keep safe", I had a lot of time to practice speaking in that activity, the topic was very practical and related closely to me. In the activity, I could stand in front of the class and talked about what I think and I like that way of learning, I prefer to use my own ideas when speaking English. In the course, there were few chances I can talk in that way, just twice up to now as I can remember. The rest of speaking was speaking sitting down activity, or with controlled content or structure, or simply answering questions from the teacher.]

“Em muốn cần phải được nói nhiều hơn nữa trong giờ học, nói như thế này vẫn hơi ít. Chỉ có bữa trước nói về keep safe (the speaking activity in which each student has to talk about one important stuff that he/she is keeping safe) là em nói được nhiều, liên quan đến bản thân em, đứng trước lớp nói về những gì mình nghĩ. Em thích được nói trước mọi người và nêu ý kiến của mình hơn Trong chương trình cô ít cho mình được như vậy, hình như đó chỉ là lần thứ 2 từ trước giờ, một lần khác nữa là pair work trước lớp. Còn lại toàn là ngồi tại chỗ nói không” (Thao/Sti./01-11).

Thao preferred it when Diana made changes to the activities in the book so that he could learn with different kinds of visual aids. He also liked learning vocabulary with realia, and he believed that vocabulary should be learned in this way because "it [was] easier to remember"

and "real". In his evaluation of the class, one thing he did not feel very satisfied with in Diana's teaching was that she adhered to the course book quite rigidly. He claimed: "I would prefer it if the teacher gave us exercises outside the book". Because Diana often used the course book in class, he wondered: "it seems Diana has to follow the syllabus and cover the book" (Thao/Sti./01-11). Among the activities in his GE1 class, he also particularly disliked reciting given dialogues; for him "rote learning [did] not help to improve communicative competence". He valued it highly when Diana used games and video in the classroom. In his view, with such activities, learning was not only fun but also effective. However, he argued that his purpose were learning and practicing, not to come to school to play game or to listen to music, so it would be more beneficial if games and songs used by the teacher were for learning purpose rather than exclusively for entertaining.

In summary, after combining Thao's stated beliefs and enacted beliefs, a summary of his belief system for English learning emerged. It can be seen from table 7 that Thao's beliefs appeared to be close to communicative language teaching principles. These beliefs reflected his identity as a Vietnamese learner of English in the light of his desires and expectations when studying English, especially in how he was attracted by NT and what he believed an NT could do for him. It seemed that he had very high expectations of his GE1 course and the teacher.

| Clusters of beliefs          | Thao's beliefs                                 | His preferred ways of learning  |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| The goal of learning English | To learn for communication                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking and listening activities</li> <li>- Learning with material outside the course book</li> <li>- Practicing using body language</li> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> </ul> |
|                              | To use it accurately                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Correction from the teacher</li> <li>- Working with more competent partners</li> </ul>  |
|                              | To have a native-like pronunciation of English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pronunciation practices with the NT</li> <li>- Being corrected by the NT when speaking</li> <li>- Listening to the NT</li> </ul>   |

|                                 |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| The nature of language learning | Both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are important for mastering a language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Listening and speaking practices</li> <li>- Talking with the NT</li> <li>- Listening to CD/video</li> </ul>                                    |
|                                 | Vocabulary and grammar are the foundation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Gaining a lot of input</li> <li>- Listening to and understanding teacher in class</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Speaking and listening are the most practical skills                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listening and speaking practices in class</li> <li>- Talking with the NT</li> <li>- Listening to CD/video</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Interaction is a crucial condition   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group work and pair work</li> <li>- Learn in small class</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Exposure to good model of language is a crucial condition                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning with NT</li> <li>- Listening to CD and NTs</li> <li>- Using reliable materials</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Practice makes perfect   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listening and speaking practices</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Being confident and not afraid of making errors  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual presentation activities</li> <li>- Talking with the NT</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Translating skill is important in using language   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having time to think, to translate texts when reading and to form ideas when speaking</li> </ul>  |
| Learning activity               | Classroom activities should be varied and interesting                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Materials from both inside and outside the course book</li> <li>- Activities adapted from the course book</li> <li>- Learning with realia</li> <li>- Learning with games/video</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Free activities are more beneficial than the controlled ones                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real-life activities</li> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> <li>- Activities from both inside and outside the course book</li> </ul>                |
|                                 | Learning activities should be personalized   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Rote learning does not help to improve communicative competence                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary with realia</li> <li>- Learn grammar while speaking, writing</li> <li>- No rote learning structures/dialogue</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Talking with NT improves speaking skill  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking with the NT</li> <li>- Study English in private school</li> </ul>   |

Table 7: Summary of Thao's beliefs and preferred ways of learning

#### 4.2.2. Diana's beliefs vs. her ways of teaching

Diana was recognized by the academic staff and students as a good teacher for GE courses in AMA. After the RepGrid interview with Diana, her independent constructs were.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent (individual) learning</li> <li>- Interactive (collective) learning</li> <li>- Using visual aids</li> <li>- Using eliciting techniques</li> <li>- Interacting with teacher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Controlled activity</li> <li>- Authentic activity</li> <li>- Self-study (home) activity</li> <li>- Teacher's correction</li> <li>- Learning vocabulary</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interacting other learners in class</li> <li>- Learning in fun/non-stressful class</li> <li>- Contextualized role-play</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning grammar</li> <li>- Practicing skills</li> <li>- Help/support from teacher</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Her stated beliefs were inferred from her justification and evaluation for these constructs. After merging these beliefs with beliefs coded from the stimulated recall interviews, her belief system of language learning emerged in four clusters of beliefs about the goals of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning activities, beliefs about learners' characteristics and about the roles of an NT (see table 8).

#### ***4.2.2.1. Diana's beliefs about the goals of learning***

In her beliefs, "language should be learned for communication purpose"; she expressed this idea regularly in the interviews. For instance, after a task from the book that required each learner to make a list of 5 things in their bag/backpack, Diana asked the learners to take the five things out and she turned the activity in the book into a speaking activity. The transcription below was a piece of her classroom instruction in this activity.

"Now, everyone on this side, could you all stand up (1.5) yes (.) you all stand up (.) You guys ((turns to the other side of the class)) stay sitting, OK. Now ((turns back to the first side)) I want you to go over here ((points to the second side)), look at you classmates' things (.) and ask them questions (waits while the students are moving) ask them question (.) and point (.) ask what are these ((points to sample stuffs)) (.) what are those ((points)) (.) What is this (.) what is that (.), OK?". (Diana's class, 22th Oct)

In reflecting on this, she noted:

"They can use everyday English in practical everyday situations, so they can drill it into their mind, so it will be not easy to forget. Next time when they do it in real life, it's easier to remember" (Diana/Sti./22-10).

Learning English, for Diana, meant that students could use it in everyday life, so she preferred to associate or relate what the learners learned to what happened outside class. In giving reasons for a free-speaking activity in her class, she argued:

"It's not only coming to AMA to learn English and speak English in the classroom, or just whatever in the book, I want to relate to everyday life, every issue, so that when they have a conversation somewhere in English, suddenly they will remember the words that they learned, if they are talking about the same topic." (Diana/Sti./27-10)

Diana also believed that when she familiarized her learners with different accents of English, her learners would benefit for this strategy of learning. In a recorded lesson, when asked why she was reminding her learners about the difference between American English and Australian English, she explained:

"In real world sense, there is not one perfect English accent. So giving students exposure to those different sounds is very important, it is not the most important thing but to know the differences is a way they can enrich their learning experience" (Diana/Sti./13-10).

Another goal of learning was to have good pronunciation. In her experience with Vietnamese learners, a lot of them paid much money just to come to the school to have contact with NTs; Diana argued that they had already learned for a long time in the public settings where most of the Vietnamese EFL teachers were not very good at pronunciation, so they primarily came to AMA to get more contact with native English speaker. Hence, she often tried to help her learners to be aware of their pronunciation, corrected them, and practiced with them in class. The extract below is from such an activity in her lesson.

- T: What kinds ((points to pictures in the book)) of gift?  
L: ehh (.) °Raduate°  
LL: °Raduate°  
T: Yeah (.) Graduation (.) Can you say that (.) ((look at the learners encouragingly)) everyone? (2.0) Now one two three (.) graduation  
LL: [Raduate  
[°graduation°  
T: No (shakes head) (.) ↑ graduation  
LL: [Raduate  
[°graduation°  
T: Graduation ((invites one learner))  
L1: Raduate °raduation°  
T: /gr/ (.) /gr] ((looks at the whole class))  
LL: [gr] °[r]°

T: [gr] (.) [græ] (.) [græ]  
 LL: [græ]  
 T: ↑ graduation (.)  
 LL: graduation (.) graduation  
 T: good ((looks at L1))  
 L1: graduation °graduation°

Diana also noted learning culture as an important part of language learning as "communication through language is a cultural thing". In her view, students did not just learn a language, they also learned about culture, the world and how people communicated, so we could learn a lot about culture through language. Hence, she liked it when she related the cultures of Vietnam and other English-speaking countries while teaching. Such activities related to culture were used quite often in her lessons; for instance, Diana talked about the differences between family in Australia and Vietnam, she told the learners how European people thought about God, or the American ways of giving and receiving gifts, etc.

#### ***4.2.2.2. Diana's beliefs about the nature of language learning***

For this GE1 level, Diana evaluated language skills and language knowledge as of equal importance as they were the sound (listening, speaking) and the written form (text, vocabulary, grammar) of language. Diana argued that grammar and vocabulary were the foundation, but they must be reinforced and supported by language skills. In her view, everyone needed to have a good foundation to be a successful English learner. The foundation, in her sense, was vocabulary/grammar. Hence, although she knew that most of the learners have mastered basic grammar quite well, she still spent class time to review when there were grammar focus sections in the book, and corrected grammatical and spelling mistakes carefully when her learners spoke or wrote; and after that, she designed activities in which the learners could use grammar/vocabulary for listening, speaking, and writing.

Next, it seemed that Diana strongly believed in the benefits of interaction. Among different types of interaction, Diana recognized interaction with the NT as the most valuable for learners because it provided "one-to-one interaction", "immediate feedbacks", and created "a sense of trust with the teacher" that learner could not find elsewhere but in classroom with an NT. One of the most beneficial values of interaction with the teacher was teacher correction. Or her, a classroom was beneficial in that it provided conditions for interactive activities, while home was an individual studying environment. Diana noted a crucial role of student-student interaction, reasoning that as a group they could work together, and had a sense of a "small community" because they had the sense that they were all learning towards the same goal, for the same reason. Once they had understood among themselves, she guessed there was no room for criticism, they trusted each other and could work together, and became less dependent on the teacher. Besides, when putting different learners to work together, they could learn from each other and correct each other. She gave an example:

"as soon as you start a group activity, the students tend to ask their partners first before they ask the teacher, if there is a partner but they can't work it out, they will ask the teacher" (Diana/Rep).

To explain a group activity in her class, she noted:

"... in the classroom setting, we have the advantage of learning together, I like to take advantage of group activity, that's something that students can't do at home. I think that's something that's worth doing, and because they pay a lot of money to come here to study, then you can take advantage of the kind of activity that you can do in class. (Diana/Sti./13-10).

According to her, learning in class was not taking something from the book, trying to remember, and doing mechanical drills in a boring atmosphere. Instead, in order for them to learn effectively, she needed to make learning more positive, and hence to get students to interact with each other in pair and group work.

Besides, language should be learned in a relaxed, non-stressful class. She preferred teaching GE courses because she could teach with games and fun activities. She shared that the learners suffered a lot of anxiety and stress when learning in English class. For instance, she said she did not want to call any particular students if she felt that he/she was not ready; another reason why she used group work and pair work was that her students would feel less nervous when working with a small number of people. When learners were working on tasks, she often came close to them and explained that she did not like to keep herself too far from them; she was trying to help them as a friend, trying not to criticize them.

Diana's beliefs highlighted the roles of individual learners in their learning; they had to take responsibilities for their own failure or success. As a result, she argued that beside learning vocabulary and doing grammar exercises individually at home, in class learners should also learn from each other and teach each other. Diana noted that learners should feel a sense of ownership, responsibility, so they were responsible for their own learning, while her role was, as she stated, "I'm there to help them if they need help".

Besides this, in her argument, learners needed to feel confident because confidence encouraged and motivated them to take further steps in language learning, and "not to feel too discouraged or to have any negative experience about learning". Due to this belief, in explaining why she reminded a group of learners not to use Vietnamese in discussing tasks, she noted that she wanted to step by step build up the individual's confidence in using English by encouraging them to use less Vietnamese and more English. In addition, while teaching, she also took any chances to talk with them individually, corrected them with a positive attitude, and asked them to start by practicing a lot before performing in front of the entire class.

#### ***4.2.2.3. Diana's beliefs about learning activities***

Because different learners learned with different styles and speeds, Diana saw the benefits of learning in different contexts, goals, learners, and activities. For her, choosing what and how to teach did not depend on her preferences, but on different contexts. When asked for her preference between independent and interactive learning, she noted:

"I don't have a preference for any of these but, it really depends on different situations and kinds of skills you want teaching... It really depends on the materials, the purposes, and the outcome... If I talk about my preferences, it's how I would learn, but this is how I teach. I think for students, it's a right question.... I think if I was one of the students, I would have a preference, because students are gifted to learn in certain ways. For example, I'm a visual learner so I like learning through pictures, so as a teacher it's important to be aware of different ways of teaching, learning styles." (Diana's RepGrid)

Diana did not have clear preferences for any specific classroom activities. Diana believed that if she was the students, she would have a preference, because every student was born to be suitable to certain ways of learning, so as a teacher it was important to be aware of different ways of teaching, learning styles, all of the styles of teaching, and all of each student's learning needs and capability. In many occasions in her class, she adapted the book so that it became more relevant to her learners (see Appendix G), she paid more attention to the weaker learners and prepared extra work for the stronger ones. She insisted many times that she could not say which ways of learning she preferred as "it [was] impossible to say that". For instance, as discussed earlier, she seemed to believe strongly in the role of vocabulary/grammar in language learning, but at the same time she also saw the contributions of output in the form of oral skills in the learning process. When comparing drilling activities and four macro-skills activities, she stated that controlled drill was very important because the students came to class to "absorb as much as information that they can", and in class "they need to act like a sponge" to "soak up the information". But output

was also important because "it [demonstrated] what students [had] learned, what they [had] absorbed"; "it [proved] that the learners [could] understand the work", so she preferred to use output to check whether they could understand what they had been taught.

Although she believed that a teacher should not have any teaching preference, Diana could describe types of activities that were highly situated in the GE1 class.

"I didn't make it very important at that stage, of the GE1 level, they are not advanced enough and I find that a lot of students are too shy, even just to ask me... I actually like self and peer correction because. ... But in class, I use more teacher correction... and I expect them at this stage to feel more confident in their answers... Now, in this GE1 class, I often initiate the turn when speaking because it's a very shy class." (Diana's RepGrid)

Take vocabulary/grammar learning for example. Diana stated that at the moment (for the GE1 class), they were the basis, the "foundation to use in other activities such as speaking". If the learners did not get the basis and foundation right, then "there [would] be room for errors in the future". However, as she argued, most Vietnamese learners had covered basic vocabulary/grammar in their public schooling and they could take more self-study at home. Thus, when they came to AMA, as she argued, the role of vocabulary/grammar could be a little bit lower than practicing skills and pronunciation; in most cases they just needed to be taught for revision purposes, especially with grammar. She believed: "GE 1 students [wanted] to learn new things"; in a lesson the learners needed to learn bit of vocabulary to apply it in grammar exercises, and in speaking tasks in class. According to her, if the learners wanted to know more, they could learn by themselves outside classroom.

In her beliefs, learning activities should also be authentic, communicative, and interesting. As she argued, the activities should be different in terms of the levels of complexity, requirements, skills, knowledge, and they must "be practical so that the students [could] adapt them themselves to their own everyday experience" (Diana/Sti./13-10). For fun

activities, she particularly liked visual aids, games, and fun in class because she thought that "when the learners [left] the class, they [would have] a positive feeling about the experience of learning, and would not feel any pressure or anxiety". For visual aids, she preferred to sketch simple pictures, diagrams on the board, and to employ body language and realia. In her view, these non-verbal channels of communication were helpful; they supported the teacher as well as the students in conveying and understanding meaning. Due to those reasons, for her, lesson should not always be presented as inside the course book. When asked why she changed a reading task in the book into a speaking task, she said that

"if we follow the book too closely, sometimes it can get boring. So if we adapt the same information, and do it in a different way, students can practice a different skill" (Diana/Sti./13-10)

and argued that

" if we only learn from the book, it doesn't make a lasting impression on the students, if we use the real objects the next time when they have a similar scenario in real life, hopefully they will remember easily because they already practiced the language in class" (Diana/Sti./20-10)

#### ***4.2.2.4. Diana's beliefs about learners' characteristics and the roles of an NT in AMA***

Diana believed in the multi-style and multi-level characteristics of every class, and the job of a teacher, according to her, was to fulfill the most of these needs and styles, and to cover each student's learning capability. Moreover, in her reason, because the success of learners in learning depended very much on their teacher, the teacher must be considerate, helpful, and dedicated. Being aware of this, Diana often employed different ways and techniques when she taught.

She believed that it was the teacher's responsibility to correct and that learners needed the teacher's feedback to move forwards in their learning, especially with unique activities for



classroom contexts such as listening and pronunciation, the activities that learners could not self-correct. She commented:

"Vietnamese students have common mistakes... If they are not aware of their common mistakes, then they are constantly influenced by other people who make the same mistakes, they cannot tell the differences. But if they know, they will make a concrete effort to improve and make changes" (Diana/Sti./20-10).

She suggested that although NT should correct learners, it must be done in an encouraging way that helped them to self-correct. She explained that because learners in every class were multilevel, she believed that they could help and correct each other. In her views, peer correction and self-correction were good for learners because "they [had] to be on their own training". However, she explained that she did not use self/peer correction as much as teacher correction with her GE1 learners as "they [were] still at the basic stage", "they [were] not advanced enough", and "a lot of students [were] still too shy".

Diana also believed that as Vietnamese learners were often passive and shy in class, but they preferred collective activities, and wanted to improve their speaking and listening skills, so it was another reason for her to use group/pair work. When asked for her preference of collective activities while teaching, she explained that: "Vietnamese students tend to be quite shy" thus "as a whole group, especially at the beginning days, students [had] to take a lot of these activities". She was sure that her Vietnamese learners could learn a lot from each other while they were working in groups/pairs. Diana suggested that NTs should create "a safe environment for Vietnamese learners" to study so that "they would not feel criticized and negative". According to what she argued, when students were confident, they were willing to share ideas and help each other more, so building confidence was a way to "improve the quality of skills practiced". Besides, Diana used eliciting technique in class as her learners could be more confident with their answers with this technique. She wanted them to

recognize that they could understand when listening to English, remember and guess the answer, and feel that they were using English to communicate.

In her argument, although students could practice at home themselves, in class she wanted the learners to practice in "an analytical way as there [were] teacher's instruction, direction, clarification, elicitation, guide, encouragement, and correction", and they were "something that you [could not] do by yourself at home". Besides, a good teacher in her view was a person who could help learners "feel a sense of ownership, responsibility, so they are responsible for their own learning". Because of these beliefs, Diana preferred to behave as a friendly and dedicated teacher, and she liked to create a positive and comfortable mood in the GE1 class. She preferred to work in relaxed, informal activities; and explained that "because learning [was] something very intensive, a lot of concentration [was] going on in a short span of time of a lesson".

Beliefs the roles of a NT reflected clearly her identity as an NT in an EFL setting and the beliefs were highly institutionally situated. Diana highlighted that because learners often expected a lot from NT when they came to private schools; an NT must perform his/her roles well, must give learners the "services" that they were not satisfied with in public schooling. She said: "within the classroom, the teacher has different roles towards students" but first of all, she was aware that in public schools in Vietnam, there were normally no foreigner teachers, so she guessed:

"the students feel that when they were growing up, they didn't have direct contact with foreigners, so they want to improve their listening and speaking skills more... So a lot of the students coming here, hoping to practice more speaking... I like being in speaking activities with them because they have a chance to speak to a foreigner" (Diana/Rep)

Diana argued that most of the class time should be used for practicing language skills; and listening and speaking were the two skills that should receive more focus as there is an

NT for them to interact with, and there were other learners who shared the same purposes of learning.

Generally, her beliefs seemed to come from both personal experience and training, and her identity as an NT was reflected clearly across the beliefs. The number of beliefs in her belief system was more numerous than those of Thao, and her beliefs and preferred ways of teaching seemed to be situated strongly in this GE1 course. The table below is the summary of her belief system.

| <b>Clusters of beliefs</b>              | <b>Diana's beliefs</b>  | <b>Preferred ways of teaching</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| The goals of learning                   | To learn for communication  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real-life, practical activities</li> <li>- Speaking and listening skills</li> </ul>   |
|   | To have a good pronunciation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practicing and correcting pronunciation</li> <li>- Correction in class</li> </ul>   |
|   | To learn its culture  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking about and relating cultures while teaching</li> </ul>   |
| The nature of language learning         | Both language declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are important                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using skills practice to reinforce grammar and vocabulary</li> </ul>  |
|   | Vocabulary and grammar are foundation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grammar and vocabulary activities</li> </ul>  |
|   | Interaction is crucial for learning   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interactive activities</li> <li>- Using pair/group works</li> </ul>   |
|   | Learning with NT is beneficial  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correcting learners</li> <li>- Spending time to communicate with learners</li> </ul>  |
|   | Language should be learned in a relaxed, non-stressful environment                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Game, fun activities</li> <li>- Interactive activities</li> <li>- Using pre-activities and lead-in activities</li> <li>- Being a friendly, patient, considerate teacher.</li> </ul> |
|   | Learners must be autonomous   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using peer correction</li> <li>- Using pair and group work</li> <li>- Asking learner to do study more vocabulary and grammar at home</li> <li>- Use eliciting technique</li> </ul>  |
|   | Learners must be confident  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using pair and group work</li> <li>- Be friendly and positive while giving feedback</li> </ul>  |
| Learning activity                       | Learning activities should be varied for different goals, learners, and different classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using activities with different focuses, requirements, levels of difficulty, purposes</li> <li>- Varying teaching techniques</li> </ul>   |
|   | Learning activities should be communicative, authentic, and interesting                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using real-life, practical activities</li> </ul>  |
|   | Visual Aids enhance understanding   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using realia, picture, and drawing</li> <li>- Using body language with instructions</li> </ul>  |
| Beliefs about learners' characteristics | Learners learn with different styles  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using various activities</li> </ul>   |
|   | Learners in a class are multilevel  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using activities with different focus, requirements, and levels of difficulty</li> </ul>  |

|                               |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| and the roles of an NT in AMA | Learners can help each other in learning                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using pair/group work</li> <li>- Using peer correction</li> </ul>  |
|                               | Learners are often not confident when using English              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using pair/group work</li> <li>- Encouraging learners</li> <li>- Being friendly and positive while giving feedback</li> <li>- Using eliciting techniques</li> </ul>  |
|                               | Vietnamese learners want to improve listening/speaking skills    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interacting with the learners</li> <li>- Focusing more on speaking/listening skill</li> </ul>  |
|                               | Vietnamese learners prefer collective activities                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using pair/group work</li> </ul>   |
|                               | A native teacher has to give learners what they need in learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a low-stressful, positive, interesting learning environment</li> <li>- Focusing on listening and speaking skills</li> <li>- Communicating with learners</li> <li>- Correcting learners' errors</li> <li>- Helping learners to be more autonomous and confident</li> </ul> |

Table 8: Summary of Diana's beliefs and preferred ways of teaching

#### 4.2.3 Diana's classroom activities

This section is a description of the percentage of time for different classroom activities used in the GE1 class. The procedures were described in section 3.3, and an example with explanation for how I coded the lessons and the activities is added in Appendix F. It should be explained here that by comparing the percentage of time distributed to different categories of activity, the researcher wanted to provide evidence for kinds of activity that happened more and less often in the class. The purpose was not only to check, from a more objective source of data, whether or not the teachers' beliefs were performed in practices; it was also to see the extent to which their beliefs were reflected in their focused activities.

| Classroom activities   | Percentage of class time for these activities |              |
|--|---|--------------|
| Listening to CD/Video  | 17 %  | <b>100 %</b> |
| Speaking in pair/group/with teacher  | 36 %  |              |
| Reading  | 7 %   |              |
| Writing  | 10 %  |              |
| Other activities: (drills/games/listening to teacher's lecturing/presentation, etc.) | 30 %  |              |

Table 9: Learners' modality in Diana's lessons

As discussed earlier, Diana believed that to communicate effectively, the learners needed to practice more speaking and listening skills, the two skills that most Vietnamese learners expected to improve when coming to a private school. For the total time spent in each skill in class, it can be seen from *table 9* that the focus of the class was listening and speaking skills with 17% and 36% of the total time respectively. While speaking and listening accounted for over half of the class time, reading and writing were less central, they just took up 7% and 10% of the total time. The remaining 30% was used for other activities such as games, drawing, modelling, acting, arranging classroom displays, listening to teacher's instructions and lectures. It could be observed that in the speaking activities in her class, she often used practical activities because practicing these authentic activities would be a necessary preparatory stage for the learners to remember the language used in such situations in real life. A lot of such communicative activities came from the way she made use of teaching materials in the class.

|                     |                              | Percentage of class time |              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Origins of material | Supplied material            | 51 %                     | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Self-developed/supplementary | 19 %                     |              |
|                     | Adapt the supplied material  | 2 %                      |              |
|                     | Emerging material            | 28 %                     |              |
| Types of materials  | Minimal written text         | 39 %                     | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Extended written text        | 22 %                     |              |
|                     | Audio (CD and others)        | 21 %                     |              |
|                     | Visual                       | 18 %                     |              |
| Use of material     | Highly controlled            | 60 %                     | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Semi-controlled              | 26 %                     |              |
|                     | Minimally controlled         | 14 %                     |              |

Table 10: Materials used in Diana's lessons

As shown in table 10, it seemed that Diana did not follow the course book very closely. Although she used the supplied material 51% of the class time, on many occasions in her class (28% of the time), Diana developed the lessons from materials created by students

while learning such as writing papers, results of group work, and games. In addition, she also developed classroom materials herself and used these materials in 19% of the time in her class; and in the rest 2% of the time, she adapted the course book, made some changes to the activities to make them more suitable. Table 10 also shows a variety of types of materials used; they were minimal written text (e.g., captions, isolated sentences, word lists), extended written text (e.g., stories, dialogues, connected paragraphs), audio, and visual materials. Within this group, the minimal written text was used the most often (39%), and the visual material such as picture, realia, drawing was used the least often (18%).

Although the class was still at beginning level, the results showed that the time spent on activities to “teach” the language was only 43%; the other 57% was used for other activities for the learners to improve their procedural knowledge through activities requiring them to “use” the language (table 11). Besides, in believing that the learners were multilevel, and had different learning styles, Diana tried to incorporate different types of activities in her class. Because she thought that Vietnamese learners preferred collective activities, she tried to spend as much class time as possible for the learners to work in pair/group (table 12). She believed that good pronunciation was a goal of learning, and that one of her roles was correcting the learners’ pronunciation. As a result, there were many pronunciation activities and pronunciation correction occasions in the class. Moreover, the observations showed that when she was teaching, she always tried to be friendly and helpful with her learners, she responded positively when correcting their mistakes, she often used games for the lesson to be more exciting, she employed a lot of eliciting techniques so that the learners could play a more central role and be more active in class. She often drew pictures, used realia and body language to teach, and showed video because in her beliefs, a picture was more valuable than a thousand words and highly valuable in supporting understanding.

However, the other results did not support the idea that the activities in the GE1 were highly communicative. In table 10, the materials were controlled tightly in 60% of the class time; in 26% of the time, the learners could occasionally extend beyond the restrictions imposed by the course book or other given materials; and in only 14% of time in class they were totally free to work in authentic and personal communication. In addition, in the 43% of the time allocated for activities to focus on language knowledge, as shown in table 11, nearly this entire share was used for focusing explicitly on grammar, vocabulary, and or pronunciation (42%) while there were very few moment of focusing on discourse (1%), and no time at all spent on focusing on function, or meaning of language. Together with 30% of the time for drills, lecturing, and games shown in table 9, these results might support her belief about the foundational role of vocabulary and grammar, but they were done at the expense of time for more communicative activities in the class.

| Contents of the lessons |                               | Percentage of class time for activities focusing on these contents |       |       |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------|-------|--|
| Focus on language       | Form                          | 42 %   | 43 %  | 100 % |  |
|                         | Function                      | 0 %  |       |       |  |
|                         | Discourse/Sociolinguistics    | 1 %  |       |       |  |
|                         | Meaning                       | 0 %  |       |       |  |
| Other topics            | Narrow range of reference     | 5 %  | 57 %  |       |  |
|                         | Limited range of reference    | 46 %   |       |       |  |
|                         | Broad range of reference      | 6 %  |       |       |  |
| Topic control           | Teacher selects what to do    | 82 %   | 100 % |       |  |
|                         | Student(s) selects what to do | 18 %   |       |       |  |

Table 11: Content of the lessons in Diana's class

As demonstrated in table 11, within 57% of the time spent on the subject matter of classroom discourse, only 5% was for practicing immediate classroom environment and formulaic exchanges which had phatic value but little conceptual content such as "Good evening" or "How are you?". Only 6% of the time went on classroom events where the

learners could be exposed to topics of broad range, controversial public issues, world events, abstract ideas, reflective personal information, and other academic subject matter. Table 11 also shows the central role of Diana in determining what was going on in the class, 82% of the class time the learners worked on tasks controlled by the teacher; the remaining 18% they were free to choose what to do. Diana explained that because the GE1 was still a basic class, the classroom tasks were limited to daily topics such as movies, school, holidays, places of residence, and family and they still needed a lot of controlled practices and directions from her. This was evident in the 46% of the class time spent on these topics. Most of her self-developed materials were games and drills so that the learners could practice vocabulary/grammar; only some of them were interactive tasks used for oral activities but they were used in high control in most of the time.

| <b>Types of interaction</b> | <b>Percentage of class time for activities organized for these types of interaction</b> |              |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|
| Teacher-Whole class         | 45 %  | <b>100 %</b> |
| Group/pair work             | 15 %  |              |
| Choral by students          | 6 %   |              |
| Individual work             | 33 %  |              |
| Group/individual work       | 1 %   |              |

Table 12: Participation organization in Diana's class

Moreover, table 12 illustrates that the largest proportion of the class time went to teacher-whole class interaction (45%) and individual work (33%), while the total time when learners worked in pair/group was much smaller (15%). The teacher-whole class interaction was coded when there was one central activity led by the teacher, this meant when the teacher was lecturing, explaining, eliciting, making discussion, and questioning the whole class and/or with individual students.



Then, the activities in the GE1 class could not be seen as being very communicative as the learners used display questions, predictable answers, and restricted use of linguistic form most of the time. As summarized earlier in table 9, in 36% of the time, the learners talked in pairs/groups or with the teacher. In the table 13, this percentage can be divided into 20% for display questions with predictable answers and 16% for genuine questions with unpredictable answers. In another way of categorisation, there was 14% for restricted use of linguistic form (one specific form, as in a transformation or substitution drill), 16% for limited restriction (a choice of more than one linguistic form but in a very narrow range, e.g., responses to yes/no questions, statements about the date, time of day, and so on), and 6% for unrestricted use (no expectation of any particular linguistic form, as in free conversation, oral reports, or personal diary writing). This 36% could also be divided according to the extent to which speakers engaged in extended discourse or restricted their utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause, or word. In this way of categorising, 6% was for activities required utterances consisting of one word, 22% was for activities required utterances consisting of one clause or sentence, and the time for activities with longer utterances (more than one sentence or consisting of at least two main clauses) was 8%.

| <b>Communicative features</b>  |                     | <b>Percentage of class time for activities practicing these features</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Information gap                | Display Question    | 20 %   |
|                                | Genuine Question    | 16 %   |
| Restriction of linguistic form | Restricted use      | 14 %   |
|                                | Limited restriction | 16 %   |
|                                | Unrestricted use    | 6 %  |
| Sustained speech               | Ultra-Minimal       | 6 %  |
|                                | Minimal             | 22 %   |
|                                | Sustained Speech    | 8 %  |

Table 13: Communicative features of activities in Diana's lessons

Consequently, it could be seen that there were a number of efforts by the teacher to fulfill her goal of teaching English communicatively. However, because the percentage of time for authentic and interactive activities seemed to be much lower than that of pseudo-communication and individual and controlled activities in the GE1 class, the extent to which her lessons were communicative seemed not to be as high as Diana expected.

#### **4.2.4 Thao's beliefs and preferences in relation to Diana's beliefs and practices**

As seen from tables 6 and 7, there were many similar beliefs in Diana's and Thao's belief system, for instance, both of them believed that language should be learned for communication; vocabulary and grammar were the foundation; listening and speaking were the most practical skills; learning with NT was beneficial; interaction was a valuable condition, and language learning should be relaxed and non-stressful. However, Thao did not know what Diana beliefs were, and Diana never talked or explained anything about her beliefs in class. Instead, Diana just performed what she believed while she taught the learners.

Thao admitted that coming to a private school to learn with NT was a wise decision. He was strongly in favour of most of what and how Diana was teaching in the GE1 class. Taking advantage of learning with an NT who appeared to understand what and how he wanted to learn, Thao was very eager to take part in speaking and pronunciation activities in class. He always expected to be corrected and felt happy whenever Diana corrected him or other students. He admitted that during the course, he had realized his problems in pronunciation with many words he had learned in secondary and high school. He reported that the NNTs did not teach him how to pronounce and there was nothing related to phonology and sound practices in class. In addition, he highly evaluated Diana as being very patient, energetic,

active, close to the learners, and she always prepared very carefully for the lessons. He felt excited when Diana taught vocabulary with realia, asked them to work with activities in which he could use language to talk about topics relating to his own interest and in the way that he wanted to talk. He liked to go to the class because he loved the tone of the class, the interaction with NT, and he felt that his listening and speaking skills were improved, and he was more confident when communicating in English.

However, what was going on in the class did not completely satisfy his beliefs and expectations. Based on what Diana taught, Thao expressed his preference for more exercises outside the book, more difficult grammar, and more listening time and more challenged listening tasks. Thao also felt uneasy when Diana grouped learners with mixed abilities, styles, and knowledge; he had his own preferred partners, he wanted to work with more competent learners in class, so he felt demotivated when he had to work with partners he did not like. In Diana's beliefs, beneficial activities were ones that included interaction, listening, or speaking with practical topics, Thao shared these characteristics but had one more criterion that there must be new vocabulary/grammar for him to learn. In his view, speaking English in class did not mean replying to yes-no questions, giving answers to drills when the teacher asked, or performing a rote-learned dialogue. He expected to be in more classroom activities when he could express himself in the way he liked. Sometimes in the class, while Diana thought that the learners were shy, so working in a small group would help them to be more confident, Thao argued that he would prefer if Diana let him go around the class and ask whoever and whatever he wanted. While Diana wanted the learners to work with a scanning strategy in reading, Thao said that:

[I like to read and translate the text to understand first, after that I read the questions and answer; Diana is giving limited time to read, it's really hard to do the reading task in my preferred strategy]

“Không phải đọc câu hỏi xong rồi đọc lướt thật nhanh bài đọc trong khoảng thời gian ngắn như cô đang bảo làm. Em thích đọc bài để hiểu trước rồi mới đọc câu hỏi trả lời sau” (Thao/Sti/01-11)

Or in a listening task, he suggested:

[I would prefer if after the listening, the teacher gives us the tapescript of it. I cannot hear everything, whenever I cannot hear I am not able to do the task. So I need the tapescript after that to check]

“Em muốn sau khi nghe được phát cho tờ giấy nội dung nghe. Có lúc nghe được có lúc nghe không được. Mà nghe không được trả lời câu hỏi đâu có được đâu. Em cần cái tờ giấy ghi lại bài nghe xem” (Thao/Sti/20-10).

Interestingly, whether he liked or did not like it, he still accomplished the activities that Diana asked the class to do. However, he would do the tasks with a less active attitude and he expected more of the teacher when the activities did not match his expectations and beliefs. In such a case, he admitted that he did not pay full attention.

I have just discussed Thao’s perception of learning during his course in the GE1 class. To check how exactly the course had affected him in terms of his beliefs, preferences, and expectations, results of the second RepGrid interview were analysed and the findings showed that it was difficult to identify any clear change in his beliefs after the GE1 course. However, there were signals of changes in the reasons/foundations of some beliefs in his belief system, and there were obvious changes in his learning preferences.

Compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> RepGrid interview, it seemed that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> RepGrid interview Thao was able to make his beliefs statements much clearer and more direct. He could generate some central ideas and constructs relating to theory of language learning and teaching that did not appear in the first interview at the beginning of the GE1 course such as *thinking in mother tongue vs. thinking in English, learning language in context vs. without context, and rote learning vs. communicative learning*. While at the beginning, he believed in the high value of translation, at the end of the course he said that thinking in Vietnamese was not an

effective way to use English, it was time-consuming and passive. He preferred thinking directly in English as it was a better strategy and it showed that the user was very confident with his/her language. He expressed his preference for learning language in contextualized activities because they were more helpful in using language, he also stated that de-contextualized activities were also useful in some cases such as doing grammar drills or self-study at home. He argued that rote learning was only suitable for beginners, and that he realized this in the course as he needed more communicative activities for him to practice using English in class; although he was put in a beginners' class, he felt that he should study in a higher one. In his beliefs and experiences with the GE1 class, above beginners' level, learners should not use rote learning because it was time-consuming, not effective, and not communicative; and that learning in this way was simply a copy; it would not enable him to have quick reactions, give his own ideas, and be reflective.

There were also changes in his learning preferences compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> RepGrid interview. At the beginning of the course, he stated that working individually was not effective as there was no one to interact with, to correct each other, but at the end of the course he argued that learning alone was also good as it was more suitable when learning at home, he could learn whenever and whatever he liked; and he noted that whether learning alone or with other people depended on different situations. In the same sense, different from the first interview, in the second interview he argued that being controlled were also necessary for learning as learners were normally not autonomous in their learning. With such learners, the more control from teachers was, the more effective learning was. Thus, learning should not be always flexible, relaxed, and comfortable. Besides, he did not suggest games and songs as his preferences at the first time because he thought that he could not learn anything with such activities and they were just for relaxation, but in the second interview he

suggested them for his learning preferences and argued that he could practice listening skills and learn new words from games, and using games was also a good way to review old lessons. Interestingly, when asked why he did not choose doing grammar drills as his preference, in the 1<sup>st</sup> interview he just simply said that the activity was boring, but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview he suggested that it would be more beneficial to write short passages rather than doing grammar exercises because writing was a combination of grammar and vocabulary and expressing ideas, and so he could improve many skills with this way.

In summary, Diana's teaching in the GE1 class seemed to affect Thao in two ways. Firstly, he was more reflective in his perceptions about language learning. Secondly, he changed some of his learning preferences and started to see the benefits of different ways of learning a language.

I have just discussed the findings for how Thao's beliefs relate to Diana's beliefs and what she did in the class. I now move to present how Diana's beliefs and actions were influenced by her learners.

#### **4.2.5 Diana's beliefs and practices in relation to her learners' beliefs and preferences**

When doing something with a particular learner, Diana always based her actions on her perception about him/her. For instance:

"Minh (pseudonym) has a very friendly and warm character, she's quite funny, she gets along well with everyone in the class, I think she's probably above average but she doesn't show it. She likes to stay in the background" (Diana/Rep)

About another student, she said:

"I feel that she needs a lot more practice with her speaking, she's extremely shy, I also like if she comes to class more often, because that will definitely help for confidence and in two hours we cover a lot of information, so she missed a lot, and the more lessons she misses, the less confidence she would have to catch up with the rest in the class" (Diana/Rep).

Thao was perceived by Diana as a good learner in the class. She often called on him to model classroom activities and elaborated the conversation when talking with him. Diana often called him Eric (pseudonym) as she knew that he preferred to be called this. When talking about him, she noted:

"Eric is very confident but he's still very quiet. ... he's very fast, he knows what he's doing, but with speaking he's very shy, so I would like to see him do more on this... his pronunciation is quite hard sometimes, there are some consonants that he loses to work out, for instance, linking,... to make it a bit smoother and more natural sounding. But in general, compared to other students, he performs quite well" (Diana/Rep).

She gave every learner in her class a chance of learning, even when that was a weak learner:

"She is very quiet, I want to balance the call and spread out the attention. And also I think she is new, and she is too shy, so I'm giving her an opening door, making it easier for her" (Diana/Sti/20-10).

With more active learners, she often asked them more challenging questions, gave them less time to prepare, or asked them to start the activity as example for other learners.

"Nga (pseudonym) is one of the most confident students; it's good to get the most confident one to start first. So Minh will be the final. It's because other students can look as an example, they will be more confident, calling them first when they are not ready can be stressful for them. I think it's a good opportunity to call more confident students" (Diana/Sti/20-10).

Her understanding of individual learners in class also helped her a lot in classroom management and organization of learning activities. For instance, she arranged learners in a group with mixed styles and levels with the expectation that they would teach and learn from each other.

"I'm aware each student has a different level, so I like to pair students according to level so they can work effectively, to be more equal. Because one group may finish more quickly than the others, if so it's not effective... I feel that Minh's (pseudonym) and Eric's pronunciation are better than Mr. Bien (pseudonym), but Mr. Bien has a more mature approach, he's good at problem solving when Minh and Eric are still learning, Minh is still at high school and Eric is at university, so

they are still learning basic academic skills; Mr. Bien has done all of that, so they he can pick up thing that is more better." (Diana/Sti/17/10)

Diana not only considered different learners in a class, she also paid attention to the whole group or the whole class as well. When giving comments for an activity in class, she said:

It depends on what the students move on. If they want to focus more on one area, then I spent more time in that, and if they think they are confident in the other area then we can spend less time. Each group has a different need, depending on their level. If the students like this activity, I will do it more often." (Diana/Sti/17/10)

Overall, believing in differences in learning styles, learning needs, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of individual learners in the class, Diana always tried to satisfy all of them when she planned and when she taught in the classroom. These attempts were reflected obviously in the variety of skills practiced (see table 9) and the usage of different materials in her lessons (see table 10).

She admitted that her teaching actions were not similar in different classes; when asked whether she taught this GE1 class differently from the other GE1 classes, she confirmed that:

"Definitely, the students come with different sets of skills, so in order to teach them I need to alter the ways I teach to against each student. Even though they are GE1, some students may be stronger in other areas, in grammar or speaking or listening, so you need to adjust the different needs according to the students. ... the ways I teach each class is different because of the strengths and the weaknesses of the students in each of the class. With the GE1 class that I teach in the morning, I'm going through the textbook much more quickly than this class, at night. It's a little bit slower, and then I have to slow down as well, so they can catch up." (Diana/Sti/17/10)

For this reason, she could not teach this GE1 class as communicatively as she expected. She explained that because most of the students in the class were too shy, quiet, and not very confident, and just at the beginning stage, most of the class time was still teacher-centered and went with individual works (see table 12), the content of the lessons was still controlled,



limited, and focused on linguistic forms (see table 11), and non-communicative activities were still adopted more often than the communicative ones (see table 13).

Diana's beliefs about learners as a group of people who were shaped by their culture also affected her ways of teaching. For instance, Diana believed that Vietnamese learners had a number of common characteristics, one of which was that they were more familiar with and preferred collective activities, she tried to use pair/group as often as possible in the class; and because the learners would be more confident if there were teacher's guides, she often came to their group and worked with them as a participant. She noted:

"It creates a sense of community when we sit close to the students. That means we all work together as a group, learning and trusting each other, building knowledge together. If I stand too far away, it's separating, and the teacher is higher, and students are very lower, but when we come together, students feel more relaxed to ask questions." (Diana/Sti/27/10)

Besides, she also took these common characteristics into consideration when she chose material to teach, and what she said with the learners in the class as well.

"In Vietnam, more students want to learn American English compared to British English. So we use texts, and texts that American English is pronounced to help the students learn that." (Diana/Sti/20/10)

"What I am doing is introducing the idea of blog, I'm aware that in Vietnam "blog" is not a familiar word, not a word that is commonly used, so it was important to ... try to elicit more words to get the students to have a better understanding of the idea of blog and to find words that related to that." (Diana/Sti/17/10)

I have discussed the findings of the GE1 class in the order of the four research questions. In general, beliefs and preferences of the participants strongly affected how they taught and learned and there were signals of effects of their beliefs on each other. Next section is for the analysis and findings from the GE3 class.

### **4.3. GE3 Class: Duc and David**

#### **4.3.1 Duc's beliefs vs. preferred ways of learning**

Duc's motivation for learning English at AMA seemed to be very practical: to learn English for use in his job in the future. He wanted to study with NTs and hoped to improve his listening and speaking skills after the course. Similar to Thao in the GE1 class, most of Duc's LLBs were similar to CLT principles. In the 1st RepGrid interview with Duc, the following independent constructs were generated:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| - Working with friends        | - Absolute learning                    |
| - Working alone               | - Learning with fun/non-stressful ways |
| - Learning grammar/vocabulary | - Learning the form of language        |
| - Practicing skills           | - Learning the sound of language       |
| - Language input              | - Teacher's correction                 |
| - Language output             | - Peer's correction                    |
| - Practicing memory           | - Integrative-skills activity          |
| - Person-text interaction     | - Discrete-skill activity              |

After coding his evaluations for these constructs and his underlying reasons for his classroom actions, Duc's LLB system could be described as below:

##### ***4.3.1.1. Duc's beliefs about the goals of learning***

In the stimulated recall interviews, Duc expressed a strong belief in the communicative function of language, and thus, he noted that a learner must learn language for communicative objectives. In his view, communicating in class was simply a better way to reinforce knowledge about language, and it was good for learning compared to just doing grammar exercises or learning lists of vocabulary. He saw the benefits in activities in his GE3 class such as giving street directions, doing job interviews, and social issues debate

because he thought the activities were helpful and practical, and they were the situations in which he would use English in real life. He liked to have many opportunities in class to practice speaking and listening skills as these skills were the main vehicles of communication. To communicate effectively, Duc highlighted the role of accuracy in terms of grammar, and pronunciation. Hence, using language accurately and gaining a native-like pronunciation of English were also his learning goals and he spent a lot of time studying grammar at home for this purpose. When learning in class, he always sought opportunities to work with David as much as possible; one of the reasons was that he hoped to be corrected by an NT. He also expected to work with more competent learners so that they could recognize and correct his errors. He preferred correction in learning as they were helpful for using language accurately. He preferred pronunciation activities to take place in class and his reason was that if he could not recognize the sounds, he would not be able to communicate in English. In his view:

[... We talk because we want the listener to understand. Unless we say correctly, they would not be able to understand us. In the same way, when we are the listener, we need to catch the sounds and figure out the words and their meanings to get along with the speaker]

“Tại vì khi mình nói thì mục đích mình nói là người khác phải hiểu mình, mình mà nói sai thì họ không hiểu, còn khi mình nghe thì mình phải hiểu âm, người ta phát âm đúng mà mình nghe không được thì mình cũng không hiểu gì” (Duc/Sti/16-11)

#### ***4.3.1.2. Duc’s beliefs about the nature of language learning***

Although he could not explain why, he believed that the sooner a person started learning English, the better a user he/she would be. He felt that he was lucky as he started learning English very early at 6 years old, and suggested that parents should send their young children to English class. He noted that in big cities in Vietnam, many parents did so

and he guessed that there must be a special reason relating to the quality of those English classes.

To master a FL, in his view, a person should be good at both vocabulary/grammar and listening and speaking skills of that language. Duc characterised learning vocabulary/grammar as input and speaking as the output, and a learner must focus on both. He suggested that a person should give a little more attention to learning vocabulary/grammar because "without this knowledge we [could] do nothing". From his view, vocabulary/grammar was crucial in developing listening and speaking, and nobody could use English effectively with a poor knowledge of vocabulary/grammar. Duc argued that learning vocabulary/grammar was a "taken-for-granted duty" for a learner.

[Speaking and listening skills are developed based on a good mastery of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, without this knowledge we can do nothing with these skills... As I am a learner now, learning is my priority and the knowledge is more important than the skills]

“Kỹ năng nghe nói phải được phát triển trên một nền tảng ngữ liệu tốt, không ngữ liệu thì mình không thể nào nói được. ... vì em đang là một học viên, em đi học nên việc tiếp nhận kiến thức đối với em rất là điều không cần bàn cãi” (Duc/1stRep).

Because of this belief, he always expected to work on activities that helped to enrich his knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Hence, although he believed that he had a very good foundation of grammar/vocabulary gained from public schools, he was aware that he just had the basis; he wanted to widen his vocabulary knowledge and learn more advanced grammar. To study vocabulary, Duc had an electronic dictionary that he used as his close assistant when learning English inside and outside class. He noted that the dictionary was really important in learning; he used it very often whenever he faced difficult words. In his view, as he was able to study by himself at home, if the course in AMA focused too much on grammar and vocabularies in class, there would be no time for using English. Hence, he

suggested a way that he preferred most: teacher combined learning "new vocabulary/grammar and using English for oral skills in class", and gave learners more vocabulary/grammar drills to do at home. After learning vocabulary/grammar, he argued that a learner should practice using this knowledge, and a good way was using it in conversation; so speaking and listening skills were necessary and they needed to be practiced often, especially inside class. Although he could not explain why practice was necessary, as he noted, he came to AMA because he had not had opportunities to practise "using language" in public school. When asked about his thoughts while working in a speaking task in the class, he said that he liked the interaction in the language classroom and argued that "without interaction, it [was] difficult to learn a language", interactive activities provided him with opportunities to use English for output and opportunities of correction.

Duc defined interaction as people working together, and distinguished it from individual works on written text. As he stated, interaction helped him to "improve English faster" as "it [made] learning more active", there were people who recognized his errors and corrected him. Meanwhile, if he worked alone, it was very "passive" and "there [was] no communication".

[When we meet a foreigner all what we have to do is to communicate directly with him/her, not to translate a text... Communication always needs this kind of human interaction, and it is easier to make progress in learning by this way. Working individually, such as working with text, is not very beneficial as text is not an active partner, it's very passive object to work on. In interaction with people, we can have real communication. In such a case, there are people listening to me, and besides, they may correct me when I say something wrong]

“Khi gặp một người nước ngoài, điều chúng ta làm là nói chuyện trực tiếp bằng tiếng Anh, không phải gặp nhau đưa bài viết ra dịch. Đây là tương tác giữa người với người ... mới dễ hơn trong quá trình sửa lỗi cho nhau, như em đã nói ở trên, mình mới tiến bộ dễ hơn được, còn làm việc một mình ví dụ như với bài text thì đó là một vật bất động... Không bằng tương tác với người vì

sách là vật bất động, mình đọc mình không thể trao đổi trực tiếp với nó được. Mình tương tác với người thì người có thể sửa lỗi cho mình ngay lập tức” (Duc/1stRep)

He argued that working alone was only helpful when he was concentrating on activities such as reading, writing, and homework. But in class, he particularly liked to interact with the NT and his classmates. They were, as he said, two kinds of interaction he expected when learning in AMA as he had done much individual work on grammar/vocabulary when he was in public schools. He advocated teacher-learner interaction as exposure to the standard model of the language was beneficial. He liked to interact with David most with the reasons that David was an NT, David had a native accent, and David corrected him and helped him to improve his speaking skill.

[I prefer to learn with NTs because they use native language. I mean their language is very accurate and error-free]  
“Em thích học với giáo viên bản xứ hơn, vì họ đọc ngôn ngữ bản xứ nên sự sai sót rất ít, thậm chí là không có” (Duc/Sti/06/11)

Consequently, one reason he preferred this GE3 class to his previous class in public schools was the class-size. Duc argued that a small class was more beneficial for learning. In his view, one criterion for a good school should be that the number of students in each class must be acceptable because in such classes there were more opportunities for teacher-learner interaction. To explain talking with his favourite partner while David was spending time to check another learner’s work, he said that when he could not interact with David, he tried to interact with other learners because opportunity to work directly with NT in the class was limited, so the majority of time a learner must interact with other learners, it was not wise to wait for interaction with teacher. It seemed that Duc was very autonomous in his learning, he was always aware of the active role of a learner. Duc argued that "students must also be responsible for their learning" because "practice [made] perfect". Thus, he was very serious about learning in class and did a lot of self-study at home. Although he

evaluated himself as a good student of English, he still needed more practice; he said: "if we don't practice regularly we will forget". He argued that while students had to be responsible, a teacher of English had to be dedicated, open, funny, and considerate. Duc compared David with an ex-teacher who was fired for not satisfying the class. He preferred to study with David as "he is young, active, helpful, easy to understand, close to learners, and funnier" (Duc/Sti/23/11).

Next, he believed that "learning should be interesting and not stressful". Duc liked relaxed activities in the class such as games, video, role-play and evaluated highly the learning mood in a private school. From his evaluation, learning in a private school was not stressful, but free and comfortable. He could say what he thought confidently and asked whenever he wanted to ask. However, he also insisted that "learning should not be too easy"; he did not like to learn again what he knew. Whenever there were such easy activities, he expressed his disfavour towards them.

The last belief included in this cluster was the roles of error. Interestingly, while he had been familiar with traditional methods, he was not afraid of making mistakes and believed that errors were good for learning. In a writing activity, Duc volunteered to write his answers on the board and expected that his errors would be corrected, he said:

[I'm never afraid of making mistakes. As I'm a learner, not knowing something is normal, and it's why I have to learn. So when I try to do my best; if there is any mistake, it's not my fault]  
"Em không run, trước giờ em không sợ sai, chỉ cố gắng làm thôi. Em đang đi học mà, không biết thì em mới phải học, không biết là chuyện thường thôi"  
(Duc/Sti/16/11)

In his belief, although mistakes were natural, they must be corrected, errors could be corrected by any one in class, but correction from the teacher was his most preferred.

#### ***4.3.1.3. Duc's beliefs about learning activities***

The most repeated idea stated in the interviews with Duc was that classroom activities should be communicative. Although he could not explain how a communicative activity differed from a non-communicative one, he could describe some differences between activities in this GE3 class and his previous English classes. He liked the GE3 class as there was more pair/group work, listening/speaking activities, and practical and free activities in which he was given situations and roles, and he talked about what he really thought, what he personally wanted to talk about. In the GE3 class, he did not like it when he had to work with partners who were not willing to make the speaking tasks more communicative. For instance, in one activity like that, he commented:

[It seems that they don't want to think about the ideas to talk, they are just talking in passing. Meanwhile, I always try to be active in my turn. They are demotivating me while I'm trying to lead the work.... While the teacher comes to our group, they try a little bit, but when David goes to other groups, they start to sit in silence again]

“Có vẻ họ không chịu suy nghĩ ra chuyện để nói, chỉ nói cho qua lượt. Em thì tích cực khi đến lượt mình, nhưng nhìn họ như vậy em cũng không có hứng thú lúc đó lắm. Dù em cũng có cố gắng dẫn dắt rồi đó. Lúc mà thầy đứng quan sát thì nhóm tích cực nhất, tốt nhất là lúc đó nhưng khi thầy qua nhóm khác thì nhóm không còn tích cực nữa” (Duc/Sti/21/12).

He did not prefer rote learning as "memorising [was] not the right way to learn a language". He argued that rote learning was more suitable with vocabulary/grammar, but it was still not effective because the best way was integrating vocabulary/grammar and using them with different skills. He argued that this way of integrating activity was beneficial for both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. However, developing one skill at a time was also beneficial; according to him, while integrative activities helped to obtain a fuller result, sometimes learners also needed to do something in depth. Hence, learning activities in class should be varied and should not be limited to the course book. Duc believed that each way of learning had its own benefit, and thus a learner must employ



different kinds of learning activity to "make a full progress". He did not have any preference for language knowledge or language skills; he saw both of them as equally important. He wanted to have more practice in skills with David and his classmates and more self-study with knowledge of English language. In his view, while language knowledge was the basis for skills, skill activities helped to reinforce the knowledge. He preferred speaking/listening activities to reading/writing ones for the reasons of being "more practical", "more communicative", and "the goal of learning a language". Thus, he wanted "to practice these activities as much as possible in a lesson". However, he did not want to abandon reading and writing because, as he claimed, reading was necessary in exams while writing was helpful for vocabulary and grammar. Besides, while he believed in the benefits of integrative activities – activities in which he could practice different skills, he also saw the necessity of discrete activities such as reading and doing grammar drills. He preferred relaxed activities such as games and video clips since they "[created] a comfortable mood that positively [supported] the effectiveness of learning" or "[released] stress in class", but learning was always his core criterion to evaluate the effectiveness of any activity in class. It seemed that learning, in his definition, was gaining words and structures that he had not known. Among different ways of learning, Duc seemed to prefer studying English with NT most. He believed that this was the most effective way to make progress in listening and speaking skills, and it was one important reason why he came to AMA to study English.

From both the stated beliefs and enacted beliefs, a summary of Duc's LLB system emerged. Compared to the belief system of Thao in the GE3 class, although this systems contained more beliefs, these beliefs could also be grouped in three similar clusters of the goal of learning English, the nature of English learning, and the characteristics of beneficial

learning activities. This belief system also reflected the learner's identity and described well his high expectations in learning English.

| Clusters of beliefs             | Duc's beliefs  | His preferred ways of learning   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| The goals of learning           | To learn for communication   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking and listening activities</li> <li>- Adding material outside the course book</li> <li>- Real-life activities</li> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> </ul> |
|                                 | To use it accurately   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Correction from the teacher</li> <li>- Peer Correction</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | To have a native pronunciation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pronunciation practice with the NT</li> <li>- Being corrected by the NT when speaking</li> <li>- Listening to the NT</li> </ul>   |
| The nature of language learning | In learning English, the sooner the better                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting to learn English at young ages</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Both language declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are important | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Listening and speaking practices</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Gaining a lot of input of vocabulary and grammar                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning vocabulary and grammar</li> <li>- Listening to and understanding teacher</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Listening and Speaking are the most practical skills                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listening and speaking practices in class</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Interaction is a crucial condition   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group work and pair work</li> <li>- Learn in small class</li> <li>- Talking with the teacher</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Exposing to good model language is a crucial condition                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning with NT</li> <li>- Listening to CD</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Students must be responsible for their learning                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doing homework</li> <li>- Reviewing the lesson at home</li> <li>- Self-learning vocabulary</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Practice makes perfect   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doing homework</li> <li>- Speaking and listening practice in class</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Errors are good for learning   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being confident when speaking</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Teacher should be dedicated, opened, funny, and considerate                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning with teachers like David</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Learning should be low-stressful   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning with games</li> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> <li>- Learning with a friendly teacher</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Learning should be challenged  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doing complicated grammar drills</li> <li>- Making long conversation with various topics</li> </ul>   |
| Learning activity               | Learning activities should be varied and communicative                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different learning activities</li> <li>- Different types of interaction</li> <li>- Combine both classroom activities and homework</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Free activities are more beneficial than the controlled ones               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real-life activities</li> <li>- Working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Integrated-skills activities are more beneficial than Discrete-skills activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combining different skills in one activity</li> <li>- Combining vocabulary and grammar with listening, writing</li> </ul> |
| Rote learning is not beneficial  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No rote learning of structures/dialogue</li> </ul>  |
| Studying with NTs will improve speaking and listening skills                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking with the NT</li> <li>- Studying English in private school</li> </ul>  |

Table 14: Summary of Duc's beliefs and preferred ways of learning

#### 4.3.2 David's beliefs and his ways of teaching

David thought that his teaching was shaped much by his experiences as a learner and by teaching practice, and that the CELTA training course was helpful, but it just equipped him with the basis and starting experiences. He said most of his teaching experience came from teaching General English courses in AMA. The school evaluated him as a good teacher, so they arranged for him to teach this GE3 class at the time the learners were requesting the school to change teacher after only a week of learning. David himself was also a learner of Spanish, French, and Vietnamese, so when talking about LLBs, David used many examples relating to learning these languages. David stated that his teaching was mainly formed from his teaching experience:

"I would say my experience. I think my experience is more important, at this point. What I learned from the CELTA course did help me a lot when I started for a couple of months but what I'm doing now is from what I did, what I saw, what I learned from what doesn't work. They help me in developing my skills" (David/Rep).

The constructs below emerged in the RepGrid interview with him:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperative/interactive learning</li> <li>- Individual learning</li> <li>- Input (lexis and grammar)</li> <li>- Practicing language skills</li> <li>- Rote learning</li> <li>- Critical/processing learning</li> <li>- Slow mental-process activity</li> <li>- Quick mental-process activity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creative activity</li> <li>- Funny activity</li> <li>- Stressful activity</li> <li>- Learning the form of language</li> <li>- Learning the sound of language</li> <li>- Talking with native speaker</li> <li>- Teacher correction</li> <li>- Peer correction</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

After coding the interview elaborated from his evaluation of these constructs and his classroom actions, the four following clusters of beliefs emerged.

#### ***4.3.2.1 David's beliefs about the goals of learning***

David believed strongly in the communicative purpose of learning a language. In his perception, learners learned English to use it in situations where "they really [needed] to use English" such as travelling abroad and talking with foreigners. Therefore, he preferred activities that brought the "real world" into class. Many times in the stimulated recall interviews, David noted that it was important for him to create opportunities for the learners to practice English in communicative and authentic situations. Besides, he also argued for the benefit of personalized activities; he often adapted the activities in the course book when he guessed they were not "useful" for his learners, he gave his learners opportunities to work with role-play and discussion in his class. He preferred to put them in situations that they would meet in real life, gave them roles and encouraged them to use English. Communication, according to him, "is conveyed in most cases through speaking and listening", thus he spent a large proportion of the class time practicing these two skills. He also encouraged meaningful communication in class, even when he was teaching grammar. For instance, before an activity that the learners were practicing using the present perfect and the present perfect progressive, he reminded them that in practice, in most cases they could use both tenses. In explaining this, he noted:

"Like 'who' and 'whom' when you say. ... not many people use whom in informal conversation. It's the difference between standard grammar and casual conversation. ... so when my students are saying something, it's OK if they make some mistakes." (David/Sti/7-12)

Another goal of learning English, according to David, was to gain a good pronunciation. The extract below was what he said in class when he was preparing an extra pronunciation

activity (Appendix H) for the class to practice:

"So this is a difficult sound ((gives handouts)) for some Vietnamese people to say (1.0) ah (.) you have th in Vietnamese (.) but it's /th/not /θ/ (1.0) so let's practice this" (David's class, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec)

To explain this, David argued that Vietnamese learners' pronunciation was often not correct and they had their own special problems with pronunciation. Hence, he suggested that, as an NT, it was better to prepare more pronunciation activities and he should correct them more, and he did them very often when he taught. Most of corrective feedbacks in David's class, as I observed, were teacher correction of pronunciation. The next goal of language learning was to use it accurately, so he wanted his learners to have more activities and exercises to focus on the forms of English both in and after class.

#### ***4.3.2.2 David's beliefs about the nature of language learning***

Because learning a language was to use it for communication, according to him, all of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing were important. However, he noted that working with the sound of language should be focused more in the class, and argued that most Vietnamese EFL learners wanted to improve the oral skills most. For instance, when asked why he left a writing task in the book for homework, he explained:

"When I teach a General English class, all skills are equal, at the class level you have to teach all of the skills equally. I try to follow their basis, it depends on their weak points, but I think they come here; probably what they want is. ... I try to focus more on speaking skills, conversation, practice in a conversational setting and, and pronunciation" (David/Sti/10/02).

According to David, as declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge were inseparable, it was necessary for the learners to learn and remember vocabulary and grammar. For instance, before a grammar drill on the simple past tense, he reminded his learners of the differences between simple past and the past perfect as below:

"Ahh, this is the difference (1.0) simple past ((write on the board)) usually for

something specific (3.0) at a specific time ((writes along)), OK? ((looks at the class)) (2.0) or a period of time that is finished ((writes along)) ((looks at the class)) (2.0) so for example (.) last year (.) last week ((writes along)), OK? (2.0) Present perfect is for (.) un or not specific time ((writes along)) or a period of time that is not finished ((writes along and underlines the word "not", then looks at the class)) (3.0) for example (.) this week ((writes along))" (David's class, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec).

He explained:

"It's difficult sometimes to do grammar exercises because there are a lot of literal rules. And I don't want to give the incorrect foundation" (David/Sti/17/12).

Hence, according to him, these more "passive activities" supported and reinforced a great deal for the skills learners practised in class. In Davids' view, vocabulary and grammar were were "the input of language", "the basis to use for the other skills". He suggested that to "really learn them", the learners had to use them regularly and argued that "it [was] important to use and produce language for the sake of learning, remembering and integrating it". However, as he noted, vocabulary and grammar were more suitable for self-study so he preferred his learners to learn these "inputs" for homework. David suggested that learners should handle more at home to give more class time for "other activities that they cannot do themselves after class" such as role-plays and discussion. Then, he would check how well the learners had done the homework in the next lesson. He strongly believed that his learners could do this as they were adult learners; he said: "they have enough discipline to do it at home" and "I prefer to spend the class time using the language rather than doing stressful exercises".

"they are important for learning a language but it's not necessary to do these in class, they can do those outside the class and come to class the next day and ask me questions and I check it" (David/Rep)

He admitted that self-study was his own way of learning foreign languages. He noted:

"I guess it's my way of learning, I prefer to learn the rules pretty well. ... I always want to make sure how they understand the vocabulary, how to pronounce" (David/Rep)

When evaluating the form and the sound of language, he recognized both of the constructs as of equal importance, but he wished that if there had been a lot of class time, he would spend more time on the form and explain the rules of language.

Besides declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge, in his belief, culture was another goal of language learning because:

"... language is a part of culture and culture is a part of language... it's good to give them the background information and why we do things, so they always say when you teach language, you also teach about culture, and help them understand exactly what's going on" (David/Sti/29-11)

Thus, as David noted, it was necessary to add extra activities about culture to start his lessons or to ask learners to make them aware of cultural values while doing learning tasks, and he prepared such activities to teach his learners. For instance, talking about culture in the listening or reading tasks beforehand, talking about American eating styles for a warm-up activity.

David also preferred to teach small-size classes as in AMA school with less than 15 learners in each class. He said:

"... with a large class with ten or twelve students, it's hard to give everyone individual practice time, I try to do that, but I don't have time to do that with every student" (David/Sti/23/11).

For him, the ideal number should be about 8 to 10 to have enough students to work in 2 or 3 groups; with more than 15, he would not be able to give students a good amount of interaction, and it would be more difficult to manage. Moreover, related to the learning environment, he also noted that language should be learned in a relaxed and non-stressful class. Thus doing fun and interesting activities was a way to encourage learning. He believed that interactive activities and games could create a lot of fun, so he adopted these activities often in class.

Next, David strongly believed that learning was naturally a confusing and frustrating process. In evaluating the role of errors, he said: "we cannot avoid errors, learners needed to get feedback in order to be corrected, if not they never recognize their mistakes". For instance, in the extract below, David was eliciting answers to the question "what are your challenges?".

Duc: Trying to confident  
David: Trying?  
Duc: confident [(1.0) ahh  
L1: [Making (.) ahh (.) making  
David: Trying to (.) to verb  
Duc: ahh (1.0) not (.) no (.) feel ahh  
David: feeling (.) OK, feeling or being (.) I just say (.) being confident, alright?  
(.) or being confident ((writes on the board)) both are good.

David commented that:

"When one student makes a mistake, it's probably a common student mistake, it's a chance for other students to improve as well when I will correct the mistake"  
(David/Sti/7/12)

He also noted that correction was usually stressful for learners and he tried to make this as non-frustrating as possible. He suggested that teachers must correct learners' errors but should not have a negative attitude when correcting. He liked to correct his learners when speaking in class and correct their writing and grammar drill homework; and when he did it, he tried to do it as supportively as possible.

#### ***4.3.2.3 David's beliefs about learners' characteristics and the roles of an NT***

Like Diana in the GE1 class, David's beliefs in this cluster related strongly with his identity as an NT teaching Vietnamese students. David noted that learners in every class had some different needs so certain teaching approaches worked in some classes but might not work in other classes. In his view, learners learned in different styles and at different speeds. Hence, he said with different classes, he adjusted and used different ways of teaching. For



instance, he explained that there were always some students who wanted to participate more than everyone else, so he provided them more challenging chances to perform such as group leader or main role in a role-play; he also tried to motivate the quiet learners, gave them chances to participate and extra time to think. He also noted that translating from one language to another was not a good way of practicing; but he described most Vietnamese learners as ones who used translation very often in their writing and speech. He commented that in his experience when his learners wrote and spoke, a lot of them used "word-by-word translation". He explained that they often used a lot of Vietnamese structures that did not work in English. Therefore, he should make them aware of these incorrect language structures. However, he believed that language learners must work hard at home themselves with the written tasks, then the teacher's job was correcting his/her students' written errors in class after that. He spent much less time in class for reading, writing, and grammar compared to listening and speaking skills not only because, as discussed earlier, they were more practical for communication and they were exactly what the learners wanted to improve (see Appendix H for examples of David's homework for his learners); believing that practice made perfect, he strongly advised his learners to work hard on their own if they wanted to make learning progress. In his view, success depended very much on the learners, so they must be responsible for their own learning, and should be active in their learning. He explained that in response to the needs and preferences of his GE3 learners, the classroom should be an environment for doing tasks that they could not do outside class. In class, he used dynamic, creative activities, and he liked learners who participated actively, who often volunteered and were really involved in his lesson. This way of learning might come from his own learning experience; He revealed that:

"When I learn language I try to practice, I try to teach the ways I was taught when I was in university. There was a lot of speaking in my universities, but there was also a lot of homework" (David/Sti/23/11)

As a native English-Speaking teacher, David considered every day of the GE3 class an opportunity for the learners to study with him because "they need a native teacher to learn with". Hence, he spent much time to prepare extra works that he thought necessary for his learners, he corrected and marked their homework, he tried to stay as close as possible to them so that he could act as a helpful friend who encouraged and corrected individual learners. When asked why there was no self-correction and peer correction in class, he explained that such techniques were time-consuming and not very effective as the learners did not feel motivated; besides, peer correction was not as reliable as correction from the teacher, especially in oral language and pronunciation.

#### ***4.3.2.4 David's beliefs about learning activities***

From David's arguments, it could be inferred that he strongly believed in the benefit of all learning ways and of different learning contexts. In his view, every single way of learning had its strengths and weaknesses, but he also admitted that he often spent more class time on some particular ways of teaching/learning. He noted that he always tried to balance the skills in the class, but because he was teaching General English in a PES he should spend more time on speaking activities. He said that he "preferred to turn other practices into speaking activity" because "it was more creative and active", "there were student-student interaction and cooperation while learning". He wanted to see a lot of speaking activities in the class and said that:

"...output is necessary to really learn the input, because when we just give the input of new language and new grammar, new vocabulary, it's hard to really remember it and integrate it, and you must use it regularly. So I think it's more

important to use and produce language. ... I always spend more time outputting new language and old language they already knew" (David/Rep).

According to David, because language was dynamic, language was live and on-going, if a teacher wanted his/her learners to be able to use English to communicate in real life, classroom activities should be as "real" as possible. This belief related tightly with his beliefs about the communicative goal of language learning that was discussed earlier. In his belief, rote learning was not a beneficial way to use in class. Besides, it could be inferred that with him, both collective activities and individual activities were beneficial, but the group activities should be the focus when learners were in class. His favourite activity was using group work, even when the focus of the task was on memorising new language items. He explained that he preferred his learners to use the language rather than to do stressful exercises. To create an environment for students to use language in the class, David argued that interaction was an indispensable condition. Among different kinds of interaction, interaction with the NT played a crucial role. In his view, it seemed to be impossible to learn a language if there was no direct interaction and conversation with an NT of that language. Some of the clear benefits when a person interacts with the teacher, according to him, were that the learner could communicate with the NT, and that his/her errors could be corrected. This was his experience when learning foreign languages:

"If I'm in America trying to learn Vietnamese, but if I have no Vietnamese friend, it's impossible. Probably, I don't know how I would do that" (David/Rep)

Interacting with other people in class was also very beneficial for learning; he explained that "if interaction was used often in class, the lesson [would] be more productive". He emphasized that when he used cooperative activities, there was communication in the classroom and the learners were more active, more willing to volunteer, and to talk more

with their partners. He compared interactive work with individual practice, gave an example and explained:

"If in 5 minutes the teacher uses presentation, there is only one student speaking and the class is more quiet, but if using pair work, all of the learners have the opportunity to speak and listen. So, there is a lot of communication in the class, and the lesson becomes more active" (David/Rep).

Besides, David did not believe that following the book closely was a way to learn or teach effectively; instead, learning activities should go beyond the course book. When planning a lesson, he usually had some places in it for adapted or self-developed activities.

In summary, after joining the beliefs inferred from the RepGrid interview and the stimulated recall interview, David's belief system of language learning contained four clusters: the goals of learning, the nature of learning, beliefs related to learning activities, and beliefs about learners' characteristics and the roles of an NT (table 15). In general, most of his beliefs seemed to come from his own experience as a foreign language learner and experience of teaching Vietnamese learners in GE courses. Generally, David seemed to believe in the benefits of both CLT and traditional teaching methods.

| <b>Clusters of beliefs</b>      | <b>David's Beliefs</b>   | <b>Preferred ways of teaching</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| The goals of learning           | To learn for communication                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using real-life activities</li> <li>- Using interactive, cooperation activities</li> <li>- Focusing on listening and speaking</li> </ul> |
|                                 | To have a good pronunciation                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practicing pronunciation</li> <li>- Using teacher correction</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | To use it accurately   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using teacher correction</li> <li>- Doing grammar drill at home</li> </ul>   |
| The nature of language learning | All skills are important                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Varying classroom activities</li> <li>- Giving writing and reading tasks for learners to do at home</li> </ul>                           |
|                                 | Vocabulary and grammar are the foundation                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving vocabulary and grammar drills for learners to do at home</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Speaking and listening practices are the most practical skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using interactive activities</li> <li>- Focusing on speaking and listening</li> <li>- Teaching small class</li> </ul>                    |
|                                 | Learning with NT is beneficial                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking with learners</li> <li>- Correcting learners</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | - Teaching small class  |
|  | Learners must be active/autonomous  | - Giving homework<br>- Pushing learners to be more active   |
|  | Language should be learned in a relaxed, non-stressful environment                        | - Being dedicated, helpful, and considerate<br>- Being friendly and patient with learners<br>- Staying closely with individual learners when they work<br>- Using games                   |
|  | Practice makes perfect  | - Giving homework everyday  |
|  | Culture is a part of language learning  | - Adding extra activities relating to cultures  |
|  | Errors are good for learning  | - Being supportive and positive when correcting mistakes  |
| Beliefs about learners' characteristics and teacher and the roles of an NT | Learners in a class is multilevel   | - Varying teaching activities<br>- Encouraging learners   |
|  | Learners need to learn with different speed   | - Varying teaching activities<br>- Encouraging learners   |
|  | Learners learn with different styles  | - Varying teaching activities<br>- Encouraging learners   |
|  | Learner can listen to and understand teacher  | - Using different strategies to get learners understood   |
|  | Learners have bad habit of translating  | - Correcting learners' writing style  |
|  | A native teacher has to give learners what they need in learning                          | - Talking with them individually<br>- Staying closely with individual learners<br>- Correcting, commenting, and check all of their homework<br>- Being friendly and patient with learners |
| Learning activity  | Classroom activities should be communicative and authentic                                | - Using real-life activities<br>- Using interactive activities  |
|  | Learning activities should be varied for different goals, learners, and different classes | - Varying teaching activities<br>- Adapting the book<br>- Using self-develop activities<br>- Combining classroom and home activities  |
|  | Rote learning is just beneficial for learning grammar and vocabulary                      | - Using rote learning with grammar and vocabulary at home   |

Table 15: Summary of David's beliefs and preferred ways of teaching

#### **4.3.3 David's classroom activities**

After coding the recorded videos of David's classes with the COLT, I was able to summarize of the length of time spent on different teaching/learning activities in his class.

Like Diana in the GE1 class, David believed strongly that language should be learned for communication purposes. With this belief, he often used communicative and authentic activities in class. Besides, to learn language for communication, he said he preferred to use interactive and cooperative activities. The results seemed to support his beliefs, nearly a third

of the class time was used for pair/group works (table 16) and listening/speaking skills were the central practices (table 17). As can be seen in table 16, while 30% of the time was for his learners to work in pairs or groups, only 18% was when they worked individually. After that, 4% of the time, the whole class were participating in choral work, repeating a model provided by the textbook or teacher.

| <b>Types of interaction</b> | Percentage of class time for activities organized for these types of interaction |              |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------|
| Teacher-Whole class         | 47 %   | <b>100 %</b> |
| Group/pair work             | 30 %   |              |
| Choral by students          | 4 %  |              |
| Individual work             | 18 %   |              |
| Group/individual work       | 1 %  |              |

Table 16: Participation organization in David's class

Table 17 describes the distribution of time for different skills in David's lessons. It can be seen that a large amount of the time was spent on practicing skills (64%), while the rest (36%) was for other activities such as drills, games, lecture, presentation, etc. Within the language skills group, the most focused was speaking skill with 36% of the time while listening took the second place with 16%. On the contrary, reading and writing skills were focused on the least with only 5% and 7% of the time respectively. This result also matched with his beliefs about the focus of classroom activities and what learners needed to do at home for self-practice.

| <b>Classroom activities</b>  | Percentage of class time for these activities |              |
|--|---|--------------|
| Listening to CD/Video  | 16 %  | <b>100 %</b> |
| Speaking in pair/group/with teacher  | 36 %  |              |
| Reading  | 5 %   |              |
| Writing  | 7 %   |              |
| Other activities: (drills/games/listening to teacher's lecturing/presentation, etc.) | 36 %  |              |

Table 17: Learners' modality in David's lessons

The communicative orientation in the GE3 class was also reflected in the amount of time the learners worked with topics beyond the classroom and immediate environment and included reference to controversial public issues, world events, abstract ideas, reflective personal information. In table 18, in 48% of the time for activities focusing on subject matter of classroom discourse, a large amount of it (40%) was for topics with a broad range of reference while topics with limited range of reference were dealt with in 7% of the time, and only 1% of the time was for topics with a narrow range of reference.

David also believed in the goal of accuracy in terms of grammar and pronunciation when communicating and the foundation role of vocabulary/grammar. Table 16 shows that 47% of the class time was spent on teacher-whole class activities; it was when David was lecturing and explaining grammar, discussing and evaluating the students' drills, and giving instructions. Based on the summary of the content in David's lessons, there seemed to be a balance between the time spent on focusing explicitly on language (52%) and the time used for other topics (48%). In focusing on language, 26% of the time was used for activities to focus explicitly on form (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), 23% was the percentage of time used for focusing-on-meaning activities. Meanwhile, the time spent on activities focusing explicitly on illocutionary acts such as requesting, apologizing, and explaining, and on discourse/sociolinguistics were much less, only 1% and 2% respectively.

| Contents of the lessons |                               | Percentage of class time |       |       |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|--|
| Focus on language       | Form                          | 26 %                     | 52 %  | 100 % |  |
|                         | Function                      | 1%                       |       |       |  |
|                         | Discourse/Sociolinguistics    | 2 %                      |       |       |  |
|                         | Meaning                       | 23%                      |       |       |  |
| Other topics            | Narrow range of reference     | 1 %                      | 48 %  |       |  |
|                         | Limited range of reference    | 7 %                      |       |       |  |
|                         | Broad range of reference      | 40 %                     |       |       |  |
| Topic control           | Teacher selects what to do    | 78 %                     | 100 % |       |  |
|                         | Student(s) selects what to do | 22 %                     |       |       |  |

Table 18: Content of the lessons in David's class

David believed that learners in any class were multilevel, they learned at different speeds and in different styles, and thus learning activities should be varied for different goals and learners. These beliefs seemed to be reflected obviously in table 19. The results showed how teaching/learning materials were used in the GE3 class. In his lessons, as can be seen that he often varied his methods by using different kinds of material and spent time for the learners to do different activities in class. With the origins of material, in over a half of the class time (51%), David not only followed the course book closely and used the supplied material to teach but he also adapted them and made them became more effective with the learners. However, time for using adapted materials was only 3%. 29% of the time, David used self-developed materials to teach. The remaining time, which accounted for 17%, was when he employed emerging materials such as written papers, results from group/pair work/games, and topics that arose from reading/listening practice.

|                     |                              | Percentage of class time |              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Origins of material | Supplied material            | 51 %                     | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Self-developed/supplementary | 29 %                     |              |
|                     | Adapt the supplied material  | 3 %                      |              |
|                     | Emerging material            | 17 %                     |              |
| Types of materials  | Minimal written text         | 43 %                     | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Extended written text        | 15 %                     |              |
|                     | Audio (CD and others)        | 35 %                     |              |
|                     | Visual                       | 12 %                     |              |
| Use of material     | Highly controlled            | 60%                      | <b>100 %</b> |
|                     | Semi-controlled              | 12 %                     |              |
|                     | Minimally controlled         | 28%                      |              |

Table 19: Materials used in David's lessons

Regarding types of teaching materials, more than a half of the time, the learners worked with written materials; time spent on minimal text was 43%, and 15% was for extended written text such as stories and dialogues. In this category, the percentage of time for audio materials was 35% and 12% was for visual materials. Next, in 60% of the class time, these



kinds of materials were highly controlled by the teacher, 12% of the time, there was occasional extension beyond the restrictions imposed by the materials. In the remaining 28% of the time, the materials were just used as starting points for more authentic and personal communication.

| Communicative features         |                     | Percentage of class time for speaking activities practicing these features |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Information gap                | Display Question    | 1 %  |
|                                | Genuine Question    | 35 %   |
| Restriction of linguistic form | Restricted use      | 0 %  |
|                                | Limited restriction | 6 %  |
|                                | Unrestricted use    | 30 %   |
| Sustained speech               | Ultra-Minimal       | 0 %  |
|                                | Minimal             | 4 %  |
|                                | Sustained Speech    | 32 %   |

Table 20: Communicative features of activities in David's lessons

Importantly, the time learners worked in communicative activities in David's class was much higher than in the GE1 class (table 20). Table 20 is an extension for the 36 % of the time in table 17 when the learners spoke in pair/group or with the teacher. It shows how this amount of time was divided based on three communicative features: information gap, restriction of linguistic form, and sustained speech. Within this proportion of time, only 1% was used for activities to practice display questions and predictable answers while 35% was spent on activities to use genuine/unpredictable exchanges of information. Therefore, the learners worked in more authentic activities in most of the time while the activities in which they had to practice their English in a less communicative way was less often. After that, with the category of linguistic form, there was no activity for production or manipulation of one specific form, 6% of the time was for activities allowed to choose more than one linguistic form but in a very narrow range, and the largest proportion of time (30%) was for speaking activities such as free conversation, oral reports, job interview, and street direction.

In such activities, there were no expectation of any particular linguistic form; they could use the form freely without any restriction in linguistic choice. Next, 'sustained speech' (length of speech) measured the extent to which the speakers engaged in extended discourse or restricted their utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause, or word. There was no activity for utterances consisting of one word (ultra-minimal). 4% of the time was for activities that required the learners to produce utterances consisting of one clause or sentence (minimal), and 32% of the time was for them to use utterances longer than one sentence or consisting of at least two main clauses (sustained speech).

In short, communicative activities were used very often in David's class. He was able to organize the activities and made use of the materials as he expected because, compared to the GE1 learners, his GE3 learners were more active, more willing to talk, and more competent.

#### **4.3.4 Duc's beliefs and preferences in relation to Davids' beliefs and practices**

Like Diana and Thao in the GE1 class, both David and Duc strongly believed that the goal of learning was communication, vocabulary and grammar were the basis, listening and speaking were the two most important skills, interactive activities were communicative, and that a non-stressful environment and interacting with NT were indispensable conditions for successful learning. Moreover, David and Duc also shared other beliefs such as the role of learner autonomy, the combination of self-practice at home and classroom activities, or positive views on the role of errors. As a teacher, David never stated anything about his beliefs when he taught in the GE3 class, but the beliefs were performed in what and how he taught every day.

Based on his experience of what happened in the class, Duc liked his lessons; firstly because he was learning with an NT, being exposed to standard and 'error-free' English. He

highly appreciated interaction with the NT in class. He actively took part in classroom activities and took advantage of every opportunity to talk with the NT. David's identity as an NT seemed to attract Duc strongly and played an important role in maintaining his learning motivation. Then, he felt that he was learning in a very different way compared to how he used to learn in Vietnamese public schools. He compared this GE3 class with his classes in public school where "a teacher was trying to teach, students were just trying to listen". Next, he was always active in his role in pair/group work; he listened carefully to the teacher at any time in the class, and he showed his eagerness in listening and speaking activities. He also worked very hard on the homework that the teacher gave; even when there was no homework, he still spent his free time at home for self-practice. Like David, Duc preferred an interesting and low-stress class and believed that the teacher should be dedicated, open, funny, and considerate. Hence, Duc liked the games used in the class and argued that using games meant practicing English in a relaxed way. He was happy to study with David as David was not as strict and serious as his ex-teacher. Besides, because of his belief about the importance of understanding the teacher in a lesson, one of the reasons Duc liked David was that David's accent and speed were clear and slow enough for him to understand. In his argument, as he was still a learner, learning was one of the most important goals, thus if he could not understand the teacher, he would not be able to learn anything in class. Duc perceived David as a good teacher for him as David often stayed close to the learners when they were in groups or pairs, David came to every individual student, listened to them, and corrected their mistakes. Besides, David always prepared and taught his lessons in his consideration of multi-styles, multi-level, multi-speed of different learners. He prepared more activities outside the book, more homework with grammar and vocabulary; he also used different kinds of activities which varied from the most to the least controlled, from working

with singular words to practicing long discourse, from audio to visual channel of communication. Duc felt satisfied with this variety in David's lessons, he claimed that he benefited and would make fuller progress by practicing different skills and working on different tasks in class, and that the lessons were never boring for him.

When what and how David taught did not match with his expectations, Duc adopted more self-study or compensatory strategies to support his learning in class. Despite seeking every single opportunity to interact with David, interaction with the teacher was not what Duc was involved in often in class; instead, most of his interactive time was with other learners. According to Duc, he understood that although David was trying to interact as much as possible with the learners, there were many learners and many other things to cover at the same time as well. It was not what Duc expected but in such cases, as noted earlier, he turned to interact with other students as a compensatory strategy to have more talking time in class. He said:

[In class, opportunities to work directly with the teacher are not many, and they are divided equally to everyone. So the time to interact with the NT is limited, to compensate for it, the majority of time we must interact with friends. It is not wise to wait for interaction with the teacher and do nothing when there are other people for group or pair works in the class]

“Trên lớp mà cơ hội làm việc chung với giáo viên là chia đều cho mọi người và em nghĩ là cũng không nhiều. Trong một buổi học thì dung lượng nói của thầy cũng chỉ ở một mức nào đó thôi, thời gian còn lại thì đương nhiên là phải làm việc với bạn. Không thể vì không làm việc với thầy mà phải làm việc với bạn rồi khi phải làm việc chung thì không làm gì cả, vậy thì không tốt chút nào.”  
(Duc/Sti/23/11)

In some activities, David mixed the learners in pair/group works because he wanted them to help each other, but this made Duc feel unhappy as he had to work with more passive, uncooperative, or quiet partners. In such cases he reported that he had to talk more to fill the quiet time in the group, he had to think or act for the whole group. When Duc thought that

the content of the on-going activity was easy for him, he often tried to find other reasons to motivate himself to get along with the task such as listening to the teacher's talks, instruction, and explanations as a way to practice listening skill. Similar to Thao in the GE1 class, Duc also expected to have more classroom activities with vocabulary/grammar, and expected the teacher to make grammar in class more complex, more suitable to his level. However, he was also aware that more vocabulary/grammar meant less time for listening/speaking in class; thus as he confirmed, he was still happy with practicing more listening and speaking in class and learned vocabulary/grammar at home by himself.

To see how the GE3 class had influenced Duc, the 2<sup>nd</sup> RepGrid interview was analysed and the findings showed that there was no clear evidence of changes in any of beliefs in his belief system. However, his beliefs seemed to be less "blind" and more "reasoned". At the end of the course he was able to give more relevant reasons while comparing and contrasting classroom activities and was clearer in expressing his belief statements. As a result, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> RepGrid interview some new constructs emerged and reflected important aspects of language learning such as "learning with and without interaction", "learning with and without correction", "interact with teacher", "practice pronunciation", "practice cognitive skill", and "rote learning". It seemed that Duc had a "deeper" and "larger" understanding of ways of learning language compared to what he used to believe at the start.

The next difference between the first and second interviews was his evaluation of his learning preferences. He did not expect to work individually at the start, but at the end he argued that "sometimes we need to work alone to concentrate" in activities such as reading and writing. He used to think that entertainment activities were helpful because of one reason that they helped to create a relaxed atmosphere in class. After the course, he found that games were not only for relaxation and fun as he used to think; they also helped the lessons

be more effective, more comfortable. In the same way, at the beginning he argued that a learner's central duty was learning, so learning vocabulary/grammar was more important than making use of them, but in the interview after the course, he noted that both declarative and procedural knowledge were equally important. He explained:

[I'm a learner, I'm learning so it is very important to have knowledge comes into the mind. However, when we have had knowledge, if I don't practice, these knowledge will be forgotten soon. I must practice immediately and regularly after that, so both of learning and using are extremely important]

“Đi học mà nạp được kiến thức vô đầu là quan trọng nhất, vì mình đang đi học. Khi có kiến thức rồi mà không làm gì cả sẽ quên. Mình phải thực hành sử dụng, vậy nên cả hai đều cực kỳ quan trọng” (Duc/2<sup>nd</sup>Rep).

In addition, at the end of the course, Duc started to realize the role of contextualizing the use of language knowledge in learning. When comparing this way with rote learning, he argued:

[For rote learning dialogues, this is a way by which we just can remember the dialogues we learn, but not the others. So it is more helpful to learn vocabulary and grammar, then use them as we want in different contexts. It's a better way]

“Học thuộc lòng đoạn đối thoại thì mình học cái nào mình thuộc cái đó, chứ em nghĩ chỉ cần học từ vựng tốt, ngữ pháp tốt thì mình có thể tự ráp lại thành nội dung mình cần nói. Xây dựng cái nền như vậy thì sẽ tốt hơn là học thuộc lòng.” (Duc/2<sup>nd</sup>Rep)

Duc did not like role-play at the start, but then he realized that role-play was not simply reciting the given conversation as he used to do in public school; in this GE3 class role-plays were authentic situations in which he was given different roles and he could practice a lot of speaking without any content and linguistic control. Moreover, regarding the four language skills, at first, he believed that his knowledge of vocabulary/grammar was pretty good, and thus expressed a strong preference for practicing speaking and listening skills in the course. However, after the course his evaluation of other skills was more positive. For instance, at the end of the course, he noted that: "writing short passages helps us to practice skills such as

arranging vocabularies, arranging sentences, writing short passages". Besides, during the course when David gave him more advanced homework with grammar, he realized that he was not as good at grammar as he had thought, thus he decided that he must have more practice and must learn more advanced grammar.

What happened in the GE3 class affected Duc in the light that he had more reflective beliefs and more flexible preferences. Perhaps, these changes were due to his new experience of learning in a private school with an NT; at the start, his beliefs and preferences were mainly based on his experience of the learning ways in public school and his expectations.

#### **4.3.5 David's beliefs and practices in relation to his learners' beliefs and preferences**

David's perceptions of his individual learners and the whole class affected him strongly when he taught. A lot of what and how he taught was mainly based on his perceptions about the levels and the preferences of his learners. Believing that the learners expected to improve listening and speaking skills when coming to AMA, he gave them opportunities to practice the skills they expected. Besides, knowing that the learners would be happy and feel satisfied if they were corrected, he corrected them very often in class. As a native teacher, most of the correction, according to him, should go with the students' oral language and pronunciation mistakes which were what he thought the learners were expecting from an NT like him. He said:

"I try to follow their basic, I mean it depends on their weak points, but I think they come here, probably what they want is listening and speaking. I try to focus more on speaking skill, conversation, practice in conversational setting, and of course pronunciation." (David/Sti/10/02)

Due to the beliefs about the multi-levels and multi-styles of the learners, he often created different learning opportunities in order that every learner could participate. It could be inferred from his reasons that to motivate the learners, he should be patient with them and

appreciate any ideas and contributions to the lesson from every of them, and make them believe that they were learning something new in any lesson. When asked why he was calling volunteer learners to answer a question, he explained:

"There are always some students that want to participate more than everyone else, so it does help them a chance to participate, so I give them an option to do so. As in my classes, there are always some students want to participate and they actually participated more as you see. It's just one option, it's to motivate them, but if no one volunteers, I will give the extra time to think. Unfortunately, this class does not make much volunteer, I prefer volunteer, but I want the students really involved and really motivated" (David/Sti/29/11).

To motivate the learners, in his lessons, he often used quick games at the start or the end of the lessons as he thought that they liked games and it would be more beneficial to study in a low-stressful class. He seemed to be a very considerate teacher who understood what his learners were expecting when coming to a private school. He said:

"One of the problems we have with these classes, they start at 5:30 PM and the students... after work and rush out with the traffic, so you need to keep them excited. Every teacher here need to do this, 5: 30 is not the best time to learn. You should have some kinds of fun activity in 5 or 10 minutes, at the beginning, or at the end, or both. Do something fun, a large memory in the class if they do something fun, so just try to encourage" (David/Sti/30/12).

One more example for his consideration for and understanding of his Vietnamese learners is that he often reviewed old lessons in class; in his reason:

"It is important to review when you learn a language. Probably many students don't review regularly; it's only until the test they review... They forget everything ... most of them don't remember because they do not review, they do not study at home. It's why in my class I often say review, review, practice, practice" (David/Sti/7/12)

As discussed, David spent a lot of his free time at home to read and correct his learners' homework, and then in the next lesson, he discussed individually with them about their errors in the break time, and prepared more homework for them. It was likely that he checked homework and gave new homework in every class. While giving homework seemed to be the result of his beliefs about learning activities and the roles of learners in language learning,



checking homework regularly was likely his situated solution for what he perceived about the learning habits and styles of his learners. He explained that because Vietnamese learners were not very autonomous, they needed more guidance and control from the teacher. For instance, he noted:

"I need to go from student to student because a lot of the students don't do homework every night so I keep asking them to do all homework again and again. I do not ask students to submit the homework next time, they can do it a week later, but I think it's good to review those stuffs before we move on."  
(David/Sti/7/12)

His choices of homework depended very much on how he perceived his learner's weak points and needs; for instance, when asked why he chose a supplementary material to practice the final sound /θ/ in English, he explained:

"I know as I've been teaching them quite long now. It's not what I learned from the training but I taught Vietnamese students and realized. ... Another sound they get confused is final /s/. I use this activity because this is their common problem. I'm learning Vietnamese myself now, I know that /th/ in Vietnamese is different from /θ/ in English, I have difficulty myself with this Vietnamese sound."  
(David/Sti/17/12)

His experience with Vietnamese learners, according to him, helped him a lot in terms of teaching strategies. For example, before his learners prepared for a conversation, he taught them strategies to make the conversation better; to give a reason for this, he argued that:

"When you give them the questions they just give short answers, you know, a lot of time they just answer the questions but they don't make conversations, that's why I ask them to do that. I want them to know that is starting point for conversations and they need to talk more about this, rather than just give short answers" (David/Sti/23/11).

Last but not least, it could be observed that David was a very dedicated teacher, when he was teaching, he seldom sat at the teacher's desk but often went around the class to come as close to the learners as possible. He believed that talking with teacher was what the learners wanted and different individual learners always had different problems with English, so only

when he worked individually with them, could he understand their problems, tell them where the problems were, and help them to correct. In such a case, he explained that:

"I want to make sure that they get a lot of chances to speak with partners because I'm sure that they don't have many opportunities speaking English outside the class. And they need to practice so I give them a chance, I go around and help them with the problems to improve their speaking, so usually I try to add something like that in the class just 10 or fifteen minutes for the conversations to take place" (David/Sti/23/11).

Consequently, like Diana in the GE1 class, within a short course, it was not clear how David's beliefs were affected by the learners' beliefs and preferences in the course, but his teaching practices seemed to be guided closely by his interpretation of what the learners believed and preferred.

#### **4.4. Conclusion of the chapter**

This chapter presented the findings of my study. The beliefs of the teachers and the learners were described, summarized, and related to their classroom actions to answer the four research questions. The main findings could be summarized as below.

Each learner in my study had a different belief system about language learning (see table 7 and table 14). This unique system seemed to be derived from their learning experience and knowledge. Most of the beliefs of the two learners were similar and the beliefs collected from each of them could be grouped into three categories of beliefs about the goals of learning, the nature of language learning, and learning activities. It seemed that their beliefs were very close to the principles of CLT. Based on the similar beliefs of the two learners, both of them could be described as below:

- They strongly believed that language should be learned for communication purposes, and the most practical skills for communication were listening and speaking.

- They strongly appreciated the value of accuracy in using language, and thus they believed that grammar and vocabulary were the foundation in language learning.
- They strongly believed that using English as a native speaker was the learning goal, and this goal could be achieved; and the most effective way was learning English with a NT.
- Although they could not explain well why, especially in relation to fluency, meaningfulness, and accuracy, and to the inherent value of output for language acquisition, they both believed that classroom activities were most effective when they were interactive, free, relaxed, and related to real-life.
- In their belief systems, the 'goals of language learning' seemed to be more central and determined other beliefs in the system, their expectations, and learning preferences.
- Their beliefs seemed to reflect their identities in the sense that they were EFL learners who were very experienced in learning English in public schools, and were not satisfied with their results, so they came to private school with very high expectations that the beliefs above could be fulfilled. Many beliefs in their belief system were closed to learning preferences, and some of them were unexplainable. Besides, their identities were also reflected in the way they acted in class such as how they evaluated themselves in terms of competences compared to their classmates, how they saw the suitability of the teachers' practices for them, and how they chose their preferred partners.
- They were both satisfied with their teachers. However, when what and how the teachers taught differed from what they preferred, they questioned the suitability of the class for themselves and would be less active and motivated and seek more self-study as a supporting strategy.
- The learners' learning beliefs, learning preferences, and expectations were affected by what and how their teachers taught in the classes. After the course, the learners' beliefs about some learning activities and their learning preferences were changed and became

clearer and more convincing; and they started to recognize the benefits of different ways of learning English.

Meanwhile, the findings showed that the beliefs from both of the teachers could be put into four clusters. As summarized in table 8 and table 15, the four clusters that emerged in the teachers' LLB systems were beliefs about the goals of learning, the nature of language learning, learning activities, and beliefs about learners' characteristics and the roles of an NT in AMA. Diana and David had a number of beliefs in common. From these common beliefs, it could be interpreted that:

- Both of the NTs believed strongly in the benefits of CLT. They both believed that language was for communication and thus, the goal of learning was to learn it for communication purpose.
- The teachers strongly shared the beliefs that vocabulary and grammar were the foundation of learning, and that speaking and listening were the most practical skills needed to be practiced.
- Besides, they highly valued the goal of gaining a good pronunciation of English. Good pronunciation, in their view, did not mean standard voice or native-like pronunciation but "correct pronunciation".
- They both believed that language should be learned in a relaxed, non-stressful environment.
- In the belief system of each teacher, although there were a lot of overlaps and intercorrelations between beliefs within each group and among the groups, there were some more important beliefs that seemed to cause a stronger influence, and affected and determined other beliefs and actions more clearly. The most central beliefs seemed to be

the belief that language should be learned for communication (in the cluster ‘goal of language learning’) and beliefs in the cluster ‘learners’ characteristics and the roles of NT’.

- Their beliefs seemed to reflect their identity in the sense that they were NTs teaching in a private EFL institution; they knew what the learners were expecting from them, their strengths of being a native English-speaking teacher, and their duty to please the different learning needs, preferences, and levels. Contrary to their learners, most of their beliefs were reflective and explainable and related closely to the theory and practice of English teaching pedagogy. Thus, the teachers tended to believe in different ways of teaching and learning and their actions were highly situated in the class they were teaching.

Within a course of 15 weeks, there was no clear evidence for any changes in the teachers’ belief system as a result of teaching the classes. This may be because, as stated, the teachers seemed to believe strongly in the benefits of different ways of learning; their teaching was based on their nature, knowledge, experience, and how they perceived different individuals and different groups of learners rather than any particular learner in the class. Nevertheless, the findings showed that the teachers’ perception of their learners’ expectations, learning styles, and levels strongly affected what and how they taught. The effects of learners’ beliefs on their teachers’ beliefs may take a longer period of time to emerge; within the length of a course, these influences seemed not to be clear and convincing.

In conclusion, the results showed that beliefs about language learning strongly affected the participants’ preferred ways of teaching and learning and there were tight matches between the teachers’ beliefs and actions in class. The participants’ beliefs were strongly influenced by their learning/teaching experience, expectations, preferences, attitudes to

language learning, and their identities. Although most of the beliefs in their belief system were similar, there were some beliefs that presented in either teacher's belief system or learner's belief system. Hence, there were some mismatches but they were not really contradictory; the mismatches were just simply different beliefs generated from different people. There were influences of beliefs of the teachers and learners on each other, they were not direct influences but through what they did while teaching and learning. However, the influences from the teacher were much clearer.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

As the results showed, while the beliefs collected from each learner could be grouped into three categories of beliefs about the goals of learning, the nature of language learning, and learning activities, the belief system of each teacher contained these three categories and one more category of beliefs relating to language learners' characteristics and the roles of NT. This way of grouping differs much from other categories of LLBs in the literature such as in the BALLI (Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Kern, 1995; Yang, 1992) or the categories of Cotterall (1995, 1999) and Yang (1999). Firstly, they were the categories that emerged directly from my qualitative data, without any forced choice or pre-notion of LLBs. Secondly, although there were categories, the purpose was not to categorise or classify the beliefs but to find relationships among them and to build up belief systems. More important, the categories of beliefs of the teachers and the learners were not similar, and neither were the number and the content of beliefs in each category. This reflects the nature of each belief system, the complex relationships among beliefs in each belief system and the relations between individual's beliefs and his/her own experience, knowledge, value, attitude, and identity as discussed in the literature review. As a result, contrary to the other research studies in LLBs, this approach supported the researcher in identifying the *blind* beliefs and the *reasoned* beliefs; and this also allowed him to suggest what the more central beliefs and the more peripheral beliefs seemed to be in the participants' belief systems.

In this chapter, the discussions and conclusions are presented by relating the findings in chapter 4 to the theoretical framework and the literature of LLBs. These are presented in the order of the issues raised in the research questions.

### **5.1. Learners' beliefs and learning preferences**

As predicted by theories of the nature of beliefs and belief systems, the beliefs about language learning of the learners related in a complex way to each other in their belief systems. In other words, from the ways they influenced learning preferences, it could be suggested that there were intercorrelations among different beliefs within each belief system. For instance, in the case of Duc, when he explained why he had to take more self-study at home, the belief that "practice makes perfect" seemed to relate strongly to the belief that "students must be responsible for their learning". In the case of Thao, when explaining why he must talk to other people to learn English and why he wanted to practice skills and learn new vocabulary/grammar at the same time, the following four beliefs appeared to have a causal relationship: "both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are important for mastering a language", "vocabulary and grammar are the foundation", "interaction is a crucial condition", and "speaking and listening are the most practical skills". In this complex relationship, as discussed in the literature review about the structure of a belief system, some beliefs emerged as more central and more important as it was likely that they were more influential compared to other beliefs. The core beliefs in the two learners' belief systems seemed to be beliefs about the goal of language learning: "to learn for communication", "to use it accurately", and "to have a native-like pronunciation of it". For example, their belief about the communication goal of language learning is suggested to be the cause of other beliefs such as "speaking and listening are the most practical skills", "classroom activities should be communicative and interactive", and "interaction is a crucial condition to learn a language". Their belief about the goal of accurate use may determine the belief "exposing to good model language is beneficial for learning" and the belief "learning is gaining a lot of vocabulary/grammar". Their belief about the goal of gaining native pronunciation may make



them believe that "exposure to good models of language is a crucial condition" and that "studying with NTs will improve speaking and listening skills".

In addition, some beliefs in their belief systems were contradictory. Thao believed that working with the written tasks as in translating between two languages was helpful for his communication ability, but at the same time, he also believed that interaction was crucial for language learning. In the case of Duc, he believed that learning should not be stressful but should also be challenging, and the belief about the goal of using language accurately may contradict the belief that "errors are good for learning". Both of them believed that "vocabulary/grammar is the most important"; however, they also believed strongly in the role of interactive, productive activities.

The literature review has shown that beliefs can be blind and unreasoned, or they can be results of tutoring and reflecting on experience. Noticeably, some beliefs in the learners' belief system were more "blind" or less reflective than the other beliefs, especially the beliefs in the learning activities cluster. For these beliefs, the learners could not give well-grounded arguments. On the first sight, these beliefs were more likely to be framed as suggestions or preferences such as "classroom activities should be varied and interesting", "free activities are more beneficial than the controlled ones", or "learning activities should be personalized". However, it was hard to group them as preferences as they were drawn from their underlying reasons and explanations for the preferred learning activities.

As suggested by the literature, in my study, learners' beliefs strongly affected how and what they wanted to learn, as well as their attitudes to and expectations of classroom activities and the teachers of the classes. For example, because they believed that language should be learned for communication purposes, they liked listening and speaking most in the class; they preferred it if there were practical activities that related closely to real-life

contexts. They explained that in such an activity, they could use language freely to express what they wanted. Then, due to the belief about the value of interacting with an NT, they preferred working with their teachers rather than working with their friends; they were very enthusiastic about seeking opportunities to talk with their teachers, and listened carefully and repeated happily whenever the teachers corrected them. Another example was that, as they did not believe much in the benefit of rote learning, they did not want to apply rote learning in class.

The literature has shown that language learners can make decisions and choose their own ways of learning to achieve their goals (Allwright, 1984b; Woods, 1997). Sometimes, the learners in my study mis-interpreted their teachers' instruction or their implicit purposes for activities in class, but they still got along well with the activities with their own beliefs, preferences, and attitudes towards the activities. For instance, while Diana was trying to teach paraphrasing and using possessives, Thao liked the activity as he thought that Diana was teaching new vocabulary, and that she was teaching vocabulary because vocabulary was important, the input of knowledge, and the basis of learning. In another case, while Diana's purpose was to teach short answers to the question "when were you born?", Thao was busy practicing how to say the year in English because he said that he needed to practice how to say large numbers more. Another time, while Diana was teaching strategies to talk about money, Thao preferred it as he could practice saying numbers. With Duc and David, while the teacher was trying to create a real context, assigning learners' roles so that they could practice communicative skills, Duc did not recognize these purposes, instead, he took part in the activities eagerly as he simply believed that he was playing an exciting game in class, and he thought that David was using the game as it was good for learning in terms of creating a non-stressful environment.

As discussed in the literature review, there are relationships between learners' beliefs and their *expectations* (McCargar, 1993; Kalaja, 2003; Horwitz, 1988; White, 1999), *learning preferences* (Barkhuizen, 1998; Peacock, 1998a) and *learning strategies* (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Riley, 1997; Yang, 1999; Victori & Lockhart, 1995). The results of my study suggested that these relationships were not direct but were formed in a very complex process. As can be observed in table 7 (page 93) and table 14 (page 128), one particular belief could cause different learning preferences, and a particular preferred way of learning could be the result of different beliefs. For example, the belief that language should be learned communicatively caused learners to have a variety of preferences such as speaking and listening activities, learning with material outside the course book, working with topic/content related to personal needs/demands, and pair/group work. The belief in the benefit of exposure to a good model of language caused a range of preferences, from learning with an NT and learning grammar/vocabulary to doing homework. Conversely, both of the learners liked group/pair work, but this preference may be the result of beliefs about the communicative goal of learning, the roles of listening and speaking skills, or the importance of interaction in class. These made the relationships between different beliefs and between beliefs and learning preferences in their belief systems more complicated.

Interestingly, although the learners had spent many years learning English in public schools, their beliefs and preferred ways of learning were closer to Communicative Language Teaching, not the Grammar Translation Method. In each of their belief systems there were many beliefs such as "language should be learned for communication", "interaction is necessary in learning", "language should be used to communicate in a lesson", "speaking and listening are the two most important skills", "learners should be confident", "errors are good for learning", "free activities and integrative activities are more beneficial", "vocabulary

should be learned with realia", and "learning should be interesting and low-stressful", etc. In contrast, beliefs relating to Grammar Translation principles were much fewer with just some beliefs such as "using language accurately is a goal of learning", "learning is gaining a lot of vocabulary/grammar", or "the translating skill is important in using language". This finding seems to contradict Rokeach's (1968) pattern of belief system with five types of beliefs varying in depth and arranged from the most central to the most peripheral. In Rokeach's belief system, Type A or Primitive beliefs are beliefs with 100 percent consensus; they are the most central beliefs that are learned by direct encounter with the object of beliefs, reinforced by a unanimous social consensus. They are the strongest beliefs that can determine other outside beliefs and are very difficult to change. In my study, the learners had spent at least 6 years studying English as a compulsory subject in public schools with Vietnamese teachers using a traditional method. They had direct and long encounters with methods that, in their thought, did not work for them. Meanwhile, learning in a private school with NTs and more communicative ways of learning was totally new for them. Before coming to private school, CLT was something that they never had any direct encounter with. What they could say about CLT might be just what they could read from the newspaper or had heard from other people. Nevertheless, their beliefs about CLT seemed to be very strong and they had high expectations of it. Consequently, Rokeach's (1968) definition of "Type A: Primitive beliefs" as "the most central beliefs that are learned by **DIRECT** encounter with the object of beliefs **AND** reinforced by an unanimous social consensus" when applied to LLBs with EFL learners may better be changed to: *the most central beliefs that are learned by **DIRECT/INDIRECT** encounter with the teaching and learning method, **AND/OR** reinforced by an unanimous consensus of the society.*

In summary, the learners had many beliefs about the goal, the nature of language learning, and value/benefits of some learning activities. These beliefs formed a complicated belief system; in this system, there were interrelations between beliefs and some beliefs appeared to play a more central and decisive role compared to other beliefs. Besides, these beliefs affected the learners' learning preferences, attitudes, and expectations in a complex way.

## **5.2. Teachers' beliefs and teaching practices**

As predicted by the literature, each teacher in my study had a different belief system of language learning; this unique system was the result of their learning, training, teaching experience, and their identity as NTs of English.

Diana admitted that becoming a teacher was her dream, and she noted that teaching was in her nature and the inspiration, motivation, creation, ideas, and energy for teaching came from this nature inside her. Besides this, she admitted that she learned a lot of teaching skills, techniques, and practices from her intensive teacher training course. Diana claimed that her teaching was the combination of these resources. Diana insisted on the important role of an NT for the learners because of her native identity, and explained that the learners needed her because they grew up in a Vietnamese environment, and interacting with an NT was what they paid money for. Meanwhile, David often related his reasons to his FL learning experience. He studied three different foreign languages in his homeland and he was also learning Vietnamese in Vietnam, so he expressed a number of LLBs in relation to his own learning experiences with these languages. It was likely that because of this background, an important goal of learning English, according to David, was to use it accurately. In terms of teaching experience, in the interviews, he revealed that the CELTA course had been useful

and had equipped him with theories underlying teaching and learning a language, but his teaching experience during the last 2 years in Vietnam was the real and most helpful practical training for him. He admitted that from teaching he had learned a lot about Vietnamese students' habits, strengths, and weaknesses. Generally, while Diana appeared to be an NT who had a natural teaching ability, David came across as an NT who was experienced in FL learning. Consequently, while Diana's beliefs appeared to be affected more strongly by her interests, the CELTA training course, and her identity as an NT, most of David's beliefs came from his learning and teaching experience. As a result, this study suggests that the influence of language learning experience, teacher training course(s), teaching experience, and identity on beliefs and actions are different for different teachers.

A belief system is defined in the literature as a structure where beliefs are organized along a central-peripheral dimension; the more central a belief is, the stronger it can affect other beliefs in the system (Kane *et al.*, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). Hence, based on how the teacher explained and related their reasons in the interview, in the teachers' belief systems in my study, the beliefs "language should be learned for communication" seemed to be more central and might affect other beliefs in the system, such as "interaction is crucial for learning", "both language declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are important", "culture is a part of language learning", "classroom activities should be communicative and authentic", or "rote learning is just beneficial for learning grammar and vocabulary". Meanwhile, the beliefs relating to learners' characteristics and the roles of NTs were more central and influential than the beliefs about learning activities in class. Moreover, the beliefs relating to learners' characteristics and the roles of NTs appeared to relate strongly to their identity as teachers teaching in a private school. Their awareness of differences in learning styles, needs, expectations, and competences and their roles as native teachers in fulfilling

these preferences, needs, and expectations identified them as teachers teaching English in a private institution. While the learners' beliefs and preferred ways of learning tended to benefit their own individual learning, the teachers' beliefs and ways of teaching seemed to serve and be affected by the learning goals of the whole class and to satisfy different styles, levels, and needs of the learners in a class and, as they claimed, in different classes. Besides, contrary to the learners, the teachers' belief systems allowed them to see the benefits of different ways of learning. These characteristics make the belief systems of the teacher and the learners clearly different. These findings may be explained by the Discourse Community Theory (Killingsworth, 1992; Ovens, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000), which says that the learners' beliefs come mainly from their learning experience, their goals, and expectations (Claxton, 1996), but the teachers form their beliefs from personal learning, teaching experience, and knowledge from their pedagogical training courses (Borg, 2006).

As discussed in section 2.3.3, many scholars shared that a variety of contextual factors arising from both inside and outside a class can affect the teacher's actions while teaching (Borg, 2003; Borko & Shavelson, 1990; Burns, 1996; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Woods, 1996). In a private institution as in my study, however, the teachers' actions were determined mostly by their own beliefs (as discussed in section 4.2.4 and section 4.3.4) rather than by any social or institutional constraints. In the GE3 class, there was no mismatch between Diana's beliefs and her practices. It was just the gaps between the teacher's expectations of teaching English communicatively and the frequency of the communicative activities organized in her class. She was aware of these gaps and argued that they mainly came from the reality of the GE1 class as the learners were still beginners of English. Meanwhile, David's actions in class were also strongly matched with the beliefs in his belief system. Similar to Diana, David strongly believed that an NT must give learners

what they needed in learning and must please their different learning styles and speeds. It could be observed that David was able to do most of what he preferred to teach as the GE3 learners were better than the GE1 learners in Diana's class in terms of language competence. This finding suggests that the level of learners strongly affects whether a teacher can do as he/she states he/she wants to do or must do or not. Both of the teachers saw the benefits of different ways of learning, and thus what they did was more likely to be a combination and integration of different techniques, strategies, and methods rather than an adopting of a single method to teach their class. As the findings showed, their beliefs were highly situated in the context of the learners in their classrooms. From their perception of the learners' levels and expectations, the teachers used their beliefs to combine different ways of teaching for the best outcome.

The same as the students, based on the findings in chapter 4, the teachers' beliefs (see table 8 and table 15) strongly affected their ways of teaching, and these influences were rather complex. One particular belief could strongly affect some teaching preferences. For instance, As Diana believed that language should be learned in a relaxed, non-stressful environment, she stated teaching preferences such as many games, fun activities, interactive activities, and pre-activities/lead-in activities, and she also liked being a friendly, patient, considerate teacher. When David believed that speaking and listening were the most practical skills, he liked to focus on and spend more class time on speaking and listening activities, to use interactive activities, and to teach in a small class. While one belief could determine different teaching preferences, any one particular preference could be the result of different beliefs in the belief system. For instance, when David varied his teaching activities, it could be the result of believing that "learners learn with different styles, or different speed, or are at different levels", or that "all skills are important". When he gave learners homework



regularly, he might have believed that "practice makes perfect", or that "learners must be active/autonomous". With Diana, when she asked her learners to work in pairs or groups, it could have been because she believed in the value of interaction. But at the same time, it was also possible that she believed that working in pairs was a way of practicing autonomy in learning.

In conclusion, the teachers believed in the benefits of different ways of teaching and learning. In the belief systems of the teachers, the beliefs relating to the communicative goals of learning, about the learners' characteristics, and about the teachers' roles as native speakers appeared to be the most influential. In such a private context as in my study, it was likely that the contextual constraints identified in the literature review did not affect the teachers' action much. Instead, the teachers' beliefs strongly affected what and how they taught the learners. Their beliefs were highly situated to their classes and their teaching was not only affected by the whole class, but was also influenced by different individual learners in the class.

### **5.3. How and the extent to which learning experience with the particular teacher influence the learner's beliefs**

A number of studies in the literature relating teachers' to students' beliefs often reveal the same sets of beliefs or preferences of the participants (Davis, 2003; Kern, 1995; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Peacock, 1998a, 1998b, 2001). This study, however, reveals both similar and different beliefs in terms of their content and these similarities and differences strongly affected the students during the fifteen weeks of the GE1 and GE3 courses. As predicted by the literature, matches or mismatches of beliefs and practices determined how the students got along with the learning activities, their confidence and satisfaction with the

class, their attitudes and perceptions about their teachers and the school, and their self-efficacy. Although there were some different beliefs, the beliefs in the belief systems of the teachers and the learners were not really mismatched or contradictory. More importantly, the likely central and influential beliefs of the participants were similar. For example, as shown in tables 6 and 13, and tables 7 and 14, they shared that "language should be learned for communication purposes", "listening and speaking are the two most important skills", and that "grammar and vocabulary are the foundation". These beliefs related strongly with other beliefs in the teachers' belief systems and affected their actions in class. As a result, the learners were highly satisfied with their classes for the opportunities to learn the language and to practice using it in class in the ways they expected. Moreover, as suggested in the literature, the value of learning with a native teacher, practicing speaking with them, being corrected by them, and gaining a model of native language use were embedded tightly in the mind of learners. They highly evaluated the NTs for their native-like accent and native language. Therefore, the two learners both noted that they had chosen the right class and the right place to improve their English.

While Riley (2009) suggested that a teacher's beliefs can influence those of the students explicitly when the teacher expresses his/her beliefs, or implicitly through his/her chosen methods and activities. The findings of this study showed that there were influences of the teachers' beliefs and actions on the learners' beliefs. However, these influences were not direct as the teachers never stated or explained explicitly how a language must be learned to their learners. It was suggested in the literature review that the teachers' beliefs were performed implicitly through their ways of teaching, and in their turn, these ways of teaching affected the learners' beliefs. "Affect" here means doing, behaving, or stating something differently due to a teacher's beliefs and/or teaching actions. Horwitz (1988) noted that

teachers are always viewed as "experts" by students, and thus what and how teachers teach can convey implicit messages to students and can be perceived by learners as appropriate ways of learning; Elbaum *et al.*, 1993; Kern, 1995). The findings showed that even when there was a mismatch between the learners' beliefs and preferences and the teaching practices, the learners still did the activities and explained that this was because they were the tasks teachers asked them to do. If they then could realize that the activities were helpful, they would gradually change their attitude towards them. Otherwise, if they could not see any benefit in the teacher's methods but the activities were still used in class, this would reinforce their negative attitudes towards the activities, and cause them to see the activities as unproductive ways of learning. In short, whether they liked it or not, or whether they had a more teacher-dependent style as Thao or a more autonomous style as Duc, in doing what the teachers asked them to do in class, the learners changed their learning preferences and their views about learning activities gradually. Hence, I suggest that it is not important whether the beliefs match or mismatch, but rather it is more important whether the teachers' ways of teaching match or mismatch the learners' beliefs, preferences, and expectations.

In the literature, a number of scholars noted that foreign language learners' perceptions were both positive and negative towards NNTs and NTs (Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Ferguson, 2005; Moussu, 2006; Rao, 2010; Scheuer, 2008; Timmis, 2002; Van den Doel, 2006). These studies, however, did not consider the evolution of these perceptions. In other words, the literature seemed to focus only on the product while the process of these beliefs was almost neglected. The learners in this study did not have any learning experience with NTs before the courses; they started the courses with beliefs and expectations derived from a long time studying with their NNTs in public schools in an EFL context. They were not satisfied with their results and decided to make a change by studying with NTs. When the GE1 and GE3

courses came to an end, although both of the students were satisfied with the courses and wanted to take part in the next levels, they started to realize that the NTs and studying at a private school did not give them everything they had expected, and many learning activities taught by their NNTs were not as unproductive as they used to believe. Therefore, by investigating the evolution of the learners' beliefs during the courses, this study suggests that before a learner has clear positive and negative beliefs towards NNTs and NTs as suggested in the literature review in section 2.3.6, there would be a period in which those beliefs were unexplainable and very close to learning preferences. At the end, Thao and Duc had a greater ability to reflect on their beliefs; they had clearer views about language learning and teaching and generated more convincing reasons relating to CLT principles in arguing for what they preferred or not in class. Consequently, while Kern (1995) noted that students tend to change their beliefs towards their teacher's beliefs, based on the findings, this study suggests that it may partly because the more they learn, the more they understand about the nature of language learning and the learning activities organized by the teacher, and the benefit of different ways of learning in different contexts.

#### **5.4. How and the extent to which the teachers' beliefs about learners influence their classroom teaching.**

As reviewed in the literature, a number of research studies have investigated teachers' practices, decision-making, and knowledge due to their teaching experience, and the changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs due to training. Most of the studies report these less immediate factors behind language teachers' decisions, while the impacts from their learners seem to be neglected. Barcelos (2000), in her ethnography study, tried to relate beliefs and actions of the teachers and the learners. However, she suggested at the end that it was hard to

know how the teachers' beliefs had been affected because of two reasons: (1) the teachers did not know the students' beliefs; they just interpreted through the learners' actions, and (2) the learner participants were not the most influential ones in the class. In this study, while it was also not clear how the teachers' beliefs were affected, it was obvious that how and what they taught was shaped by the learners in their classes. However, contrary to Barcelos's (2000) second reason, the teachers in this study did not think that there was any particular student that influenced them more in class, but it was the whole class that affected them more while planning and teaching and they saw every individual learner as the same in terms of influence. In fact, whenever doing something with a particular learner, such as calling for answers, asking for volunteers, or nominating a student for a model or demonstration, Diana and David always used their own perception about that learner's language competence and/or learning styles and preferences. However, their actions were based more on the goals for the benefit of the whole class than the benefit of any particular learner. The summary of the COLT result also showed that there were very few times in class when the teachers used a combination of group and individual work in one activity, or different tasks for different groups/learners (table 12 and table 17). However, they admitted that their teaching actions were attempts to create an environment in which learning opportunities could be distributed equally to everyone so that all of them could see the benefits of going to class. For example, perceiving that the class is less confident (GE1 class), or more quiet and less volunteering (GE3 class) than the other classes at the same levels, when using similar activities and procedures, the teachers adapted lengths of time, structures of activities, and teacher's instructions.

Barcelos (2000) concluded that the teachers in her study did not know the students' beliefs; they just interpreted the beliefs through their learners' actions. As Barcelos (2000)

did not differentiate the two concepts of beliefs and learning preferences, based on the findings of this study it is probably more true to say that a teacher interprets not *learners' beliefs* but their *learning preferences* and *expectations* and acts accordingly. In an institution where there were no constraints of physical layout of the class, class-size, prescribed curriculum, time, high-stakes examinations, and influences of parents, schools, and governments, there were strong impacts of the learners' preferences and expectations on what and how the teacher taught. It is also worth noting that the connector for these impacts was the teachers' beliefs about their roles to satisfy these needs and expectations and about the benefits of different ways of learning. Unfortunately, due to these beliefs, how the learners' beliefs and preferred ways of learning had affected their teachers' beliefs in a short course was really hard to answer. This kind of influence may take a longer time; it may explain why a number of studies could identify the differences in beliefs and practices of pre-service/student teachers and experienced teachers (Calderhead, 1981, 1983; Clark & Peterson, 1978; Johnson, 2003; Golombek, 1998; Nunan, 1992; Richards, 1998; Richards *et al.*, 1998; Tsui, 2003). In this study, there were some examples of such long impacts; for instance, the two teachers had reinforced their beliefs about some characteristics of the GE classes as well as Vietnamese learners after extensive contact with them in teaching. David noted that "Vietnamese learners often speak and write with structures that do not work in English"; he also shared with Diana a strong belief that pronouncing correctly was an important goal of Vietnamese learners as they had been learning English with NNTs in EFL setting for many years, and thus they had many problems with their pronunciation. How their beliefs were affected after a short course, however, was not clear.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### **6.1. Conclusion**

From the findings and their relations with the literature, it can be concluded that each person has a unique and complex system of LLBs that develops from their own experiences, knowledge, and identities. Learners' beliefs strongly affect their learning preferences and expectations. If the more central beliefs in the learners' belief systems are similar to those of the teacher in the class, these matches will be the preliminary conditions for them to get along well with their teacher during the courses. The study shows that what and how a teacher teaches in a course can make changes to the structure of a learner's beliefs and his/her learning preferences. The study also suggests that teachers tend to believe in different ways of teaching and learning and their beliefs and practices are highly situated in the classes they are teaching. Their beliefs strongly affect their actions without any external constraints except the learners' linguistic competence and their interpretation of the learners' preferences and expectations.

### **6.2. Implications of the study**

#### **6.2.1. Implications of the study to practice**

The study focused on the context of AMA - a PES in Vietnam, where the learners were not satisfied with learning in their public schools and came to the school with high expectations and no previous experience in learning English with a NT or in a private class. At the same time, there was a great pressure for the NTs to please the learners' expectations, learning needs and styles while they did not have any personal experience in EFL learning. It

is important to take this context and the identities of the participants into account to see the complex relationships between their beliefs, preferences, and practices. Thus, this study will be a good reference for AMA and other private English schools in Vietnam. The findings suggest that after a long time studying English with traditional ways in public schools, most learners will have a strong desire to study English for communicative purposes. They believe strongly that to improve their communicative ability, they need to practice listening and speaking skills, and especially to learn with NTs. In Vietnamese EFL learners' beliefs, a native-like model of language is their goal in learning and interacting with an NT is beneficial in developing speaking skills. However, they also expect to gain more lexis and structures as they believe that grammar and vocabulary are always the foundation of a language. Besides, they prefer to study in a relaxed, friendly, and non-stressful atmosphere. When studying in the course, it is likely that most learners want to see the immediate positive effects of the courses on their progress. They need to see, as soon as possible, that they are more confident when speaking English, and that they can express more of their thoughts and understand more when listening to English.

Therefore, private schools should focus more on these beliefs and expectations to be more competitive in their business of English education. It is necessary for private schools to understand these learning beliefs and expectations to design learning curricula and for the teachers to know what their learners want from them to adapt their teaching to please their learners. In this light, it is also hoped that the findings of this study can be universally available for EFL teachers to have a more in-depth awareness of the nature and effects of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and actions and students' beliefs, preferences, and expectations in their classes. As the findings showed, the learners could change their beliefs and learning preferences; they could see the benefits of different ways of teaching and



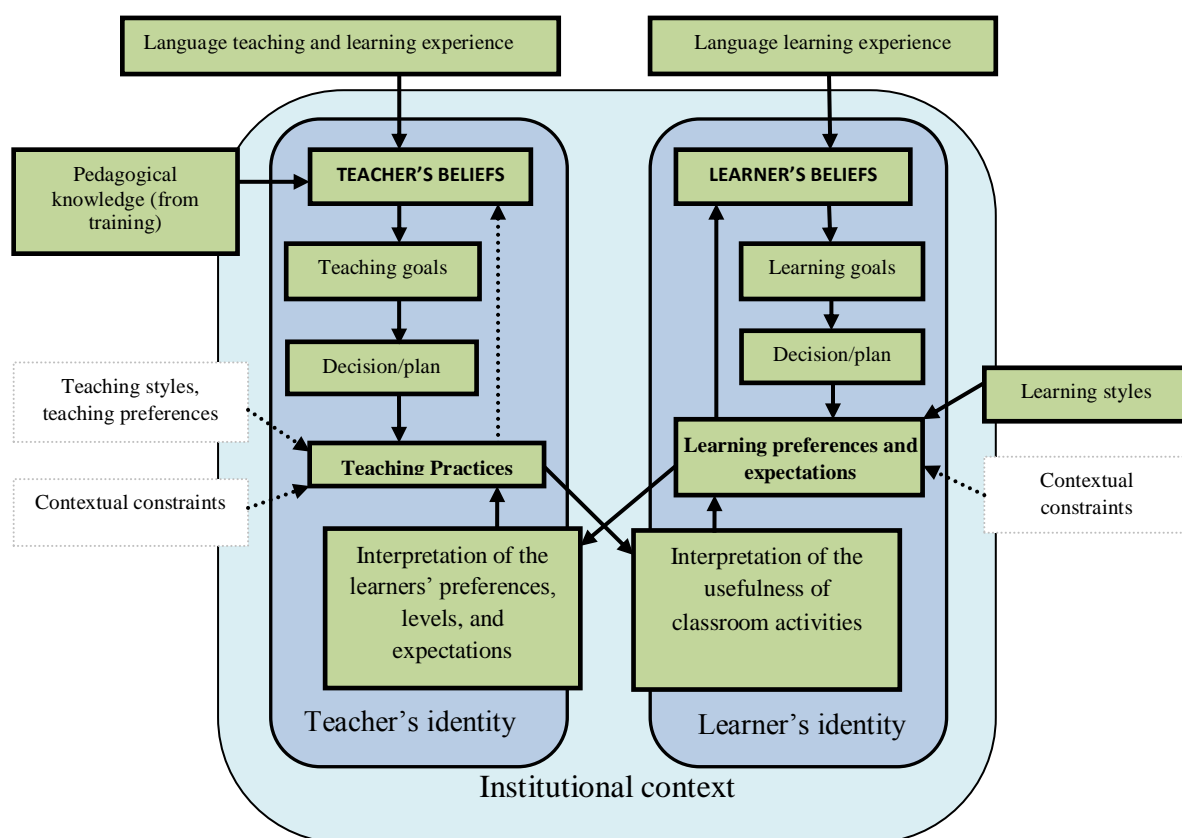
learning, different contexts of private and public schools, and different lessons taught by NTs and NNTs. Consequently, an EFL teacher, either a native or non-native one, may want to take advantage of this to motivate his/her learners and make them feel more confident in what and how he/she is teaching by stating explicitly the purposes and the nature of the learning activities he/she wants them to do.

Besides, while the benefits of learning in a PES are undeniable, the study also suggests that language learners should not undervalue the role of self-study and lessons in public schools as NTs are not able to bring them all of what they need. Last but not least, this study is also a good reference for public schools in Vietnam to know what the learners believe and expect. Although I never encourage the public schools to follow only the GT method or focus solely on teaching for tests, it is my advice that they should not underestimate the value of their current traditional ways of teaching.

#### **6.2.2. Implications of the study for the theory of LLBs**

The first implication of this study for the theory is the role of context, identity, and experience in understanding LLBs. Most of the previous studies have adopted a (post)positivist paradigm and quantitative methods, thus imposing many biases on the results, and as such were not able to get an emic view of beliefs and often mixed beliefs with learning/teaching preferences and expectations. Besides, the previous studies were mainly conducted in an ESL context and examined only the beliefs of learners or teachers. This empirical study contributes to the current literature by relating not only native English-speaking teachers' to learners' beliefs and preferences but also their beliefs with their on-going practices in a private school in an EFL context. The qualitative research methods of repertory grid interview, stimulated recall interview, and observation schedule to investigate

both stated beliefs and enacted beliefs, together with an attempt to identify both "reasoned" and "blind" beliefs and to suggest what the more central and peripheral beliefs were, thus helped to get a deeper, fuller, and more objective understanding of the beliefs of the teachers and learners.



**Figure 2:** The relations between a learner's beliefs, preferences, and expectations and a NT's beliefs and practices in a short course

Referring to the framework of relationships between teachers' and learners' LLBs posed in chapter 2, as shown in figure 2, the findings of this study suggest that teachers and learners beliefs are situated in the class and the institution where they are teaching and learning. In this particular teaching context, the relationship between teacher's beliefs and practices and learner's beliefs and preferences can be observed clearly. In regard to the teacher, what and

how a teacher teaches would neither reflect clearly his/her teaching styles nor be affected by the conventional constraints above. Instead, the practices are strongly shaped by his/her beliefs about language learning/teaching and their interpretations of the levels, learning preferences, and expectations of every learner in the class. Whatever his/her teaching styles and preferences are, the teacher tends to adapt his/her teaching to the styles, preferences, and expectations of their learners. Consequently, what and how learners deal with their learning in a class are often controlled and organized by the teacher. Regardless to kinds of activities and learning strategies a learner is taking part in, his/her preferences and expectations are shaped by his/her beliefs about learning, learning styles, and the teacher's practices. However, the influences of a teacher's practices are through the learner's interpretation of the usefulness of the classroom activities for him/her. Like the teacher, the conventional contextual constraints become less influential on how he/she learns a language compared to learning it in a public school. I have contributed evidence to bridge the gap in the literature on the relationships between learners' beliefs and teachers' beliefs and actions. My findings suggest that there are close relationships and strong mutual influences between a teacher's and a learner's beliefs; but they are not direct relationships and influences. Instead, there are influences through their actions and interpretations while teaching and learning. A teacher's beliefs guide his/her actions, and these actions will determine kinds of teaching/learning, and in turn, these practices will, through learner's interpretation, affect the learner's learning preferences and expectations. In this way of influence on how a learner learns and after an adequate given period of time, the learner's beliefs, preferences, and/or expectation in the class will be changed. I suggest that a teacher's beliefs might also change in this way due to his/her daily practices and interpretations. However, if the context is a short course and satisfying different learning preferences and expectations in a class appears to be important,

although there are immediate effects of the learners' beliefs and preferences on the teacher' practices, it will be hard to see any immediate change in the teacher's beliefs.

### **6.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research**

The latest studies into LLBs are still using mainly questionnaires (Fujiwara, 2011; Shinde and Karekatti, 2012), and investigating only learners' beliefs (Fujiwara, 2011) or only teachers'/pre-service teachers' beliefs (Li & Walsh, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011; Alexander, 2012), and study LLBs in ESL setting (Li, 2012). Wesely (2012) reviews the contemporary literature and argues that future research into LLBs should examine a variety of evidence, both observable and unobservable, about the learning of language. Additionally, Wesely (2012) was calling for more research to investigate LLBs in settings other than traditional university programs, and to examine the interplay between beliefs and teaching/learning environments. My study is thus timely. However, the significance of this study might be reduced by the following issues:

Firstly, without any comparative evidence I cannot say exactly to what extent the findings are limited to this particular context of teaching and learning, or are transferable. Next, the perception that going to a private school to study with an NT would help to improve fluency, pronunciation, and communicative competence naturally predisposed the learners attracted to this type of school to accept different ways of learning and teaching, so the teaching and learning in private schools had initial advantages to positively affect the learners' beliefs. These can be solved if there is research involving some different private language schools, or investigating learners studying in both public and private environments. Hence, inspired by the findings and with an eye to the next steps, the next problems for future investigation

should be a comparison between learners' and non-native teachers' or native teachers' beliefs and practice in both private and public schools.

Next, the intervention of research methods might also have some impact on the validity of the data. It is highly likely that the stimulated recall component had some influence on the participants' beliefs. Besides, as the literature advised, beliefs can be held unconsciously and a teacher may be unwilling to express any unpopular beliefs they hold, preferring to state beliefs viewed as socially desirable (Basturkmen *et al.*, 2004; Kagan, 1990). In addition, the "demand structure" of the situation may make the interviewee feel that he/she has to give a reason for his/her action while he/she has none or cannot remember or cannot define one, and if so, invention or generation may fill such demand (Freeman, 1991, 1994; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Norman, 1983). Even when the interviewee can define his/her thought, the quality of report is dependant considerably on their verbal skills and what vocabulary is available to them (Basturkmen *et al.*, 2004; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Kagan, 1990). Although these interventions are inevitable, future research needs to minimize the effect of these interventions more so that the data can be more valid, e.g. by taking an ethnographic approach.

#### **6.4. Final considerations**

Beliefs are context-specific and identity-related, and identity is a complex concept that is context-specific as well. There may be relations between a LLB system and other belief systems, and the other systems might have some impacts on what teachers and learners do and how they behave in and outside class.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO ELICIT ELEMENTS**  
**FOR THE REPGRID INTERVIEW**

- Rote learning vocabulary
- Translating short texts/sentences
- Doing grammatical exercises
- Listening to the teacher explaining grammatical rules
- Listening to classmates talking/giving oral presentations
- Listening to tapes/CD
- Listening to teachers' oral corrective feedback
- Memorising conversations/dialogues
- Taking part in role-plays
- Working in pairs
- Working in groups
- Taking part in whole-class discussions
- Giving individual oral presentations
- Giving group oral presentations
- Talking with the foreign teachers
- Reading texts silently in class and do follow-up exercises
- Reading texts out loud in class
- Writing short passages
- Teacher giving written feedback on student's written work
- Learners checking and giving feedback on other learners' work
- Learner taking part in language games/songs
- Watching video clips/ films in English



## **APPENDIX B**

### **OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE REPERTORY GRID**

(the questions are optional, it is not necessary to ask any subject all of the questions in the list)

#### **At the first stage:**

This is a set of the classroom activities we worked out previously.

- Would you please randomly take 3 different activities from your own set
- Among these three classroom activities, can you group two similar activities?
- Why are they similar to each other? Why is the other activity different?
- Are there other ways that they are similar to and/or different from each other? (optional: used when the constructs are repeated or not relevant)
- Do you mean that these two activities are similar because both of them are ... ? and the other activity is different because it is ... ? (To confirm/ help the subjects to generate the constructs)
- Thank you, can you choose another triad? (to start building other constructs).

#### **At the second stage: When all of the constructs are established:**

- Now on this pair of constructs you refer this side or that side? /why would you prefer to be here than there? /What are the advantages of this side in contrast to the disadvantages of that side as you see it?
- What are the reasons for your idea/argument/choice?

## APPENDIX C

### OPTIONAL QUESTIONS IN STIMULATED RECALL INTERVIEW

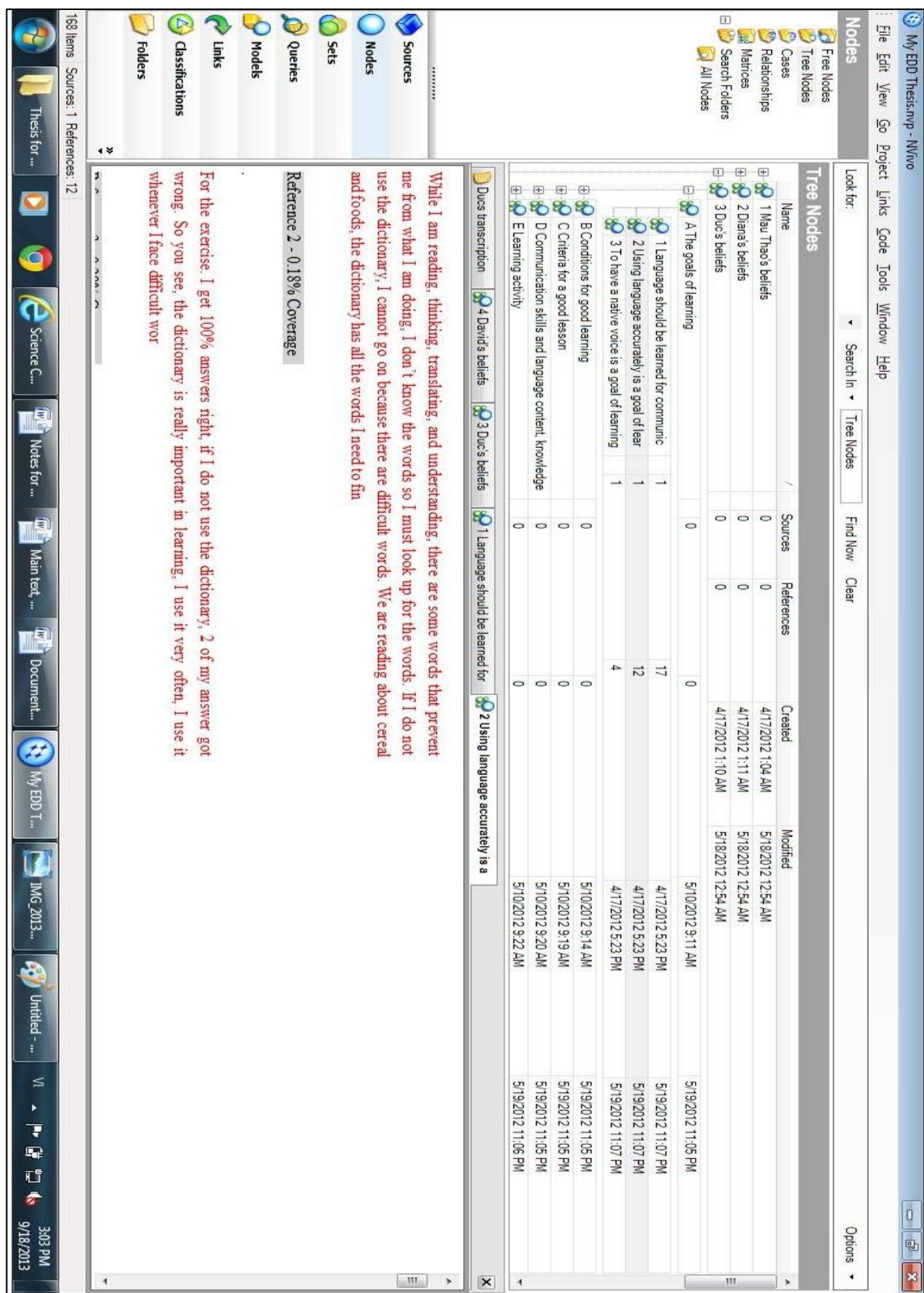
#### Questions for the teacher:

1. What were you doing here/at this point (not what you think about it now)? Was this your plan before the lesson?
2. Can you remember what you were thinking here? Why did you decide to do this?
3. Were you thinking of any alternative actions or strategies at that time?
4. What were you noticing about the students?
5. How were the students responding?
6. Did any student reactions cause you to act differently than you had planned?
7. Did you have any particular objectives in mind at this point? If so, what are they?
8. Do you remember any aspects of the situation that might have affected what you did?

#### Questions for the students:

1. What were you doing here/at this point?
2. Can you tell me what were you thinking at this point?
3. Why do you choose to do it that way? Is it the best way?
4. Were you considering any alternative activities or way of doing that activity in that time? If so, what are they?
5. Do you remember any aspects of the situation that might have affected what you did?
6. Do you use any self-study that you would/would not have done in your state schools? If yes, why?
7. Have you stopped performing certain previous practices? If yes, why?

APPENDIX D: A SCREENSHOT OF USING NVIVO 7 PACKAGE



## APPENDIX E

### COLT OBSERVATION SCHEME

Adapted from: Frohlich *et al.* (1985).

Part A describes classroom events at the level of episode and activity.

#### **Part A: Classroom Events**

##### **I. Activity**

Drill, translation, discussion, game, etc. (separate activities); alternatively, teacher introduces dialogue, teacher reads dialogue aloud, students repeat dialogue parts after teacher (three episodes of one activity), etc.

##### **II. Participant Organization**

This parameter describes three basic patterns of organization:

###### **A. Whole Class**

1. Teacher to student or class, and vice versa (One central activity led by the teacher is going on; the teacher interacts with the whole class and/or with individual students.)
2. Student to student, or student(s) to class (Students talk to each other, either as part of the lesson or as informal socializing; one central activity led by a student may be going on, e.g., a group of students act out a skit with the rest of the class as the audience.)
3. Choral work by students (The whole class or groups participate in the choral work, repeating a model provided by the textbook or teacher.)

###### **B. Group work**

###### **C. Individual seat work (Students work on their own, all on the same task or on different tasks.)**

###### **D. Group/individual work (Some students are involved in group work; others work on their own.)**

##### **III. Content**

###### **A. Explicit focus on language**

1. Form (explicit focus on grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation)
2. Function (explicit focus on illocutionary acts such as requesting, apologizing, and explaining)
3. Discourse (explicit focus on the way sentences combine into cohesive and coherent sequences)/Sociolinguistics (explicit focus on the features which make utterances appropriate for particular contexts)
4. Meaning (the communicative value of the message, the meaningful aspect of communication)

B. Other topics (the subject matter of classroom discourse, apart from management and explicit focus on language)

1. Narrow range of reference (the immediate classroom environment and to stereotyped exchanges such as "Good evening" or "How are you?" which have phatic value but little conceptual content.)
2. Limited range of reference (information beyond the classroom but still conceptually limited: movies, holidays, school topics such as extracurricular activities, and topics which relate to the students' immediate personal and family affairs, e.g., place of residence, number of brothers and sisters, and so on.)
3. Broad range of reference (Topics of broad range go well beyond the classroom and immediate environment and include reference to controversial public issues, world events, abstract ideas, reflective personal information, and other academic subject matter, such as math or geography.)

C. Topic control

1. The teacher selects the topic
2. The students select the topic

### **III. Student modality**

1. The students are listening: The listening time was coded with activities when the learner were listening to CD or to teacher's instructions and lectures, and other learners talking in pair/group works and giving presentation.
2. The students are speaking: speaking with the teacher or with partners.
3. The students are reading
4. The students are writing
5. Other activities as drawing, modelling, acting, or arranging classroom displays.

### **IV. Materials**

A. Origin of material

1. Supplied material (course book, workbook, CD)
2. Teacher's self-developed/supplementary material
3. Adapt the supplied material (change, add, remove)
4. Emerging material (material created by students while learning: writing papers, results after group work, games)

B. Type of materials

1. Text (written)

- a. Minimal (e.g., captions, isolated sentences, work lists)
- b. Extended (e.g., stories, dialogues, connected paragraphs)

2. Audio

3. Visual

C. Use of materials

1. Highly controlled (close adherence to materials)
2. Semi-controlled (occasional extension beyond the restrictions imposed by the materials).
3. Minimally controlled (materials as a starting point for more authentic and personal communication)

## **COLT Observation Scheme**

Part B analyses the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students or among students themselves as they occur within each activity.

### **Part B: Communicative Features**

#### **I. Information gap**

##### A. Requesting information

1. Pseudo (The speaker already possesses the information re-quested.)
2. Genuine (The information requested is not known in advance.)

##### B. Giving information

1. Relatively predictable (The message is easily anticipated in that there is a very limited range of information that can be given. In the case of responses, only one answer is possible semantically, although there may be different correct grammatical realizations.)
2. Relatively unpredictable (The message is not easily anticipated in that a wide range of information can be given. If a number of responses are possible, each can provide different information.)

**II. Sustained speech:** This feature is intended to measure the extent to which speakers engage in extended discourse or restrict their utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause, or word.

A. Ultra-minimal (utterances consisting of one word-coded for student speech only)

B. Minimal (student utterances consisting of one clause or sentence, teacher utterances consisting of one word)

C. Sustained speech (utterances longer than one sentence or consisting of at least two main clauses)

#### **III. Relative restriction of linguistic form**

A. Restricted use (the production or manipulation of one specific form, as in a transformation or substitution drill)

B. Limited restriction (a choice of more than one linguistic form but in a very narrow range, e.g., responses to yes/no questions, statements about the date, time of day, and so on)

C. Unrestricted use (no expectation of any particular linguistic form, as in free conversation, oral reports, or personal diary writing)

| PART A: CLASSROOM ACTIVITY   |                                |  |   |       |       | Vocabulary teaching:<br>family tree | Practice new words' form and meanings | Teacher explains grammar |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Time (minute/ms)   |                                |  |   | 11 ms | 12 ms | 8 ms                                |                                       |                          |
|  | PARTICIPATION ORGANIZATION     | WHOLE CLASS  | Teacher vs class<br>Student(s) vs student(s)<br>Choral by students                  |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | GROUPE WORK  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | INDIVIDUAL SEAT WORK   |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | GROUPE/INDIVIDUAL  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | FOCUS ON LANGUAGE  | Form<br>Function<br>Discourse<br>Sociolinguistics                                   | ✓     | ✓     | ✓                                   |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | TOPICS   | Narrow range of reference<br>Limited range of reference<br>Broad range of reference |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| CONTENT  | TOPIC CONTROL                  | Teacher selects what to say<br>Student(s) selects what to say          | ✓   | ✓     | ✓     |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | STUDENTS MODALITY              | Listening<br>Speaking<br>Reading<br>Writing<br>Other activities/drills |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  |                                | Supplied material  | ✓   |       | ✓     |                                     |                                       |                          |
| Self-developed/supplementary   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| Adapt the supplied material  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| Emerging material  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| MATERIALS  | Minimal written text           | ✓  | ✓   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Extended written text          |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Audio                          |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Visual                         | ✓  | ✓   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Highly controlled              |  | ✓   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Semi-controlled                |  |   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | Minimally controlled           |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | PART B: COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| INFORMATION GAP  | REQUESTING INFORMATION         | Displace Question  | ✓   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | GIVING INFORMATION             | Genuine Question<br>Relatively predictable<br>Relatively unpredictable | ✓   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| RESTRICTION OF LINGUISTIC FORM   | RESTRICTED USE                 |  | ✓   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | LIMITED RESTRICTION            |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| SUSTAINED SPEECH   | UNRESTRICTED USE               |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | ULTRAMINIMAL                   |  | ✓   | ✓     |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | MINIMAL                        |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
|  | SUSTAINED SPEECH               |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| <div>Practice answering teacher's questions</div> <div>Drill</div> <div>Pre-speaking:<br/>Discussing in pair</div> <div>While speaking:<br/>practice</div> <div>Teaching how to say large numbers</div> <div>Talking about money</div> <div>Drill</div> <div>Practicing pronunciation</div> <div>Teacher and learners review their works</div> <div>Discussion</div> <div>Game</div> |                                |  |   |       |       | 98 ms                               |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 57 ms                               |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 26 ms                               |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 7 ms                                |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 0                                   |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 21 ms                               |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 0 ms                                |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 0 ms                                |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 72 ms                               |                                       |                          |
|  |                                |  |   |       |       | 0                                   |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 33 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 66 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 7 ms   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 22 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 25 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 54 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 37 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 25 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 77 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 11 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 30   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 67 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 23 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 8 ms   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 45 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 52 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 72 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 0  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 8 ms   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 37 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 12 ms  |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |
| 8 ms   |                                |  |   |       |       |                                     |                                       |                          |



**Explanation:** This is an example of how I coded the activities (in the first 11 minutes) in this lesson.

In the first 11 minutes of the lesson, Diana was reviewing vocabularies relating to family topic. The teacher was visualizing the relations between members in a family by drawing a family tree on the board and using eliciting technique to complete the tree. This was a whole class activity lead by the teacher, thus, I put the ticks into the 'teacher-whole class interaction', 'teacher chooses what to say', and 'highly controlled' cells. Because the purpose of this activity was vocabulary review, I ticked for 'focus on form', 'other activities/drills' (not reading/writing/speaking/listening), and 'minimal written text'. Lastly, as the teacher was using a diagram to visualise her lecture, a tick was put into the 'visual material' category.

Then, in considering that the teacher and learners were using English to exchange messages in the activity, categories in part B were coded. Because Diana was using short questions to elicit one-word answers (father, mother, son, etc.) from the learners to complete the family tree on the board, I coded the activity for the 'display question', 'predictable answer', 'restricted use', and 'ultraminimal categories'. The same way of coding was used in the second activity in which the class was practicing using the new words/structures to ask and answer about members in their family under the control of the teacher. In this sense, for the adapted part B of the COLT, I did not intend to count the frequency of any utterance; instead, the purpose was to time the activities in which a particular category of utterance was the focus. Hence, in the third activity, because the teacher was lecturing, no category in part B was coded.

## APPENDIX G

### Examples of Diana's extra materials

2010 (Adapted from a reading test in the students' book)

GE1/ U.3/ p.24

#### 4 Speaking Thank you very much!



CD 1  
Track 18



**A** Listen to the conversation.  
Then practice it with two partners.

Sun: Oh, no ...

Paula: What's \_\_\_\_\_, Sun?

Sun: My \_\_\_\_\_. Where's my \_\_\_\_\_?

Paula: Is it in your \_\_\_\_\_?

Sun: Um ... no.

Paula: What about your \_\_\_\_\_?

Sun: No, it's \_\_\_\_\_. I can't find it anywhere!

Man: Hmm. ... \_\_\_\_\_?  
Excuse me, miss?

Sun: Yes?

Man: Is this your wallet?

Sun: Yes, \_\_\_\_! Thank you very much!

Man: You're \_\_\_\_\_.



**B** Practice the conversation again. Take a different role. This time, ask about other lost things.

A: Oh, no ...

B: What's wrong, \_\_\_\_\_?

A: My \_\_\_\_\_. Where's my \_\_\_\_\_?

B: Is it in your \_\_\_\_\_?

A: Um ... no.

B: What about your \_\_\_\_\_?

A: No, it's not. I can't find it anywhere!

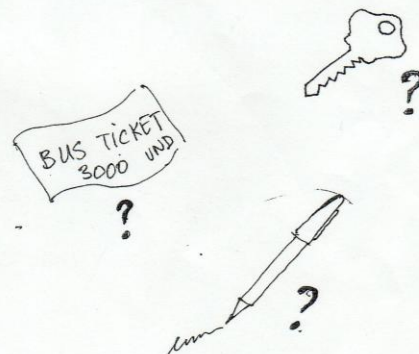
stranger: Hmm. ... What's this?  
Excuse me, miss?

A: Yes?

stranger: Is this your \_\_\_\_\_?

A: Yes, it is! Thank you very much!

stranger: You're welcome.





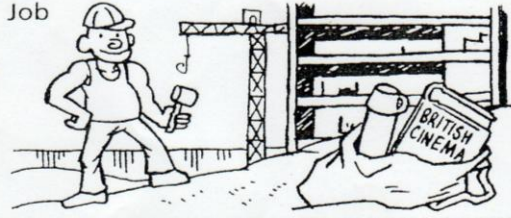
# **E1 Present simple or present continuous**

## JOB CARDS

Job



Job



Job



Job



Job



Job



Job



Job



Job



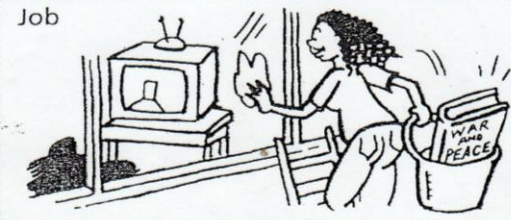
Job



Job



Job






## APPENDIX H


### Examples of David's extra pronunciation task and grammar for homework

16/2: David prepares this (he thinks the sound is difficult for UK learners)  
(the sound is not in the lesson in the book of the day) UNIT 4 /θ/ three 9

## UNIT 4 /θ/ three










**1** A20 Listen to /θ/.  
Look at the mouth picture.  
A20 Listen to /θ/ and repeat.



You do not need your voice, just air. /θ/ is unvoiced.

**2** A21 Listen to the words and repeat:

|   |                     |                     |   |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|
|    | /s/<br><b>mouse</b> | /θ/<br><b>mouth</b> |     |
| $2+4=6$   | <b>sum</b>          | <b>thumb</b>        |    |
|   | <b>sick</b>         | <b>thick</b>        |   |
|  | <b>sink</b>         | <b>think</b>        |  |

**3** A22 Look at the pairs of sentences. Listen and tick ✓ the sentences you hear.

EXAMPLE: a) Is that a mouse? ✓ Is that a mouth?  
b) Look at this sum. Look at this thumb.  
c) It's sick. It's thick.  
d) It's sinking. It's thinking.

**4** A23 Listen to the words and repeat:

|     |        |      |         |
|-----|--------|------|---------|
| 1st | first  | 6th  | sixth   |
| 2nd | second | 7th  | seventh |
| 3rd | third  | 8th  | eighth  |
| 4th | fourth | 9th  | ninth   |
| 5th | fifth  | 10th | tenth   |



UNIT  
36

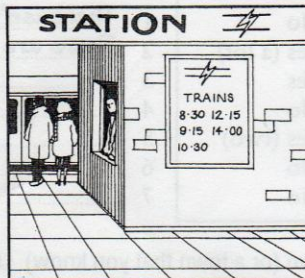
David's class - homework

# there is there are

A



There's a man on the roof.



There's a train at 10.30.



There are seven days in a week.

singular

there is ... (there's)  
is there ... ?  
there is not ... (there isn't  
or there's not)

- There's a big tree in the garden.
- There's a good film on TV tonight.
- A: Have you got any money?  
B: Yes, there's some in my bag.
- A: Excuse me, is there a hotel near here?  
B: Yes, there is. / No, there isn't.
- We can't go skiing. There isn't any snow.

plural

there are ...  
are there ... ?  
there are not ... (there aren't)

- There are some big trees in the garden.
- There are a lot of accidents on this road.
- A: Are there any letters for me today?  
B: Yes, there are. / No, there aren't.
- This restaurant is very quiet. There aren't many people here.
- How many players are there in a football team?
- There are 11 players in a football team.

B

there is and it is

there is



There's a book on the table.  
(not 'It's a book on the table.')

it is



I like this book. It's interesting.  
(it = this book)

Compare:

- 'What's that noise?' 'It's a train.' (it = that noise)  
There's a train at 10.30. It's a fast train. (it = the 10.30 train)
- There's a lot of salt in this soup.  
I don't like this soup. It's too salty. (it = this soup)

[80]

there was / were / has been etc. ⇒ UNIT 37

it and there ⇒ UNIT 38

some and any ⇒ UNIT 75



## EXERCISES

- 36.1 Kenham is a small town. Look at the information in the box and write sentences about Kenham with **There is/are** or **There isn't/aren't**.

|   |                  |             |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | a castle?        | No          |
| 2 | any restaurants? | Yes (a lot) |
| 3 | a hospital?      | Yes         |
| 4 | a swimming pool? | No          |
| 5 | any cinemas?     | Yes (two)   |
| 6 | a university?    | No          |
| 7 | any big hotels?  | No          |

- 1 There isn't a castle.  
 2 There are a lot of restaurants.  
 3 .....  
 4 .....  
 5 .....  
 6 .....  
 7 .....

- 36.2 Write sentences about your town (or a town that you know). Use **There is/are/isn't/aren't**.

- 1 There are a few restaurants. 4 .....  
 2 There's a big park. 5 .....  
 3 ..... 6 .....

- 36.3 Put in **there is / there isn't / is there / there are / there aren't / are there**.

- 1 Kenham isn't an old town. There aren't any old buildings.  
 2 Look! ..... a photograph of your brother in the newspaper!  
 3 'Excuse me, ..... a bank near here?' 'Yes, at the end of the street.'  
 4 ..... five people in my family: my parents, my two sisters and me.  
 5 'How many students ..... in the class?' 'Twenty.'  
 6 'Can we take a photograph?' 'No, ..... a film in the camera.'  
 7 '..... a bus from the city centre to the airport?' 'Yes. Every 20 minutes.'  
 8 '..... any problems?' 'No, everything is OK.'  
 9 ..... nowhere to sit down. .... any chairs.

- 36.4 Write sentences with **There are ...**. Choose from the boxes.

seven    twenty-six  
 nine    thirty  
 fifteen    fifty

letters    days  
 players    days  
 planets    states

September    the solar system  
 the USA    a week  
 a rugby team    the English alphabet

- 1 There are seven days in a week.  
 2 .....  
 3 .....  
 4 .....  
 5 .....  
 6 .....

- 36.5 Put in **there's / is there / it's / is it**.

- 1 'There's a train at 10.30.' 'Is it a fast train?'  
 2 I'm not going to buy this shirt. .... very expensive.  
 3 'What's wrong?' '..... something in my eye.'  
 4 ..... a red car outside the house. .... yours?  
 5 '..... anything on television tonight?' 'Yes, ..... a film at 8.15.'  
 6 'What's that building?' '..... a school.'  
 7 '..... a restaurant in this hotel?' 'No, I'm afraid not.'