

FROM TEXTBOOK ADOPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION: INVESTIGATING TEACHER
AGENCY AMID EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN VIETNAM

BY

HUONG THI DIEU NGUYEN

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2024

Urbana, Illinois

Adviser:

Associate Professor Karla J. Möller

ABSTRACT

The implementation of Vietnam's new national curriculum in the academic year 2022- 2023 marked a monumental shift in the education landscape as upper secondary school English teachers were granted unprecedented autonomy in selecting instructional materials. This departure from past rigid textbook practices signifies a transformative phase in education since the country declared its independence in 1975. Despite the significance of this reform, there exists a limited understanding of the decision-making processes and challenges encountered by upper secondary school English teachers while they navigated their newfound autonomy in textbook selection within this evolving educational framework. This qualitative study illuminates these complexities and experiences among Vietnamese upper secondary school English teachers amid this reform. Drawing from existing literature on professional development and teacher agency within the school curriculum, this study gathers insights through surveys and individual semi-structured interviews with educators in a diverse range of settings situated in Vietnam's northern mountainous region, including a boarding school, a school for the gifted, an international school, a city-based institution, and a rural school.

Findings reveal limited formal training and a reliance on personal experience among teachers, highlighting the need for enhanced teacher preparedness. The textbook adoption process was constrained by time limitations and a lack of specific assessment criteria, yet leadership involvement and collaborative decision-making facilitated a relatively smooth adoption process. Teachers expressed satisfaction with the new textbooks, noting similarities with previous materials and employing adaptive teaching approaches to increase student engagement. However, challenges in teaching the new textbooks persisted, reflecting broader uncertainties in the educational landscape. Implications of the study suggest enhancing the textbook selection process through the development of guidelines and templates, alongside the allocation of adequate time and resources. Moreover, there is a need for professional development initiatives aimed at empowering teachers, fostering mindset changes, and providing continuous, personalized training approaches.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Dr. Karla J. Möller, my esteemed adviser, whose unwavering support has been indispensable throughout my graduate school journey. Dr. Möller's guidance, constant availability, and emotional support have helped me overcome numerous challenges for the past almost two years. Her presence, walking with me every step of the way, has been a beacon of strength, and I owe much of my success to her mentorship.

I would like to express my appreciation to the members of my committee, Professor Kary Zarate and Professor Giselle Martinez Negrette. Their instruction in research courses has been invaluable, and their detailed feedback on my final papers has significantly enhanced my ability to conduct educational research. Additionally, Professor Negrette's course on discourse analysis has profoundly impacted my worldview, helping me discern nuances and intentions in language.

To my beloved family in Vietnam, my heartfelt thanks go to my mom and brother for their constant support and love. Their encouragement has been a source of strength throughout my journey. I am also deeply grateful for the joy and motivation my 4-year-old daughter brings me during our everyday video calls. Her adorable presence fills me with love and energy, driving me to strive for excellence to support her future.

I extend my appreciation to all the professors who have mentored me throughout my academic journey. Each course has equipped me with new expertise and perspectives, shaping my understanding of education and the world. Their dedication to teaching serves as a role model for my own aspirations.

Finally, I am thankful for the support and camaraderie of my graduate friends, who have shared this journey with me. Additionally, my friends back in Vietnam have provided invaluable emotional support, for which I am deeply grateful.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in my academic and personal growth. Your contributions have been instrumental in shaping my journey, and I am profoundly grateful for your presence in my life.

*To my dear father in heaven, my mother, my brother, my daughter–Thảo Hiền, my friends,
and all educators who have inspired and encouraged me to reach new heights.*

I am blessed to have you in my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY.....	10
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	34
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	60
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS	81
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	117
REFERENCES	133
APPENDIX A: THE SURVEYS.....	155
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	158
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS	163
APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER	172
APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT LETTERS.....	173
APPENDIX F: FLIERS	176
APPENDIX G: TEXTBOOK EVALUATION SHEET SAMPLE	178

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Targeted proficiency level for each level of schooling	24
Table 2.2 Major educational reforms in Vietnam	26
Table 2.3 Comparison between 2006 and 2018 GEC	29
Table 2.4 Comparison of textbook selection procedures in 2020 and 2023	32
Table 3.1 The responsibilities and roles of teachers and professors within the GEC	53
Table 3.2 Nine modules in the Enhancing Teacher Education Program.....	55
Table 4.1 Research sites	64
Table 4.2 Participant data.....	68
Table 4.3 Interview participant data.....	72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Structure framework of Vietnam’s national education system.....	17
Figure 2.2 The curriculum’s implementation plan.....	28
Figure 3.1 Understanding teacher agency	37
Figure 4.1 Research methodology.....	63
Figure 4.2 Teachers’ work experience and work locations.....	69
Figure 4.3 The Data Analysis Spiral	74
Figure 5.1 Factors influencing the textbook decision-making process.....	87

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CERF	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment
DOET	Department of Education and Training
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Training
ESL	English as a Second Language
GEC	General Education Curriculum
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
PD	Professional Development
PLC	Professional Learning Community
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief background to the thesis by discussing the importance of studying the perspectives of upper-secondary English teachers amid Vietnam's recent educational reforms. The research specifically centers on the teachers' autonomy in selecting textbooks for the 2022–2023 academic year, which was the first year they were granted the right to choose their instructional materials independently. For this thesis, I investigated the teachers' newfound autonomy alongside their roles as change agents and the implementation of the new textbooks within the Vietnamese educational landscape. This first chapter unveils my curiosity as a researcher in exploring the authentic experiences of Vietnamese teachers of English and their insights on pedagogical resources. Additionally, in this chapter, I present my research objectives, highlight the significance of the research project, and provide a preview of each subsequent chapter.

Background

I grew up in a working-class family in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam. Although my family never had the opportunity to go on vacations, my childhood was filled with boundless adventures within the pages of books, whether written in or translated into Vietnamese. I would often tuck myself into my mother's snug seamstress work corner, wrapping myself in leftover fabric scraps, crying with Ariel the little mermaid, or cheering on the brave princess as she saved her eleven brothers in *The Wild Swans* (Andersen, 2011). When I was about nine years old, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* (Rowling, 2003) was released. I vividly remember a televised interview where a student from the capital city, with an insatiable eagerness to delve into the story, was engrossed in the English edition as he was unable to bear the wait for the Vietnamese translation. That moment ignited a fervent curiosity within me to

master English so that I could read the original texts, and perhaps one day, venture outside the verdant tea hills and alluring mountains in my hometown.

Even though I was an avid reader of Vietnamese and excited about learning English at the age of eleven, my passion for English dwindled over the years. I gradually developed a strong dislike of this language because I saw no connection between it and my real world. I became fed up with the required rote memorization of English grammar rules—and with the hundreds of pages of practice tests we had to complete. *Where are the excitement and thrills of reading enchanting stories in English? Where are the opportunities to explore diverse cultures and different walks of life?* It seemed to me that the sole purpose of my formal English education was to help me score well in the upper secondary graduation examination. I eventually passed that test, yet my spoken English proficiency was buried with my childhood dreams of exploring the mysterious outside world. At the age of eighteen, I could not utter a complete phrase in English.

Ironically, I decided to attend a local college with a major in English Language Teacher Education. It was the best financial option for someone clueless about where she should go—and, sometimes life does bring miracles, as in Andersen’s fairy tales. On my first day at college, one professor looked me in the eyes, saying that he saw “the potential” and traces of long-buried curiosity within me. He inspired me to participate in and lead community projects where my team of student teachers would teach English to underserved children in remote areas. I will never forget how my heart was filled with joy because of the laughter and bond I had with my very first students. I could feel their hunger for knowledge, exploration, and opportunities to change their lives by having a strong command of English. I relived my childhood adventures.

From that moment, I desire to keep their dreams alive, nurture their enduring joy and empower them for lifelong learning.

My career since has been a pursuit to enhance my English skills and address fundamental questions: *What restricts my students from reaching their full potential? How can we improve the education system?* Over the past eleven years, I have pursued these answers. Is the issue a lack of interaction with native English speakers? I connected my students with native speakers online. Are limited instructional materials a contributing factor? I explored diverse resources and discussed them with my colleagues. Are teaching methods the challenge? I conducted free English classes at home for five years, employing various pedagogical practices such as incorporating English literature, role-playing, flipped classrooms, and learning English through science. Despite these efforts, many of my students still succumbed to academic pressures and eventually lost interest in English, which echoed my past struggle.

From my experience as a full-time English teacher in a public upper secondary school, it is clear that the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) acknowledges the significance of English for global integration. In the 1990s, English was mandated as a core school subject and quickly became the primary foreign language taught in schools and tertiary institutions (Le, 2007). In 2008, the Vietnamese Government launched a significant language initiative named “Teaching and Learning Foreign Language Education in the National Education System in the Period 2008-2020,” commonly referred to as Project 2020. This transformation aims to turn foreign languages into a strength for the Vietnamese people, supporting the nation's industrialization, and modernization endeavors (Prime Minister, 2008). The overarching goal of this ten-year program is for upper secondary school graduates at the end of Year 12 to achieve

Proficiency Level B1, as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001).

Despite ongoing efforts, certain issues persist. My firsthand experience in the formal school system has provided me with valuable insights into the expectations of educational leaders and the direct impact of key educational policies on English language teaching (ELT). First, most current educators, students and their parents pursue specific short-term goals, such as winning academic competitions, earning prestigious prizes, and scoring high on standardized tests. Because of this intense focus on measurable end goals, most ELT is devoted to grammar instruction to boost students' test scores quickly. The long-term goals of developing the global mindset and worldviews through ELT are often ignored. Second, today's students are burdened by heavy workloads inside and outside the classroom, leaving little time for reflective or critical thinking. English instruction becomes rote and mechanical, and little effort is devoted to appreciating the beauty, history, or culture of the language. Therefore, Hoang (2011) suggested that without substantial modifications to the curriculum and teaching methodologies, English education in Vietnam might struggle to meet the evolving demands placed upon it.

This dynamic landscape of English language education in Vietnam has been reshaped by the recent introduction of the 2018 General Education Curriculum by the MOET. This reform signifies a profound shift from the previous reliance solely on mandated textbooks by the Ministry. Instead, it empowers schools and educators actively to curate a diverse array of instructional materials, knowledge and skills aligned with MOET's quality standards and competencies (MOET, 2018c). This transformation spans various educational dimensions including changes in curriculum content, learning materials, teaching methodologies, assessments, school leadership, management, and educational objectives. Notably, for the first

time since Vietnam declared its independence in 1975, teachers were not only encouraged but also required to explore and implement various instructional materials and innovative teaching methods. This pivotal shift prompted a focused examination of the decision-making processes and challenges faced by English teachers as they negotiated their newfound autonomy in textbook selection amidst this evolving educational framework.

The primary goal of this study is to investigate thoroughly the ongoing implementation of this educational reform with a focus on the process of adopting and implementing textbooks. It offers insight into the intentions and measures initiated by Vietnam's MOET. In addition, the research aims to analyze how practitioners, upper secondary English teachers, at the local level perceive, interpret, and execute the textbook adoption procedures. The study seeks to capture both the policy-level objectives and the practical implications within classrooms. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of the Vietnam 2018 General Education Curriculum as a significant national stride toward international integration and participation in the global arena.

To understand the underlying factors driving curriculum reforms, this study provides the policymakers' intentions outlined in MOET's published policy documents, specifically concerning the autonomy granted to upper-secondary English teachers in selecting instructional materials. Additionally, the research delves into the practical aspects at the local level by examining the training provided to teachers for their roles in implementing the 2018 General Education Curriculum through textbook adoption. The study operates under the premise that shifts in teacher attitudes and their comprehension of curriculum and pedagogy are pivotal for sustainable reform (Fullan, 2007). Additionally, a significant aspect of this research is centered on pedagogy. It seeks to compare how teachers approach teaching the curriculum content using their chosen materials versus the previously mandated materials. Moreover, the study aims to

extract valuable insights from teachers' perspectives on enhancing long-term support for their professional development.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching goal of this study is to delve into the experiences of upper secondary school English teachers regarding their preparation for, selection of, and application of textbooks in their teaching practice and recommendations for future professional development activities.

Firstly, this study aims to investigate the teacher's experience and their readiness for educational reforms. It specifically focuses on how they were equipped with knowledge, information and skills to select textbooks independently and exercise autonomy in this process.

Secondly, it seeks to unravel their teaching encounters with the new textbooks by comparing these experiences with their teaching of the mandated textbooks. This exploration extends to understanding how these experiences have shaped their identity as educators and catalysts for change within their schools.

Thirdly, this study aims to gather recommendations to inform future teacher professional development programs and activities. This will ensure the necessary knowledge for making adoption decisions and effectively applying new instructional materials in their classrooms. Moreover, these recommendations are geared toward supporting long-term professional growth among upper secondary school teachers.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following overarching research question with four sub-questions:

What is the journey of the upper secondary school teachers through the textbook selection process and the first year of its use?

1. How did the training the upper secondary school teachers (USSTs) receive prepare them for the role of selecting the English language textbook (ELTs)?
2. What is the USSTs' experience with the new textbook across the dimensions of their teaching responsibilities?
3. How has this experience of selecting and teaching impacted their sense of themselves as educators and change agents in their schools?
4. Knowing what they know now, what do teachers believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure the teachers have the knowledge and information needed for adoption decisions and application of new textbooks in the future?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study resonates within the realm of educational reform and teacher development. It encapsulates the different dimensions that impact areas within and beyond the classroom walls.

Firstly, this research is beneficial to educational policy and practice. By delving into the experiences of upper secondary school English teachers, particularly regarding their preparation, selection, and application of textbooks in teaching, it provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges educators face amid this era of educational reforms. This insight becomes a cornerstone for informing future policies, curricular structures, and teacher training initiatives. Understanding teachers' readiness for educational reforms and their autonomy in selecting instructional materials is pivotal in designing training programs that empower educators to make informed decisions. Ultimately, this knowledge loop ensures that upper secondary school teachers are equipped with the necessary tools to effectively implement new academic resources and foster a well-rounded learning environment for students.

Secondly, the study's exploration of teachers' teaching encounters with new textbooks and their comparison with the mandated materials offers a deeper comprehension of the intricate dynamics within classrooms and sheds light on the effectiveness of different instructional materials. It unveils which elements of the new textbooks contribute positively to the learning process and which aspects might need enhancement or adaptation. This understanding is advantageous in refining pedagogical resources, and methodologies as well as enhancing student learning outcomes.

Thirdly, the recommendations from this study are beneficial for future teacher professional development. Unraveling how teachers perceive themselves as change agents within their schools contributes to the discussions surrounding professional training. The insights into these transformations will guide the design of tailored teacher training programs which will not only foster individual growth but also cultivate a sense of agency and innovation among educators. As a result, the study lays the groundwork for long-term professional growth in which teachers are empowered to navigate future educational challenges with confidence and adaptability.

The Structure of the Thesis

This study is structured into six chapters. The first chapter lays out the researcher's background and motivation to conduct the study, the context, and the pivotal research questions alongside their significance within the investigation.

The second chapter provides a comprehensive overview of Vietnam's educational system. It delves into the social and historical backdrop that propelled English into a predominant position within the nation's linguistic landscape. In addition, this chapter critically examines the two major initiatives, namely the Foreign Language Project 2020 and the 2018

General Educational Curriculum, implemented by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training.

The third chapter reviews the extant literature concerning teachers' professional development in Vietnam with a particular focus on the upper secondary level. Furthermore, it examines the crucial role of teachers' autonomy within the school curriculum and offers insights into the educational landscape.

The fourth chapter shifts focus to the study's methodology. It presents the research design, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations. Additionally, this chapter acknowledges the study's limitations.

The fifth chapter discusses the study's major findings. It addresses four key areas aligned with the research questions. They encompass the received training programs, teachers' roles as change agents within schools, their experiences in selecting and teaching the new textbooks, and recommendations aimed at shaping future teachers' training programs and professional development activities.

Lastly, the sixth chapter circles back to revisit the major findings and evaluates the study's implications. This chapter ends with a set of recommendations for prospective research endeavors in this field.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Vietnam, situated on the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia, is a nation governed by a single-party Communist system. It shares a border with China to the North, Laos and Cambodia to the West, and the Eastern Sea (also known as the South China Sea) to the East. Throughout the 20th century, Vietnam experienced prolonged warfare and underwent significant structural and political transformations, ultimately establishing itself as an independent state under the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1975. In 1986, Vietnam introduced economic and political reforms, transitioning into a socialist-centered market economy (Murray, 1997), and rejoining the global economy. This economic growth has catalyzed substantial changes across various societal domains, including the educational sector.

In laying the groundwork, this chapter presents a brief exploration of Vietnam's history and the rise of English language education. In addition, this chapter details the education system and outlines the ongoing discussions and challenges surrounding English language teaching in Vietnamese schools, with a specific emphasis on Project 2020. This chapter highlights the significance of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, the most recent educational reform discussed in Chapter 1, and the central focus of this study, within this context.

The Interplay of History and Linguistic Preferences in Vietnam

From the dawn of recorded history in the third century B.C, Vietnam has evolved from a small territory situated in the mountainous northern region, gradually extending southward (Nguyen & Vo, 2012) to emerge as a thriving economy with an anticipated population of nearly 100 million (United Nations Population Fund, 2023). Its history has been characterized by conflicts and intricate international relations (Taylor, 1983; Wright, 2002), predominantly shaped by such significant powers as China, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America

(Le, 2011). These influences, coupled with the impact of Confucianism, colonialism, anti-colonialism, and the present Marxist-Leninist political framework, have played a pivotal role in driving diverse shifts in language instruction and foreign linguistic preferences throughout Vietnam's rich historical narrative.

Chinese Influence

For over 1000 years, from 111 BC to 938 AD, China's rule in Vietnam led to the adoption of the Chinese language for state affairs and government documentation as well as the establishment of a Confucian scholar class, and formal examinations for bureaucratic roles (Pham & Fry, 2004). Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were introduced and intricately interwoven into Vietnamese animistic beliefs (Le, 2011). While many Vietnamese identified as Buddhists, Confucianism's hierarchical principles shaped their moral and social norms, impacting various aspects of Vietnamese society, including architecture, arts, educational philosophies, and practices (Nguyen, Jin, & Gross, 2013). Confucian ideas reinforced societal hierarchies in terms of power, wealth, and gender roles, often excluding women from formal education and confining them to traditional domestic roles (London, 2011).

Initially, the Vietnamese employed Chinese with Vietnamese pronunciation. They later incorporated Chinese characters and eventually crafted their distinct script known as Chữ Nôm around the 10th century. In the 17th century, French missionaries introduced Quốc Ngữ (Vietnamese), a Latin-based script, primarily used for Catholic converts and in mission schools (Wright, 2002). Despite its limited use, Vietnamese was much easier to learn than Chinese ideograms. Hence, this set the stage for future engagement with both French and English languages in written form.

French Dominion (1887-1954)

French rule began in 1887, and the Chinese script was eliminated in 1919 with the introduction of the French educational system. The Vietnamese Catholics, who had received assistance from the French and held the same belief system, were instrumental in collaborating with the French colonial regime. Wright (2002) highlights that Petrus Ky, a renowned linguist educated in a French missionary school, served as an early French interpreter, and created bilingual educational materials in both French and Vietnamese. Vietnamese Catholics became literate in the Quốc Ngữ script, laying the foundation for a linguistic shift towards the French language. During this period, French served as the primary medium of instruction in schools throughout the nation, whereas English was offered only as a foreign language at very few private schools in major cities.

During the struggle for independence against the French, the high illiteracy rate persisted due to limited educational opportunities across the country. However, after declaring independence in 1945, the communist-led government prioritized achieving full literacy and enforcing compulsory primary education. President Ho Chi Minh emphasized combating illiteracy. The government established free basic education and night classes for the illiterate population and Vietnamese was used as the writing script. It was estimated that over 2.5 million people were functionally literate within a year (UNESCO & MOET, 2015).

America-Vietnam War (1954-1975)

Following the liberation from French occupation, Vietnam was divided into North and South after the Geneva Conference in 1954. The American involvement from 1954 to 1975 created separate education systems in the North and South. The Communist leadership in the North emphasized the teaching of Vietnamese with support from Russia and China. On the

contrary, the South promoted French and English due to their political affiliations with France and the USA (Goh & Nguyen, 2004). During the American War from 1955 to 1975, English gained significance due to the extensive American presence in the South, with over half a million US troops stationed in Vietnam (Wright, 2002). The demand for English proficiency led to the proliferation of private English language schools. At this stage, English was seen as a gateway to opportunities in the American military, politics, and business (Wright, 2002). However, with the communist victory in April 1975, English was phased out from educational training, making way for Russian and Chinese to become the primary foreign languages in Vietnam (Do, 2006).

Post-War and Renovation Era

From 1975 to 1986, Vietnam established strong ties with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, heavily relying on them for vital resources, commodities, job opportunities and educational prospects (Napier & Nguyen, 2003). From 1965 to 1974, a total of 26,000 Vietnamese individuals attained their first degrees in the Soviet Union (USSR) or Eastern Europe with an additional 3,000 citizens acquiring postgraduate qualifications (Vietnam Courier, 1982). Between 1975 and 1991, the USSR “became the main supporter of an impoverished Vietnam” (Wright, 2002, p.237). This was a consequence of Vietnam’s isolation from the Western capitalist world due to a trade embargo led by the U.S., its estrangement from China following the 1979 border war, and concerns raised by neighboring countries after the Cambodian invasion. As a result, Russian became the dominant foreign language in Vietnam’s education system.

In 1986, the introduction of *Đổi Mới* (Renovation) represented a pivotal moment in Vietnam's shift from a centrally planned socialist economy to an open market system. It aimed to alleviate economic distress by adopting open-door policies with other nations (Bui & Nguyen,

2016). During this period of transformation, the education system struggled to adapt to the evolving labor market needs. Pham (2011) highlighted that the educational focus aimed at instilling “nationalism and human dignity” (p. 215), primarily centered on Confucian classics, poetry, history, and military tactics, neglecting practical sciences. This emphasis resulted in a lack of adequately trained workers when Vietnam engaged in economic integration with organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) in 1995, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998, and later the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. Estimates suggested that merely 15% to 20% of the workforce possessed the necessary skills demanded by this integration (Pham, 2011).

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union in 1989, there was a reduction in the trade of goods, materials, and human movement. As a result, Vietnam was compelled to explore new markets and adapt to international business practices. This transition toward a market-oriented economy progressed gradually until the early 1990s. In 1994, the United States ended its trade embargo against Vietnam and Vietnam recognized the demand for educational reform to prepare managers for a global economy (Von Kopp, 1992), English was introduced as a compulsory subject in schools and rapidly emerged as the predominant foreign language in educational institutions (Hoang, 2020; Le, 2007).

The Present Day

Vietnam is now home to 54 ethnic groups, with approximately 86% being Vietnamese while the remaining percentage comprises various ethnic minorities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Among these diverse communities, over 100 languages are spoken (Lavoie, 2011). It is administratively divided into 63 provinces governed centrally from Hanoi. Vietnam is currently undergoing rapid social and economic development, with substantial strides in

science, technology, and a burgeoning market economy. Despite its status as a developing nation, the country has achieved significant growth, averaging rates of 8.0% in GDP in 2022 (World Bank, 2023). Regarding education, Vietnam has demonstrated notable achievements in the international Young Lives Longitudinal Study of 2012 and 2015, where it outperformed several countries, including Ethiopia, India, and Peru, according to research conducted by Oxford University (Young Lives, 2022). Similarly, Vietnam's commendable performance was observed in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2022).

Acknowledging the importance of a knowledgeable workforce, the government has prioritized education in general and English language education in particular as a key strategy for national advancement, aiming to ensure equitable access to education for all citizens. Education remains pivotal in shaping Vietnam's national identity and future aspirations, preserving values from its history while adapting to contemporary needs.

The Education System in Vietnam

Since Vietnam declared its independence in 1975, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's government has persistently pushed for comprehensive educational reforms aiming to restructure the system, revise curriculum content and reform textbooks. The early reforms centered on the general education curriculum, the Quốc Ngữ—Vietnamese script, and the overall structure of education during the early 1980s. In 1991, the Law on Compulsory Primary Education mandated education for all children aged 6-14. To accomplish this goal, the education system was broadened, with focused initiatives to reach children in remote regions. Considerable funding was allocated to primary education. Additionally, post-literacy programs were implemented to prevent relapse into illiteracy. These measures were prompted by the Directive on the

Eradication of Illiteracy (The Committee of Ministers of Vietnam, 1990) to attain universal primary education and literacy by 2000.

The Directive on the Renovation of the General School Education Curriculum (Prime Minister, 2001) expanded this requirement to include Vietnamese youth aged 11-18. In addition, initiatives extended to preschool education with the launch of the Project on Compulsory Pre-schooling for 5-year-old children in 2010. Regarding higher education, initial reforms emphasized the size and diversification of educational institutions. However, since 2005, there has been a notable shift toward prioritizing quality assurance with the incorporation of accreditation to ensure educational standards. The educational reforms initiated in the early 1980s have yielded remarkable outcomes. Vietnam has achieved a high rate of adult literacy rate of 96% (World Bank, 2019). Despite this progress, substantial challenges persist, particularly concerning educational standards and quality (Tran et al., 2014).

In Vietnam, education is mandatory until the lower-secondary level (year 9), and it offers various routes for advanced studies. While many students progress to upper-secondary education (years 10-12), some opt for professional high schools or vocational training. Upon completing upper-secondary education, students have diverse pathways for continued studies, including higher education, professional training, or vocational programs.

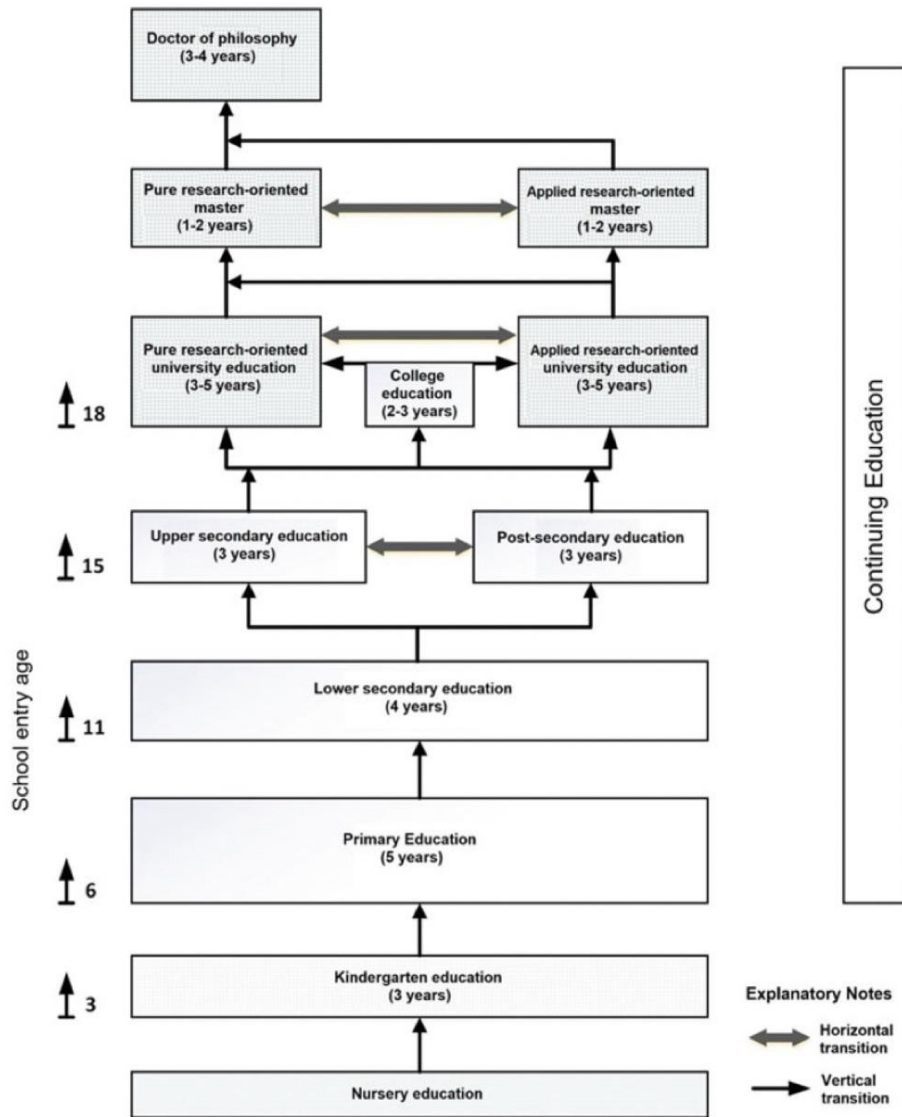
Pre-School

The Vietnamese education system consists of three main sectors: early childhood education, general education, and tertiary education as presented in Figure 2.1. Early childhood education caters to children below six years old, including nursery education and kindergarten. This level of education exhibits the least regulation and the most disorganized growth (London,

2011), and there exist significant inequalities among geographical regions and income groups of parents.

Figure 2.1

Structure framework of Vietnam's national education system (Prime Minister, 2016a)



Note. From *Renovation in Curriculum Design and Training Programs for Teacher Education in Vietnam* (Nguyen, Pham & Pham, 2022)

General Education

General education consists of primary education for ages 6-11 (years 1-5), lower-secondary education for ages 12-15 (years 6-9), and upper-secondary education for ages 16-18 (years 10-12). After completing upper-secondary schooling, students undergo a national examination to qualify for a School Completion Diploma, enabling entry into higher education institutions. As per the 2005 Education Law and its 2009 Amendment, primary and lower secondary education are made compulsory, aiming to achieve universalization. This initiative has played a role in progressively reducing regional and income-based disparities in primary education enrollment and completion rates. The majority of these students will compete for spots in public upper secondary schools, while others have alternative options in non-public secondary schools, professional high schools, vocational secondary schools, and junior colleges. However, transitioning from lower secondary to upper secondary education often leads to dropouts, particularly among disadvantaged groups (Tran et al., 2014).

At both lower and upper-secondary levels, there exist 'Normal' schools for the majority of students, while a subset of 'Specialized' or 'Selective' schools serves the top 5% of achievers. Admission to these selective schools is highly competitive and primarily based on academic performance and achievements at lower levels. Selective upper-secondary schools emphasize specialized subjects such as mathematics, physics, English, and literature and utilize teaching materials beyond mandated textbooks. Students in these schools often face pressure to maintain high academic standards and rankings due to school, teacher, and parental expectations (Vu, 2020).

This two-tier system creates a notably competitive environment, emphasizing high-stakes examinations at the upper levels. Recognition and privileges are bestowed upon the most

successful students, influencing a competitive culture and exam-driven success or failure mentality at lower levels. Consequently, a tutoring industry outside formal education thrives, driven by the examination-focused culture, prompting parents and students to seek additional private tutoring beyond regular schooling hours.

Post-Secondary Education

Post-secondary education in Vietnam consists of higher education, professional education, and vocational training, each falling under different governing bodies. While the MOET oversees higher education, vocational education is managed by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Though legislation outlines pathways to higher education, these sectors operate somewhat independently. Professional education spans up to four years post-lower secondary education or two years post-upper secondary to earn a professional diploma. The connections between professional and higher education are well-structured under MOET. In the vocational sector, managed by MOLISA's General Department of Vocational Training, institutions offer various courses, from short-term skill certificates to long-term degrees. Despite legal provisions, coordination between vocational and professional education sectors remains a challenge, impacting practical pathways between these segments (Tran et al, 2014).

English Language Education in Vietnam

In Vietnam, Vietnamese serves as both the national and official language. The Vietnamese education system categorizes all other languages as non-national languages for indigenous minority languages and foreign languages for non-indigenous languages, following guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2018 (MOET, 2018b). While the 2013 Vietnamese Constitution designates English as a foreign language, official government

documents, educational directives, and practical implementation highlight its special status among the seven recognized languages taught in the Vietnamese general school education system including English, Russian, Chinese, French, Japanese, German and Korean. English receives substantial time allocation and is second only to Vietnamese regarding required knowledge and skills across the national education system, from general schools to colleges (Hoang, 2020).

English Language Education From the Early 1980s to 2002

English instruction has seen a steady increase in allocated time from the early 1980s to the present. National adoption of English as a compulsory subject occurred between 1982 and 2002. It was comprised of upper secondary levels (grades 10-12) with three periods of instruction per week, totaling around 300 periods. English was also offered as an optional subject at lower secondary levels, subject to school resource availability (Vietnam Institute for Educational Sciences, 1989). Hoang (2010) observed that the textbooks in both sectors were primarily grammar-focused, which aimed to systematically teach grammar as a set of rules for learners to master and apply to proficient language use. Despite the existence of two curricula, the high-stakes national examinations relied exclusively on the three-year curriculum. During this period, private English language institutions experienced growth due to an increasing trend of individuals pursuing English for career advancement and social elevation. The market-oriented economy strongly shaped English into a key determinant for educational, professional, and commercial achievements. English was often associated with economic advancement and success, with a phenomenon described by Le (2007) as “English language fever” (p. 172) and equated with prosperity and economic growth (Le & Barnard, 2019).

English Language Education Since the 2006 General Education Curriculum

In 2001, The Vietnamese Prime Minister issued Government Directive No 14/2001 CT-TTg on the Renovation of the Vietnamese General Education Curriculum. Under the guidance of the Vietnamese MOET, curricula for all school subjects, including the General School Education English Curriculum (MOET, 2006), were designed. According to this curriculum, English became a compulsory subject nationwide for seven years from lower secondary school through upper secondary school (grades 6-12) with a total of 700 periods allocated for instruction. This allocation represented a significant increase of 400 periods compared to the period between 1982 and 2002.

The curriculum policy document outlined a new objective for English education, emphasizing that “communicative skills as the primary objective of secondary school English education, linguistic knowledge is regarded as a pathway to achieving this goal” (MOET, 2006, p. 6). Despite advocating for English use in communication, this curriculum did not prescribe a particular teaching approach or methodology to achieve this aim. Nonetheless, the 2006 curriculum is considered a foundational move toward adopting a communicative approach.

The introduction of the 2006 curriculum aimed to promote communicative skills in Vietnamese classrooms. However, studies (e.g., Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Pham, 2007) revealed challenges in implementing this approach, with many teachers hesitant to alter their methods and students reluctant to engage in communicative activities (Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). Le and Barnard’s case study (2009) illustrated that despite curriculum intentions, classrooms still relied on traditional methods, remaining textbook-centric and test-oriented. Grammar-focused testing further hindered oral proficiency, compounded by large class sizes, mixed proficiency levels, and teacher shortages (Nguyen, Hamid, & Renshaw, 2016). Inequities persisted across regions and

demographics, notably impacting ethnic minority students (Le, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2018).

Upper-secondary graduates lacked communicative English skills, thereby raising concerns about national competitiveness in a globalized world (Wedell, 2009).

English Language Education During Project 2020

In response to the abovementioned critical need and the demands of globalization, in 2008, the Vietnamese Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg, approving the national foreign languages project known as “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008-2020” (referred to as the Decision 1400) and the National Foreign Languages Project, often abbreviated as Project 2020. Having a budget of 9,378 billion VND (about 426 million USD), this initiative stands as an ambitious language project in Vietnam’s educational history. It signifies the Government’s dedicated efforts to enhance English proficiency within the national schooling system (Bui & Nguyen, 2016).

To carry out the Prime Minister’s Decisions 1400 and 2080, the MOET formulated and officially introduced three experimental English language curricula for Vietnam’s general school education system. These are respectively known as:

- Pilot English Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam
- Pilot English Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam
- Pilot English Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam.

From 2011 to 2017, each of these curricula underwent pilot testing in 300 selected schools across Vietnam, revealing both successful outcomes and persisting challenges that required resolution (Hoang, 2018). Project 2020 commenced as a twelve-year endeavor, divided into three distinct phases:

- Phase 1 (2008 to 2010): Focused on creating an English curriculum and educational materials for a ten-year teaching period, alongside preparing school infrastructure and training teaching staff.
- Phase 2 (2011 to 2015): Involved piloting the new curriculum in select schools with adequate facilities and qualified teachers. It aimed to introduce English as the medium for teaching mathematics in 30% of high schools in specified cities.
- Phase 3 (2016 to 2020): Devoted to implementing the new curriculum, teaching approaches, and textbooks across all schools nationwide. The ultimate goal, by 2020, was to have 100% of students engaged in the new English program across different educational levels.

Vietnam established a six-level Language Proficiency Framework modeled after the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). This framework laid the foundation for designing language syllabi, textbooks, and language assessments. It consists of three main tiers—basic, intermediate, and advanced—segmented into six levels mirroring those outlined in the CEFR.

As part of the initiative, the aim was to ensure school English teachers achieved a confident, intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency. Specifically, Level B2 was expected from primary and lower-secondary teachers, while upper-secondary educators were targeted to operate at Level C1. Additionally, the established target for English language education varied across school levels: Level A1 for primary schools, Level A2 for lower-secondary schools, and Level B1 for upper-secondary schools. This aimed at enabling students, after a decade of English learning, to graduate at the end of Year 12 with the capability of achieving an independent, intermediate English proficiency level of B1, as in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1*Targeted proficiency level for each level of schooling (MOET, 2014a)*

Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam & Levels of Schooling			CEFR equivalence	General description
Basic User	Primary School (Year 3-5)	Level 1	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday structures; basic vocabulary meeting specific communication needs. Can introduce oneself and others; can provide personal information such as place of birth, family, friends, etc. Can engage in simple communication if the interlocutor speaks slowly, clearly, and is willing to cooperate.
	Lower-secondary school (Year 6-9)	Level 2	A2	Can understand sentences and structures frequently used in basic communication needs (such as information about family, oneself, shopping, asking for directions, work). Can exchange information on simple, everyday familiar topics. Can describe oneself simply, the surrounding environment, and issues related to basic needs.
Intermediate User	Upper-secondary school (Year 10-12)	Level 3	B1	Can understand the main ideas of a standard speech or paragraph on familiar topics related to work, school, entertainment, etc. Can handle most situations when visiting an area using that language. Can write a simple paragraph on familiar or personally interested topics. Can describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes, ambitions, and present concise reasons, explanations, opinions, and plans.
	<i>Expected proficiency for primary and lower-secondary teachers</i>	Level 4	B2	Can understand the main idea of a complex text on specific and abstract topics, including technical exchanges in one's professional field. Can communicate fluently and naturally with native speakers. Can write clear, detailed texts on various topics and can explain their views on an issue, present advantages, and disadvantages of different options.
Advanced User	<i>Expected proficiency for upper-secondary teachers</i>	Level 5	C1	Can understand and recognize the implications of lengthy texts on a wide range of subjects. Can express oneself fluently, instantly, without difficulty in finding expression. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can write clearly, concisely, and in detail about complex topics, demonstrating the ability to organize texts, use cohesive language, and connect ideas.
		Level 6	C2	Can easily understand most spoken and written texts. Can summarize oral or written information, rearrange information, and present it logically. Can express oneself instantly, fluently, and accurately, distinguishing subtle meanings in complex situations.

In 2017, the Vietnamese Government recognized potential challenges that could hinder the achievement of Project 2020, the new extended Project 2020 was issued, formally outlined in

the Prime Minister’s Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg, titled “Decision on the Approval, Adjustment and Supplementation of the Project ‘Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period of 2017-2025” (referred to as the Decision 2080) (Prime Minister, 2017). The following year, Project 2020 underwent a title change to simply “The Project” (MOET, 2018a), coinciding with the proposal of a new plan for the period 2017-2025 (MOET, 2018b).

English Language Education Since the 2018 General Education Curriculum

Following the directives outlined in Decision 2080, as well as the General School Education English Curriculum by the Vietnamese MOET (2018c), English has been established as a compulsory subject nationwide, from grade 3 to grade 12. This curriculum designates four periods per week for English instruction at the primary level, three periods per week at the lower secondary school level, and three periods at the upper secondary level. This results in a total of 1155 periods, which is 455 periods more than what was allocated in the 2006 General School Education English Curriculum. On December 26th, 2018, MOET issued the two-year optional English curriculum for grades 1 and 2.

Until 2024, English will be one of the three mandatory subjects for the upper-secondary graduation exam. As a result, currently English is taught and learned intensively in kindergartens, primary and high schools, colleges, and universities, as well as at numerous local and international English Language Centers (ELT) throughout Vietnam (Le & Barnard, 2019). However, in November 2023, MOET issued Decision No. 4068/QĐ-BGDĐT (MOET, 2023b), officially declaring that English will no longer be compulsory in the upper-secondary school graduation examination and certification from 2025. This decision indicates a potential transition toward a more practical and communicative approach to English language education, as it

recognizes the constraints of the current paper-based English test that primarily assesses reading skills.

English education has been pivotal in shaping Vietnam’s educational landscape. The introduction of English as a mandatory subject across various educational tiers, coupled with ongoing curriculum refinements, highlights its significant role in Vietnam’s education. The subsequent section of this chapter will provide a detailed exploration of the latest educational reform, specifically focusing on the 2018 General Education Curriculum. This discussion will emphasize its objectives, particularly in teacher agency in the adoption and implementation of English textbooks.

The 2018 General Education Curriculum

Vietnam has continually revamped its education system to adapt to evolving societal and natural dynamics, prioritizing sustainable development (Nguyen, 2017). Below is Table 2.2 detailing the major educational reforms in Vietnam.

Table 2.2

Major educational reforms in Vietnam (Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, 2012)

Educational Reforms	Year
1	1950
2	1956
3	1981
4	2006
5	2018

Aiming to industrialize and modernize the country within a socialist-oriented market economy. Vietnam’s government introduced Resolution No. 29/NQ-TW. In 2014, Resolution No. 88/2014/QH13 was introduced to revamp K12 textbooks and curriculum. Following this, in 2015, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 404/QD-TTg, endorsing a strategy to reform the

General Education Curriculum (GEC) and textbooks. These reforms focus on fostering a competency-based general education curriculum, fostering an environment for holistic student development, instilling confidence, responsibility, and citizenship, and preparing them for the demands of globalization and the new industrial revolution (Nguyen, 2017).

Since 2018, Vietnam has renewed its general education curriculum to achieve a significant and well-rounded enhancement in the quality and effectiveness of general education.

There are several key elements in the new curriculum:

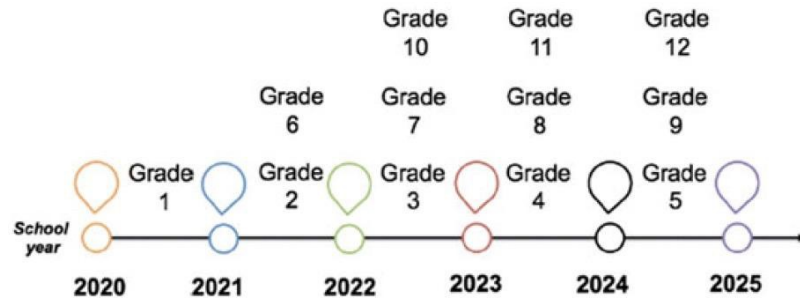
- integrating literacy, human development, and career focus
- shifting from a knowledge-based education to a holistic approach nurturing both qualities and skills
- aligning ethics, intellect, physical health, and aesthetics
- fostering the individual potential of every student (The National Assembly of Vietnam, 2014).

In addition, this program aims to empower students to become active, self-assured individuals equipped for career-oriented and lifelong learning. It seeks to instill admirable qualities and essential competencies required for responsible citizenship, fostering industriousness, creativity, and meeting personal and professional growth. Hence, students are poised to actively contribute to the country and humanity (MOET, 2018c).

By 2018, MOET had officially introduced the new K12 GEC nationwide (MOET, 2018d). This competence-focused curriculum spans two phases: basic education from grades 1 to 9 and professional orientation from grades 10 to 12. As of October 2021, it had been in place for two years in primary school and one year in Grade 6. The rollout was extended to upper secondary levels in 2022, ultimately replacing the 2006 curriculum.

Figure 2.2

The curriculum's implementation plan (Nguyen et al., 2020).



Some Features of the 2018 GEC

The 2018 GEC aims to reform K12 education with a multifaceted approach. Central to its mission is a shift towards emphasizing practical application over rote memorization, reducing the number of subjects while introducing new disciplines such as computer science at the elementary level. At the upper secondary level, the 2018 GEC introduces diverse pathways caterin to students' interests and aptitudes. It offers specialized tracks in social sciences, natural sciences, technology, or arts.

Compared to the 2006 curriculum, the updated one has fewer subjects, emphasizes interdisciplinary learning and integrates various sciences. Schools are transitioning from delivering knowledge through lectures to hands-on, experimental approaches. This shift requires teachers to adapt their teaching methods and undergo training. The government is also improving working conditions to enhance education quality. The new curriculum allows for more outdoor activities and allows upper secondary school students the choice of optional subjects. It aims for a standard base while allowing flexibility for local contexts, promoting active student engagement, and transforming teachers into facilitators guiding students' development of essential qualities and skills.

Table 2.3*Comparison between 2006 and 2018 GEC*

No.	Aspects	2006 GEC	2018 GEC
1	Orientation	Content	Competences
2	Stages	One stage	Two stages: – Grades 1 to 9: basic education – Grade 10 to 12: professional orientation with two types of subjects compulsory and elective
3	Approach to science subjects	Individual approaches for lower and upper secondary levels	– For the lower secondary level: integrated science subjects/Natural Science – For the upper secondary level: Individual ones: Physics, Chemistry, Biology
4	Textbooks	One set	Many sets approved by MOET
5	Number of subjects	17	13
6	Teaching and learning approach	Teacher-centered Limited experimental learning	Student-centered More experiential learning

Note. *From Renovation in Curriculum Design and Training Programs for Teacher Education in Vietnam (Nguyen, Pham & Pham, 2022)*

Qualities and Competencies in the New Curriculum

The new curriculum in Vietnam for K-12 education centers on fostering holistic student development aligned with national policies and resolutions. It prioritizes cultivating specific qualities essential for well-rounded individuals to contribute positively to society. These qualities—patriotism, compassion, diligence, honesty, and responsibility—are deeply rooted in Vietnamese culture and national identity, as outlined in government resolutions. The curriculum aims to integrate these virtues into students' learning experiences, emphasizing collective consciousness, a healthy lifestyle, hard work, creativity, and continuous self-improvement. By

focusing on these qualities, the educational system aims to nurture individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities and the nation at large.

The new curriculum emphasizes competencies crucial for student development, drawing on insights from various educational concepts. Competence, as outlined by Nguyen (2017) and supported by literature reviews, encompasses a combination of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes cultivated through learning and practical application. Students are expected to acquire generic competencies such as autonomy, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, and creativity across academic subjects. Additionally, professional competencies are honed through specific subjects like language, mathematics, sciences, and technology. This approach aims to foster not only core competencies but also students' special abilities or talents. Overall, the curriculum's focus on autonomy, communication, problem-solving, creativity, language, mathematics, science, technology, aesthetics, and physics aligns with the identified core competencies, ensuring a well-rounded development for students in Vietnam's general education system (Nguyen et al, 2020).

Regulations for Selecting Textbooks in General Education Institutions

At the time of this study, upper-secondary schools followed Circular No. 25/2020/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2020d) in the academic year 2022-2023 on the regulations for selecting textbooks in general education institutions. General education institutions are mandated to adhere to specific guidelines: (1) They must choose textbooks from the Ministry of Education and Training's approved list; and (2) For each subject or educational activity collectively referred to as "subjects" within a grade, institutions are required to select one or multiple textbooks; and (3) It is imperative to uphold principles of transparency, openness, and legal compliance. The primary criteria for textbook adoption include (1) alignment with the socio-economic

characteristics of the local area and (2) suitability for the teaching and learning conditions prevalent in general education institutions.

The Procedure for Textbook Selection

According to Circular No. 25/2020/TT-BGDĐT, the Council for Textbook Selection, or the Council, is established by the provincial People's Committee to assist the provincial People's Committee in organizing the selection of textbooks. For each grade level, a Council is formed with a minimum of 15 members, an odd number, including at least two-thirds of members being heads of specialized departments and teachers actively teaching the subjects at that grade level. The Council aims to facilitate the textbook selection process for educational institutions. However, on December 28th, 2023 the MOET issued Circular No. 27/2023/TT-BGDĐT on regulations on textbook selection in general education institutions. It involves each school establishing its own Council, led by the principal. This emphasizes the pivotal roles of the head of the specialized team and subject teachers.

Additionally, the Circular in 2023 incorporates a novel feature where the provincial People's Committee publicly releases the approved textbook catalog, promoting proactive engagement in textbook selection by students and parents. This transparency initiative aims to empower stakeholders by providing them with accessible information to make informed choices. Furthermore, the Circular in 2023 allows schools to propose adjustments or additions to the catalog. It aims to leverage feedback from teachers, students, and parents to create a more responsive and adaptive system geared towards continuous enhancement.

The comparison regarding the textbook adoption process between the two Circulars is detailed in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4

Comparison of textbook selection procedures in 2020 and 2023

Steps	Circular No. 25/2020/TT-BGDDT (MOET, 2020d)	Circular No. 27/2023/TT-BGDDT (MOET, 2023a)
1	<p>General education institutions propose the selection of textbooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution’s specialized team researches, discusses, and evaluates textbooks, choosing at least one per subject through secret balloting. The proposed catalog, signed by the team leader and teachers, is submitted for approval by the institution’s head. - The general education institution’s leadership, including the head, deputy head, specialized team leader, and a Parents’ Representative Board representative, assesses recommended textbooks. They select one per subject, submitting the chosen catalog to the Department of Education and Training (DOET) or the Division of Education and Training. The general education institution’s catalog is signed by its head and the specialized team leaders. 	<p>The Council establishes a plan for organizing the selection of textbooks for the general education institution; assigns tasks to the members of the Council.</p>
2	<p>The Division of Education and Training synthesizes and reports to the DOET the catalog of textbooks proposed for selection, arranged in order of the number of general education institutions proposing selection from high to low.</p>	<p>The head of the subject-specialized team plans and organizes the selection of textbooks for each subject within the team, reporting it to the head of the institution. The entire teaching staff participates in selecting textbooks, with the head organizing research, discussions, and a vote for each subject. The chosen textbook, supported by at least half of the teachers, is then compiled into a catalog with signatures from the head and an assigned person.</p>
3	<p>The DOET synthesizes, and transfers to the Council of the textbook catalog proposed for selection by general education institutions, arranged in order of the number of general education institutions proposing selection from high to low.</p>	<p>The council meets, discusses, and evaluates the organization of textbook selection by specialized teams; reviews the minutes of the specialized team meetings, teacher evaluations, and assessments of textbooks; compiles the results of textbook selection by specialized teams into a report, which is signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Council.</p>
4	<p>The Council organizes the selection of textbooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chairperson of the Council assigns members to study, review, and evaluate textbooks based on the selection criteria at least 7 days before the first meeting of the Council. - The Council conducts meetings, discussions, and evaluations of textbooks; votes secretly to select one or more textbooks for each subject. - The Council consolidates the results of the textbook selection into a record, signed by the attending members, and submits it to the DOET. 	<p>The Council proposes to the head of the general education institution the list of textbooks that has been selected by the specialized teams.</p>
5	<p>The DOET synthesizes the results of textbook selection by the Council and submits them to the Provincial People’s Committee for review and decision.</p>	<p>The general education institution compiles a dossier of selected textbooks and submits it to the Division of Education and Training (for primary and lower secondary education) or the DOET (for upper secondary education).</p>
6	<p>Based on the results of textbook selection by the Councils submitted by the DOET, the Provincial People’s Committee decides to approve the catalog of textbooks for use in general education institutions at the local level.</p>	<p>The provincial People’s Committee publishes the approved list of textbooks for use in general education institutions on public media; directs the DOET to announce the approved list of textbooks to local general education institutions before April 30 each year.</p>

Summary

In conclusion, this chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of the contextual factors shaping this study. This chapter delves into the historical backdrop of Vietnam alongside Vietnam's linguistic nuances and recognizes their profound impact on the educational framework. The intricate details of the educational system, coupled with the trajectory of English language education, set the groundwork for understanding the pivotal changes ushered in by the 2018 GEC. Of particular significance is the autonomy granted to schoolteachers, particularly upper secondary school English teachers, allowing them to select their instructional materials and implement their chosen textbooks for the academic year 2022-2023. As a transition into the next chapter, the focus will shift toward a literature review on teacher agency within the school curriculum and the realm of teacher professional development through the lens of the Vietnamese educational context.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with an in-depth exploration of the concept of teacher agency, its characteristics and the current manifestations of teacher agency within the educational framework of Vietnam. The subsequent section introduces the theoretical framework that underpins this research study. Subsequently, the focus shifts towards the domain of teacher professional development, including both its overarching principles and its specific manifestations within the Vietnamese educational context. The chapter ends with the extant research on teacher professional development initiatives in Vietnam, with a particular emphasis on training programs associated with the 2018 General Education Curriculum.

Teacher Agency in the School Curriculum

Human Agency

The concept of ‘human agency’ finds its roots in social science (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), and has been extensively theorized to address individual and social change, effectively tackling global challenges (Bandura, 2018). Fuchs (2001) shed light on the dichotomy within social research on agency, oscillating between an over-socialized, macro perspective and overly individualized notions. Recent attempts to reconcile this dichotomy involve frameworks like

The definition of agency has been approached from various perspectives. Agency is described as “the ability of actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure” (Calhoun, 2002, p. 7), echoing the earlier definition in the Collins Dictionary of Sociology (Jary & Jary, 1991) as “the power of actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure” (p. 10). According to Priestley et al. (2015), agency involves the ability to undertake deliberate action independently and in freedom. This includes

breaking free from constraints imposed by rules and regulations in teachers' professional activity (Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2016).

Priestley et al. (2016a) outlined three primary perspectives on conceptualizing human agency: "agency as variable, agency as capacity, and agency as phenomenon" (p. 20). In addition, agency is shaped by several critical factors, encompassing a blend of environmental, personal, and behavioral contextual elements, known as determinants (Bandura, 2006). Bandura discussed the four core properties of agency. Firstly, *intentionality* involves forming intentions with action plans as well as strategies and recognizing the need for accommodating self-interests in collective pursuits. *Forethought*, the second property, extends agency temporally, incorporating goal-setting and anticipation of outcomes to guide and motivate efforts. *Self-reactiveness*, the third agentic property, emphasizes the role of agents as self-regulators, actively constructing and regulating courses of action. Lastly, *self-reflectiveness* involves individuals examining their own functioning, reflecting on personal efficacy, the soundness of thoughts and actions, and making corrective adjustments. Together, these properties contribute to the multifaceted nature of human agency including intentional planning, foresight, self-regulation, and metacognitive reflection.

Teacher Agency

Teachers who embrace agency feel empowered to guide their own learning, make informed decisions, and view themselves as active learners capable of thoughtful reflection on the outcomes of their choices (Priestley et al., 2015). Furthermore, when teachers possess confidence in exercising agency, they are more likely to discover meaningfulness in their profession (Priestley et al., 2016b). This sense of purpose not only bolsters their commitment to being effective educators but also motivates additional efforts in professional development. In

essence, the presence of teacher agency significantly contributes to the advancement of language teachers' professional practice (Bao et al., 2020).

In addition, educators are acknowledged as the key influencers in shaping and carrying out educational policies, as they actively participate in policy implementation within their classrooms, and directly impact the learning environment for students (Anderson, 2010; Priestley et al., 2012). Educators also play a vital role in adapting existing educational settings to meet the diverse needs of all learners (Pellicano et al., 2018). Many education authorities expect teachers to possess the knowledge and capability to create or adapt formal curricula to align with the school context (Leite et al., 2018) and to participate actively in curriculum development at the school level (Biesta et al., 2015). Although the implementation of curriculum change demands professional teacher agency (Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2017), many teachers encounter challenges in fulfilling this expectation.

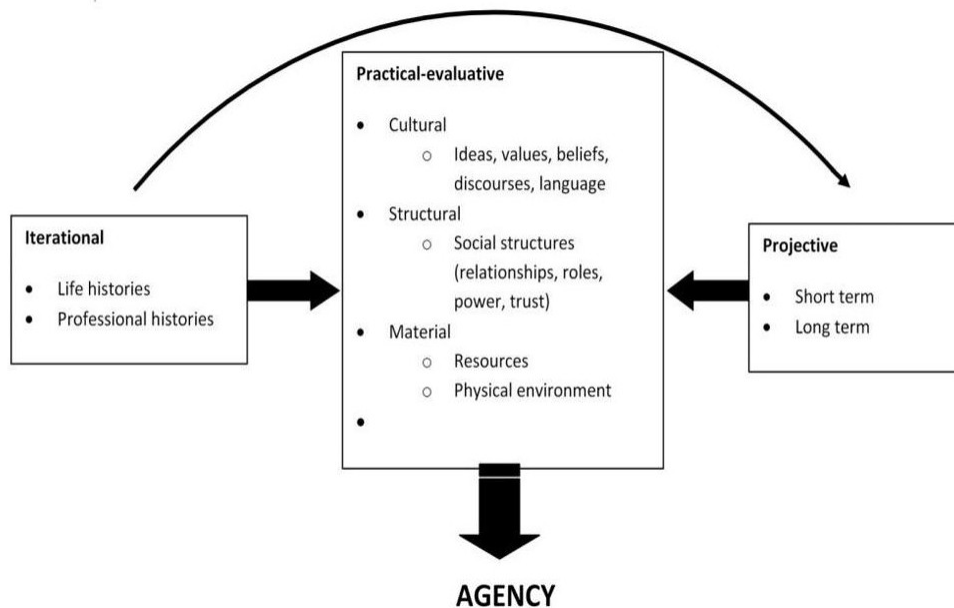
Teacher agency involves teachers actively seeking to influence curriculum changes at different levels within the educational system to achieve desired outcomes. Educational researchers have recently focused on discussing the types and levels of agency enacted by teachers. Some argue that agency should be recognized rather than measured, emphasizing that it is not a possession but an action and an accomplishment (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Oliveira, 2012). The ecological approach to agency, highlighted by Biesta et al. (2015) and Campbell (2012), highlights the inseparability of teacher agency from their operating contexts. This perspective frames teachers as “actors acting by-means-of-an-environment,” characterizing teacher action as a response to their environment (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 18).

Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2013) formulated a visual representation of teacher agency, depicted in Figure 3.1, drawing direct inspiration from Emirbayer and Mische's (1998)

conceptualization of agency. This model emphasizes that agency, whether in professional or personal contexts, is shaped by past experiences. It stresses the future-oriented nature of agency, combining short-term and long-term goals and values. Moreover, agency is always enacted within a specific context, constrained and supported by available cultural, structural, and material resources. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) identify these three dimensions as the *iterational*, the *projective*, and the *practical-evaluative* dimensions. While all three dimensions play a role in concrete actions, their contributions vary. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) describe them as a “chordal triad of agency within which all three dimensions resonate as separate but not always harmonious tones” (p. 972).

Figure 3.1

Understanding teacher agency by Priestley, Biesta & Robinson (2013)



The *iterational* aspect emphasizes the selective reactivation of past patterns of thought and action, providing stability to social universes. Teachers’ agency, rooted in personal capacity, beliefs, and values, is influenced by their past experiences. Teacher education plays a crucial role

in shaping these experiences and developing a reflective mindset. The *projective* dimension is concerned with the imaginative generation of possible future trajectories of action, linked to actors' hopes and desires. Teachers' aspirations, whether positive or narrowly instrumental, are shaped by prior experiences and professional contexts. The *practical-evaluative* dimension highlights the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments in response to evolving situations. Context and structure, both social and material, play a crucial role in shaping agency. Conflicting pressures and relationships in schools significantly impact the practical-evaluative dimension of teacher agency, emphasizing the importance of context and its transformation over time.

The study by Priestly et al. (2015) highlights the significance of teacher agency as it is an emergent phenomenon shaped by continually shifting contexts, reflecting past experiences and orienting towards future objectives. Recognizing agency as an achievement rather than just a capacity emphasizes the significance of context in disabling or enabling individuals. Policymakers should consider contextual factors that impact teachers' agentic capacity, challenging the notion of solely focusing on capacity building. The distinction between autonomy and agency is essential; autonomy alone may not lead to agency if teachers reproduce habitual behavior. Policy specifications can empower teachers, allowing them to actively adapt to meet both curricular goals and local needs. This perspective aligns with the notion put forth by Baldauf (2012) who argued that teachers' individual agency may be so significant as to "compromise the impact of a national language policy" (p. 240).

The ecological approach to teacher agency provides a framework for policymakers and educators to understand, support, and enhance the complex dynamics shaping teacher decision-making and actions. Ultimately, recognizing and fostering teacher agency can lead to more

effective, reflective, and student-focused educational practices, challenging misguided regulations that have constrained teachers for decades.

Teacher Agency in Language Education

The discourse in language policy has transitioned from focusing on actors with the power to initiate language change (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) to those influencing language change (Zhao & Baldauf, 2012). Teacher agency has consequently received increased attention, with teachers now recognized as pivotal decision-makers (Baldauf, 2012). Their agentic role is a crucial factor in implementing and responding to policy changes (Hamid, 2010; Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Numerous studies have delved into teacher agency, exploring their responses in mediating, and negotiating among policies, pedagogical practices, and institutional constraints (e.g., Campbell, 2012; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Priestley et al., 2012; Vähäsantanen, 2015).

Numerous empirical studies on teacher agency within the realm of English language education have been carried out across diverse contexts, such as the USA (Vitanova, 2018), Japan (Ishihara et al., 2018), Vietnam (Le et al., 2021), China (Liu et al., 2020), and Finland (Pappa et al., 2019). These investigations consistently reveal that teacher agency becomes evident through teachers' commitment, resistance, and negotiation with national policies and educational practices. For example, Ishihara et al. (2018) investigated two English native speakers teaching in Japan, discovering that despite the official directive for English-only classrooms, the teachers employed Japanese as a translingual practice. The teachers justified this approach, highlighting that translingual practice facilitated interaction with students and “made pedagogies accessible and culturally relevant” (p. 89).

Regarding the influence of micro-aspects on language teacher agency, Vitanova (2018) utilized narrative inquiry to investigate how gender, race, and culture act as mediators for this construct. The results of this study illuminate a crucial understanding that agency is a manifestation of social responsibility and active involvement in discussions related to race and gender, both within and beyond the classroom setting. At its core, teacher agency is shaped by the interplay of specific sociocultural contexts and individual lived experiences. Hence, a significant implication is that teacher educators must openly tackle these issues and assume a prominent role in nurturing conversations on social justice and equity among second-language teachers within the profession.

Regarding factors influencing teacher agency, studies by Liu et al. (2020) and Pappa et al. (2019) provide valuable insights. Liu et al. (2020) emphasized the creation of open spaces for teacher agency through interpreting policy discourses and fostering a community of practice. Pappa et al. (2019) highlighted positive elements such as autonomy, openness to change, teacher versatility, and a collegial community as encouragers of teacher agency. On the contrary, institutional delays and administrator ignorance were identified as factors closing these spaces, resulting in resistance to top-down policy implementation (Liu et al., 2020). Additionally, constraints on teacher agency manifest in the form of language and classroom-related tensions, coupled with limited temporal, material, and developmental resources (Pappa et al., 2019).

Examining the landscape of teacher agency in Vietnam through various studies reveals a similar dynamic nature of teacher agency. Le et al. (2021) conducted a case study examining how primary Vietnamese teachers implemented English teaching methods as stipulated by the policy. The findings demonstrated that these teachers exercised their agency by negotiating and adapting policy directives, particularly concerning child-friendly teaching activities, to better suit

their classroom circumstances. Tran (2019) specifically delved into the experiences of 20 English teachers transitioning from instructing languages such as Chinese, Russian, and French to teaching exclusively English at a leading Vietnamese university. The impetus for this shift stemmed from a growing shortage of English teachers and reduced demand for teachers of other languages. In response, these educators were encouraged to pivot to English proficiency to secure their positions within the institutions. The study examines different facets of teacher agency such as their perceptions, feelings, interpretations, improvisations, and judgments in response to this significant change. The study's insights revealed that teachers' responses to this transition were intricate and contradictory. Teacher agency in this scenario was not a straightforward reaction of resistance or accommodation. Instead, it was a dynamic and nuanced process.

In conclusion, these studies collectively have highlighted the dynamic nature of teacher agency in navigating their teaching profession and policy changes. Teachers exhibit a range of responses, from negotiation and adaptation to resistance, influenced by factors such as institutional support, resource availability, and individual beliefs. Understanding these complexities is crucial for informing effective teacher education practices and policy implementation strategies that foster a collaborative and supportive environment for teachers. However, it is important to note that there is limited research regarding upper secondary school English teachers' agency, especially during the textbook adoption and implementation process that happened in Vietnam during the academic year 2022-2023. This specific area warrants further investigation.

Figured Worlds as a Framework to Understand Teacher Agency

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) initially introduced the notion of Figured Worlds in their influential work “Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds.” This concept is an integral component of Holland et al.’s (1998) broader theory of self and identity. Figured Worlds are intricately connected to the process of identity construction. Figured Worlds constitute one of the four contexts identified by Holland et al. as spaces where identities are constructed. Individuals “figure” their identities by actively engaging in activities within these Figured Worlds, interacting with social types present in these contexts, and forming social connections with those who participate in these worlds. It is within Figured Worlds that people undergo the process of developing new identities.

To formulate their theory, Holland et al. (1998) synthesized ideas from various, occasionally contradictory, schools of thought such as culturalists, constructivists, and universalists, drawing inspiration from the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1981). Holland et al. (1998) provided a comprehensive definition of Figured Worlds as spaces where “specific characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52). In this realm, individuals engage in both conceptual (cognitive) and material/procedural (performative) processes to generate new self-understandings (identities).

According to Holland et al. (1998), Figured Worlds possess four key characteristics:

- 1. Cultural phenomena:* Individuals are recruited into or enter Figured Worlds, evolving through participant efforts.
- 2. Contexts of meaning:* Figured Worlds give significance to social encounters and anchor activities in specific times and places.

3. *Socially organized and reproduced*: Figured Worlds lead to the sorting of individuals and diverse relational dynamics.

4. *Allocation of individuals*: In Figured Worlds, people are placed in different roles, connecting them to various social contexts and allowing them a sense of personal identity.

This framework is instrumental in comprehending the experiences of upper secondary school English teachers in Vietnam, portraying them as conscious actors actively involved in constructing their worlds in response to policy implementations and change. The teachers' responses are intricately shaped by their past and ongoing engagements in English teaching realms, as well as their interactions with other actors within these domains, including colleagues and leaders. This perspective provides valuable insights into the complexities of teachers' responses to transitions. It sheds light on the dynamic nature of the ongoing process of change and teacher agency (Varghese & Snyder, 2018).

Moreover, the concept of Figured Worlds relies on people interacting and understanding each other to continue existing (Urrieta, 2007). In the context of upper secondary school English teachers in Vietnam, this intersubjectivity fosters a collective agency and enables a nuanced understanding of their shared agency. The Figured Worlds framework helps identify the opportunities and obstacles faced by new teachers as they try to take charge and influence these social contexts. Using Figured Worlds allows for establishing a connection between individual identity formation, the learning process, and a larger shared understanding or collective identity. This approach proves effective in exploring teachers' engagement across diverse contexts (Varghese & Snyder, 2018) and their relationship with language policy implementation (Plaisance, 2014). Thus, the concept of Figured Worlds serves as a lens through which to analyze

the intricate interplay between teachers, their experiences, and the socio-cultural contexts within the educational landscape.

For the purpose of this study, it is essential to regard upper secondary English teachers as active participants operating within the intricately structured milieu of the Vietnamese educational system. Within this framework, teachers inhabit a figured world that is both socially constructed and perpetuated. Embedded within this cultural and social landscape are prescribed roles that teachers navigate throughout various stages, including textbook adoption, implementation processes, and professional development endeavors. These roles not only shape the trajectory of their teaching practices but also influence the broader educational landscape in which they operate, which highlights the interconnectedness between individual agency and systemic dynamics within the educational context.

In this study, the notion of Figured Worlds serves as a template to explore the intricate experiences of upper secondary school English teachers in Vietnam during textbook adoption and implementation processes. The lens of *space* investigates the transitional spaces teachers navigate, encompassing physical, curricular, and policy-driven dimensions. *Improvisation* focuses on how teachers craft responses to challenges posed by new instructional materials, creating spaces for change within their teaching practices. *Judgments* explore the evaluative processes teachers employ in response to the reform process. *Acts* scrutinize specific behaviors in textbook processes, contributing to the shaping of their Figured Worlds. *Interpretation* unravels how teachers make sense of changes and transition through different stages of the reform process. Finally, *contributors* shed light on the roles and contributions of various actors, influencing and shaping teachers' Figured Worlds. Through these lenses, Figured Worlds

becomes a powerful tool to analyze the interplay between teachers, their experiences, and socio-cultural contexts in education.

Teacher Professional Development

Definitions of Teacher Professional Development

Professional development (PD) refers to the process through which educators enhance their subject matter expertise and learn new instructional strategies, thereby improving their teaching methods (Liu, Hallinger, & Feng 2016). Teacher professional development (TPD) is defined as the process of teachers learning, learning to learn, and applying their knowledge in practice to support student learning (Avalos, 2011). TPD unfolds across a spectrum of environments and through a blend of methodologies. Educators may engage in structured courses, partake in self-reflection regarding their instructional methods, or collaboratively observe and discuss their peers' teaching styles. Moreover, learning opportunities arise in both orchestrated and spontaneous contexts. Formal, structured discussions among educators provide planned learning experiences, while impromptu dialogues with peers—whether these occur adjacent to teaching sessions or during parental engagements—offer informal learning moments. Ultimately, the process of teacher learning is not confined to a single approach but is realized through diverse and flexible pathways.

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) defines TPD broadly, including activities that enhance skills, knowledge, and expertise. This can occur through various means, including formal courses, workshops, collaborations between schools, coaching/mentoring, and sharing of effective practices. TPD is defined as “activities that develop an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher.” Similarly, PD, as noted by *What Is Professional Development in Education?* (Western Governors University,

2021), extends beyond traditional settings (e.g., seminars) to include informal avenues such as individual research, reading, classroom observation, and peer discussions. In Norway, teachers in secondary schools have shown significant participation in formal training and education, leading to high formal competence (Hagen & Nyen, 2009, as cited in Postholm, 2012). The core objective of PD, irrespective of the medium through which it occurs, remains consistent: to advance the educational experiences and outcomes for both teachers and their students (Mizell, 2010).

Characteristics of Teacher Professional Development

Professional Development Definition (2024) emphasizes the diverse nature of professional development in education, ranging from specialized training to advanced learning. This ongoing learning opportunity, funded by various sources, takes varied formats such as conferences, workshops, online sessions, and degree programs. Buczynski and Hansen (2010) also demonstrate that teacher learning not only enhances their skills but also positively affects student learning outcomes. The role of teachers has evolved, with increased collaborative time outside of classroom teaching contributing to practice-oriented learning and positive impacts on student outcomes, particularly notable three to five years after training. This is supported by the concept of 'adaptive expertise' described by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), which emphasizes continuous learning.

While seen as vital for school success and teacher satisfaction, PD has faced criticism related to cost and vaguely determined goals. Pedder and Opfer (2011) highlighted the complexity of the professional development system, involving individual teachers, school systems, and various interactions. In this intricate landscape, PD was viewed as a learning process contributing to teachers' development and expertise, shaped by situational elements

within the complex system. In an international meta-study based on 97 research projects in primary and secondary schools, Timperley et al. (2007) examined the effect of teachers' professional development on student learning outcomes. The activities in these studies, conducted over a period of six months to two years, were aligned with existing political objectives. They focused on students' personal, social, and academic achievements. The study identified seven key elements in a professional learning context:

1. *Extended learning opportunities*: Providing enough time for extended learning opportunities and effective use of this time.
2. *Engaging external expertise*: Involvement of external experts in the learning process.
3. *Teacher engagement*: Focusing on engaging teachers in the learning process, regardless of whether they volunteered.
4. *Challenging discourses*: Addressing and challenging problematic discourses within the learning environment.
5. *Professional community interaction*: Providing opportunities for teachers to interact within a professional community.
6. *Alignment with policy trends*: Ensuring the content of professional development is consistent with wider policy trends.
7. *Leadership in school-based initiatives*: Having leaders actively lead and facilitate professional learning opportunities in school-based initiatives.

In terms of factors that contribute to the enhancement of TPD, Postholm (2012) highlighted several key elements. Firstly, the establishment of a nurturing and positive school environment, supported by clear guidelines and proactive leadership, is foundational for effective teacher education. Another significant factor is the integration of external resources and

expertise, combined with the adoption of educational reforms. Additionally, empowering teachers to take the lead in driving professional development initiatives can reignite their enthusiasm for teaching and drive their professional growth. Finally, it is essential to recognize the importance of continuous, collaborative professional development and gain a nuanced understanding of its dynamics. Research by McMahon et al. (2007) and Parise & Spillane (2010) further highlights the value teachers place on further education that is directly linked to their teaching practice.

Teacher Professional Development in Vietnam's Education

In the PD landscape of Vietnam, professional groups within schools serve as official platforms for educators to engage in and exchange PD activities. The MOET has emphasized the renewal of these groups to foster interaction, mutual support, and a focus on student learning activities. MOET advocates for two main forms of PD: lesson study-based activities and theme-based teacher-learning activities (MOET, 2018e, 2020a). However, these interactive and practical forms of PD are not widespread in Vietnam and have not been extensively explored by educational researchers (Phan, 2017).

At the policy level, Vietnam's MOET, as outlined in guideline Official Dispatch No. 5555, envisions a comprehensive transformation of teacher professional development (TPD) in schools, emphasizing elevated teaching quality through innovative methods, improved testing, and refined student assessment. The policy encourages active participation of managers and teachers in content selection, fostering active learning, self-reliance, and creativity. It promotes the adoption of active teaching methods, integration of thematic teaching processes, and familiarity with online training and professional activities. The guideline employs a three-dimensional evaluation of TPD consisting of assessing teaching plans and materials, organization

of learning activities, and students' activities (MOET, 2014b). In addition, Circular 20/2018/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2018e) emphasizes promoting core teachers as mentors for professional development. Moreover, it highlights the importance of addressing the limitations through self-improvement and school policies which promote professional exchange forums or learning communities.

Employing the three-dimensional approach suggested by the Vietnamese MOET, Hai and Linh (2022) conducted a study to evaluate TPD in terms of (i) teaching plans and materials; (ii) organization of learning activities; and (iii) students' activities. The research revealed a positive moderate to high correlation between teaching plans and materials, organization of learning activities, and students' activities. Additionally, an inverse correlation was observed between the average age of teachers and the organization of learning activities, indicating that older teachers tended to underestimate its implementation. Consequently, the study recommended targeted professional development activities for older teacher groups, urging teachers to enhance their expertise in utilizing teaching materials for effective learning activities. Despite experienced teachers being assigned as mentors, there was an underestimation of their ability to organize learning activities, indicating the need for changing perceptions within the profession. Education reform in Vietnam should consider this aspect.

Extending into the realm of instructional leadership, Nguyen et al. (2023) examined the pivotal role of principals in TPD. The study, conducted across 12 schools, involved interviews with principals and teachers. It was found that TPD was highly valued by both groups. Principals supported various professional learning activities and strongly influence school operations and teacher development. Teachers generally viewed principal leadership positively, indicating its

significant role in their professional growth. The study contributed to understanding the status and impact of principal instructional leadership in Vietnamese education.

In the primary education sector, Nguyen et al. (2023) explored the professional learning community (PLC) among primary teachers. The researchers highlighted the persistence of traditional habits in professional learning and structural issues such as scheduling and facilities, economic constraints of teachers as well as varying levels of motivation for educational reforms. These challenges are significant in the context of Vietnam's ongoing educational reforms and underscore the need for adapting PLCs to local conditions and ensuring continuous professional development for teachers to enhance the effectiveness of PLCs in improving teaching practices and student outcomes.

Through a sociocultural lens, Pham et al. (2023) explored TPD among primary school teachers and highlighted three core TPD characteristics: self-directedness, collegiality, and situatedness. *Self-directedness* was prominent, with themes for professional activities often proposed by principals or teachers, depending on the scale of the activity. *Collegiality* was particularly vital during the stages of developing and analyzing research lessons for lesson study-based activities, as well as in the preparatory and follow-up stages of theme-based activities. Regarding *situatedness*, teachers actively collaborated, shared ideas, and discussed challenges, although more experienced teachers sometimes played a more dominant role in these discussions. The study found that professional activities were closely linked to the practical aspects of teaching and learning, aligning with the needs of the new general education program, and addressing specific difficulties faced by students. Teachers' active participation in PD activities was generally high but varied due to personal and contextual factors, such as age, technology skills, financial difficulties, and family responsibilities.

At the tertiary level, French et al. (2023) scrutinized the impact of policy reform on the development of teacher educator (TE) professional competencies and identities in Vietnam, amidst broader educational reform. The research, initially aimed at evaluating the influence of a proposed circular for professional standards, shifted focus to examining TE identities after the policy's withdrawal. Conducted through semi-structured interviews with five TEs from various higher education institutions in North Central Vietnam, the study revealed a limited understanding among TEs of professional identity and its relation to a national competencies framework. This study highlighted an area for professional development that could be addressed through targeted training programs. It also underscored the importance of creating a framework for professional competencies that is supportive rather than restrictive, allowing TEs to grow autonomously and find satisfaction in their evolving roles. The research implied that professional development initiatives should be carefully designed to enhance TEs' self-perception and capabilities, ensuring that such programs contribute constructively to the individual's professional trajectory and the broader educational landscape.

Together, these studies offer a comprehensive overview of PD in Vietnam, spanning from primary to higher education. They indicate a shifting PD paradigm that addresses both individual and systemic requirements. Nonetheless, a notable research gap exists, particularly concerning upper secondary school English teachers' TPD especially in the context of textbook adoption and implementation during the academic year 2022-2023. Investigating this area can yield valuable insights to enhance the support provided to upper secondary school English teachers as they engage in TPD, navigate educational reforms, and exercise their agency.

Preparing Teachers for the 2018 General Education Curriculum

In December 2018, the MOET introduced the 2018 GEC which aimed at enhancing students' skills and abilities. This shift in educational objectives necessitated modifications in the curriculum, teaching approaches, and forms of education, along with changes in the evaluation and assessment of student learning outcomes and performance. To achieve the goals of the 2018 GEC as detailed in Chapter 2, it became imperative to enhance the competence of teachers, as they constitute the fundamental team responsible for executing the curriculum.

The MOET in Vietnam has established various legal documents to set professional standards and guidelines for teacher competency in alignment with the GEC. These legal frameworks are crucial in shaping the development and execution of teacher training programs to meet contemporary educational needs. Key documents include (1) Circular 20/2018/TT-BGDĐT on professional standards for teachers in public educational institutions; (2) Circular 32/TT-BGDĐT (2018), which details the Vietnamese General Educational Curriculum, setting the educational standards and expectations and (3) Circular 17/2019/TT-BGDĐT, which specifies the regular training program for teachers in public educational institutions. These foundational documents not only guide the creation and implementation of teacher training programs in line with the GEC's requirements but also serve as a benchmark for evaluating the overall quality of education in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, the MOET has designated seven major pedagogical universities (PUs) to develop new teacher training programs and foster the continuous professional development of general teachers in accordance with the annual requirements of educational human resources (MOET, 2019a, 2019b). These PUs include Thai Nguyen University of Education, Hanoi National University of Education, Hanoi National University of Education 2, Hue University of

Education, Danang University of Education, Vinh University of Education and Ho Chi Minh City University of Education. These institutions have been tasked with upskilling the existing teaching workforce and with preparing future pedagogical students to fulfill the GEC standards as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

The responsibilities and roles of teachers and professors within the GEC

Roles	Descriptions	Responsibilities
Key lecturer (KL)	The professors comply with MOET’s professional benchmarks and are associated with seven leading pedagogical universities in Vietnam.	Research the new GEC, educate teachers nationwide about its aims, concepts, subject matter, teaching approaches, and assessment techniques. Also, stay connected with local educators to consistently update teaching methods, assure training quality, and effectively roll out the new GEC.
Core teacher (CT)	Teachers in general education institutions have at least five years of direct teaching experience, understand the educational environment, possess good professional skills, and are respected in their school community. They are capable of advising and supporting colleagues in professional development and activities.	Following training by Key Lecturers, Core Teachers are responsible for creating a training plan for local General Teachers (GTs). Once GTs receive their online learning accounts, they assist their peers during the online learning phase, with CTs providing support and feedback through the system. Based on local circumstances, CTs, who are the first to access the content, will also share this knowledge with GTs during their self-study sessions
General teacher (GT)	Teachers have been trained at pedagogical universities nationwide, work in general educational institutions (schools) and meet the required teaching ethics standards.	Engage in training sessions on the GEC, conducted by the CTs team, along with programs offered by the MOET and the ETEP. Independently research the updates in the GEC for discussions with CTs. Create fresh lesson plans for student instruction and implement teaching in accordance with the new General Education standards.

Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP)

The Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP), supervised by the World Bank and initiated by the MOET in 2017, is a key initiative for training teachers to meet the requirements of the new GEC. The program has three primary objectives: (1) fostering competency development and enhancing the role of selected PUs and academies in teacher training and re-training, (2) boosting the management and policy-making capabilities of educational agencies at all levels, and (3) supporting the professional development of teachers through these selected PUs and academies.

This approach streamlined the training process, allowing teachers to receive direct and expert guidance without the need for multiple courses, as was common in previous models. A crucial element of this program is the training of core teachers, conducted through a Learning Management System (LMS) that utilizes tested and approved materials from PUs, ensuring effective pedagogical training. This system adopts a flexible, real-time approach to cater to different learning contexts. It combines online and face-to-face methods, following a 5-3-7 and 7-2-7 model which includes days of online learning, face-to-face sessions, and online self-study.

This method, developed by the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education and endorsed by the MOET, aims to enhance personal competency development and orient teachers towards GEC competencies. CTs play a pivotal role in this re-training model, supporting GTs in self-study and consultation. The ETEP introduced nine new GEC training modules for teachers at various levels to develop professional competencies and meet GEC standards. These modules are essential in the successful implementation of the GEC, promoting regular, continuous, and lifelong learning amidst educational innovation and in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3.2*Nine modules in the Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP) by the MOET*

No	Module	Content
1	An introduction to GEC & Implementation Guide (Compulsory)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GEC's Main ideas and development perspectives 2. Objectives and requirements to be achieved regarding the qualities and competencies of elementary/secondary school students 3. Development of lesson plans and incorporating the GEC's curriculum. 4. GEC's required teaching methodologies, tailored to both the overall and subject-specific curricula. 5. Assessment of student learning outcomes, aligning with the comprehensive general and subject-specific programs. 6. Prerequisites for the effective implementation of the GEC.
2	Implementing teaching techniques to foster students' competencies and qualities (Compulsory)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embracing contemporary teaching and educational methods to enhance students' abilities and qualities. 2. Choosing and utilizing suitable teaching techniques for students' competency and quality development in various subjects and educational activities as per the GEC. 3. Developing and applying effective educational strategies that cater to students of all levels.
3	Orienting assessment and evaluation towards the development of learners' competencies and qualities (Compulsory)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopting current trends in educational assessment and evaluation to cultivate students' skills and qualities. 2. Employing various testing methods to measure students' learning outcomes in both academic and educational contexts. 3. Creating assessment tools to gauge student progress and competencies. 4. Using these results to improve teaching methods.
4	Crafting lesson plans focused on developing learners' competencies and qualities (Compulsory)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addressing the key aspects of designing lesson plans aimed at enhancing students' skills and qualities. 2. Formulating individual teaching and education plans for the academic year. 3. Analyzing and developing subject-specific curricula and educational activities.
5	Counseling and supporting students in their educational activities (Optional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the psychophysiological characteristics of students. 2. Developing and implementing psychological counseling topics, integrated into educational subjects and activities. 3. Establishing channels for student counseling and support within the school.
6	Building school culture (Optional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing the importance of cultivating school culture, including the roles of teachers and students. 2. Establishing and promoting the school's fundamental values. 3. Planning, executing, and monitoring initiatives to create a healthy and welcoming school environment.

Table 3.2 (cont.)

No	Module	Content
7	Building safe schools and preventing violence (Optional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addressing the fundamentals of creating safe educational environments and preventing school violence. 2. Identifying potential risks and formulating strategies for school safety and violence prevention. 3. Implementing rules and communications for safety in schools.
8	Collaborating with families and society for moral and lifestyle education (Optional)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlighting the roles and benefits of school, family, and societal collaboration in moral and lifestyle education. 2. Detailing cooperative efforts between schools, families, and society in this regard. 3. Developing coordinated action plans involving teachers and families for moral education at all student levels.
9	Utilizing information technology and technology equipment in education (Compulsory)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing the role of information technology, digital resources, and technological equipment in teaching. 2. Employing software and technological tools to support student learning activities. 3. Integrating information technology and digital resources in educational activities at schools.

There has been limited research in evaluating the ETEP program for the 2018 GEC. Huynh’s 2022 study highlights various obstacles in this program. These challenges include reluctance among teachers to transition into Core Teacher roles due to stress and a preference for conventional training methods, leading to a small percentage discontinuing after initial training. Additionally, there is a notable lack of initiative in developing new skills and adapting to updated educational practices. A generational divide among educators and resistance to novel training approaches or textbook updates also impede readiness. These issues are compounded by the somewhat passive involvement of PUs in embracing new teaching methodologies.

Furthermore, Huynh (2022) identified several issues in terms of reform implementation. GTs often viewed re-training and initial training merely as tasks, lacking full understanding and motivation, particularly in the early modules. Despite initial enthusiasm in attending training sessions, GTs’ engagement tended to wane post-training, especially when learning experiences

were not shared with Core Teachers (CTs). A notable number of GTs, between 2% and 3.5% across 19 Vietnamese provinces, withdrew from the program after each module, indicating a lack of interest and difficulty in adapting to the GEC's educational approach from 2018 to 2021.

Regarding the organization of teacher training programs, there are several issues. In some regions, courses were implemented forcefully as routine tasks without deep engagement. Key lecturers focused well on content, but organizational methods lacked sufficient attention, particularly in online settings. Additionally, training venues were often inadequately equipped, and there was a lack of motivation and suitable conditions for teacher participation. The quality of key lecturers, who were central to training, varied, with some lacking in-depth knowledge and experience in the new GEC. This led to disparities in pedagogical competence and the effectiveness of their teaching and collaboration efforts.

In addition, the training modules posited some limitations, including dissatisfaction with the shift from the 5-3-7 to the 7-2-7 model due to incomplete transfer facilities. Online courses were not fully effective, overly relying on text documents. There was also a disproportionate focus on enhancing Core Teachers' understanding and application skills, with less emphasis on their ability to support and advise colleagues. Additionally, the integration of the three stages in the 7-2-7 model lacked effectiveness, especially in expanding Core Teachers' understanding and competencies.

Furthermore, The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Vietnam's education system, especially in the implementation of the 2018 GEC. Teacher training shifted online, involving over 4,500 teachers from 63 provinces. The teachers engaged in remote learning, creating and developing teaching plans specific to each subject. This online approach, while saving costs and facilitating access to digital tools, also exposed challenges such as reduced

teacher income, especially for contract teachers during school closures, and financial strains on educational institutions. The pandemic affected every aspect of educational activities, from curriculum development to textbook approval processes.

The reform in the 2018 GEC in Vietnam has made remarkable strides through the ETEP. This program revolutionized professional training for general teachers by integrating online and face-to-face methods, granting them access to original training content. This approach marked a significant shift from the previous top-down training system that had often resulted in information loss at each level of transfer (Mai & Hall, 2017). ETEP also fostered a change in teaching perspectives, focusing more on student development and not solely on knowledge delivery. It equipped teachers with the skills to effectively use new curricula and textbooks and highlighted the importance of information technology in contemporary teaching. This transformation in both training and teaching methods was crucial for elevating the quality and efficacy of Vietnam's educational system. Furthermore, the availability of multiple textbooks for a given program underscored the importance of effective lesson planning. Teachers had to actively select and curate various resources that align with the specific teaching topic, ensuring a tailored and engaging learning experience for students (Nguyen & Pham, 2022). This adaptability and resourcefulness are vital components of successful teaching within the evolving educational landscape.

Despite these strides, there remains a gap in the literature that warrants further investigation. Specifically, there is a need to delve deeper into how teachers implemented textbook adoption and incorporated it into their teaching practices, especially among upper secondary English teachers during their initial exercise of autonomy in the academic year 2022-2023. My current research can shed light on ways to provide better support and guidance to these

teachers as they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the new curriculum and textbook adoption. This study will ultimately contribute to the ongoing improvement of Vietnam's educational landscape.

Summary

This chapter presented an in-depth literature review on teacher agency within Vietnam's educational framework. It explored its theoretical foundations, the impact on teacher professional development, and the role of teachers in educational reforms, particularly in the context of the 2018 General Education Curriculum. This chapter discussed the concept of human agency in education, the dynamic nature of teacher agency in policy implementation, and the use of the Figured Worlds framework to understand teacher responses to educational changes. Additionally, this chapter delved into the specifics of teacher professional development in Vietnam and examined how it aligns with the recent educational reforms. In the next chapter, I will describe the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will provide a concise overview of the qualitative research design and the research methodology employed in the present study. This overview will include an explanation of the research design, and the process of data collection which consisted of participant information, surveys, and interviews. In addition, I will detail the methodology used for data analysis and follow that with a discussion of ethical considerations, including the assessment of risk, maintaining data confidentiality, and data storage practice. This chapter ends with a section on the limitations of the study and an introduction to the data analysis chapter. The methodology I employed in this study aims to answer to following overarching research question with four sub-questions:

What is the journey of the upper secondary school teachers through the textbook selection process and the first year of its use?

1. How did the training the upper-secondary school teachers (USSTs) receive prepare them for the role of selecting the English language textbook (ELTs)?

2. What is the USSTs' experience with the new textbook across the dimensions of their teaching responsibilities?

3. How has this experience of selecting and teaching impacted their sense of themselves as educators and change agents in their schools?

4. Knowing what they know now, what do teachers believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure the teachers have the knowledge and information needed for adoption decisions and application of new textbooks in the future?

Qualitative Research Design

Research methodologies primarily align with either a positivist or constructivist tradition (Creswell, 2012). The *positivist paradigm* and its adapted form, the post-positivist paradigm, operate under the premise that both material and social realities are susceptible to objective comprehension, making them quantifiable and measurable (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). Quantitative research, grounded in positivism, employs deductive methods to measure variables and unveil patterns and relationships (Walter, 2010), as opposed to relying on subjective deduction through reflection or emotional analysis (Gill & Johnson, 2010). As a result, positivism does not emphasize human interactions, value systems, or consider the viewpoints of both the researcher and the research subjects (Sritanayarat, Kanjanajuta, & Tanawattanakorn, 2010).

While quantitative research is grounded in the positivist research philosophy, qualitative research is closely associated with the *constructivist approach*. Qualitative research is typically characterized by an inductive approach to knowledge generation, with a focus on capturing the qualities or attributes of the phenomenon being studied. Researchers employ this approach to explore social phenomena, understand meaning, and gain insights into social dimensions (Leavy, 2014). This approach prioritizes the significance of meaning and holistic considerations over isolated variables and statistical analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research in education offers valuable opportunities to improve the field by exploring researchable questions and gaining insights from those being studied. This approach emphasizes discovery and understanding, which holds significant promise for enhancing educational knowledge and practices. “Qualitative researchers

are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed” and “how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 6).

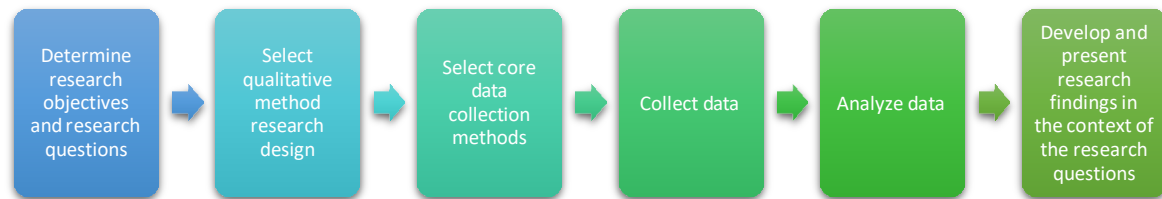
The Present Study

Considering the primary aim of this research, which is to delve into the experiences of upper secondary school English educators in terms of the adoption and implementation of textbooks as well as their perspectives on effective professional development practices, a qualitative research approach rooted in constructivism was more suitable than a positivist paradigm. This choice was predicated on the study’s focal point: human perceptions and the nuanced understanding of textbook adoption and implementation alongside teachers’ insights on their professional development amid the most significant educational reform in Vietnam.

The study primarily adopted a qualitative research approach, complemented by certain quantitative aspects derived from the survey component. Regarding quantitative data, an online survey was administered, targeting upper secondary school English teachers in a specific province situated in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam. The quantitative facet of the study is relatively modest in scope, and it serves the purpose of collecting participant demographic information. Since surveys were limited in collecting in-depth teachers’ underlying thoughts, responses to new instructional practices, and the rationale underpinning their pedagogical approaches when implementing the new textbooks, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted for this major portion of my study’s data set. These interviews were designed specifically to delve deeply into these areas of inquiry. Subsequently, the study’s findings were derived through a comprehensive synthesis of evidence gathered from all data sources. The chronological progression of the research is visually illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Research methodology



Researcher Positionality

As an upper secondary English teacher with nearly 12 years of experience in Vietnam, I bring a unique researcher positionality shaped by my immersion in Vietnam's educational landscape. Having actively participated in the textbook adoption process during the summer of 2022 before embarking on my studies in the USA, I embodied a cultural insider perspective regarding the selection of instructional materials. However, my subsequent absence from Vietnam rendered me more of an insider-outsider concerning the implementation of the new curriculum. Despite my familiarity with the teaching practices in focus in this study, I lack firsthand knowledge of how the adopted textbooks were integrated into classrooms over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year. This duality of insider and outsider perspectives fueled my curiosity about the experiences of fellow educators during this process and the unfolding dynamics of the curriculum implementation. Moreover, as someone likely to engage in future textbook adoption and implementation processes, this study holds personal and professional significance for me as both a researcher and an educator. It will inform my understanding of professional practices and guide my future involvement in educational reforms.

Data Collection

Research Participants

Choosing Research Sites

Given that the research focuses on exploring the experiences of upper secondary school English teachers when selecting and implementing new textbooks in Vietnam's northern mountainous region, it is logical to choose upper secondary schools within this geographical area as the research sites. Therefore, I used purposeful selection with an aim to offer a comprehensive view of schools situated in diverse settings within the geographical region. The chosen sites encompass a range of school types, including an upper secondary school for the gifted, a boarding school, an urban school, an international school, and a rural school. All schools are managed by a single provincial department of education and training. The inclusion of schools from various settings allows me to consider regional variations in the study.

Taking into account the practical aspects of the research context and the specific data requirements to address the research questions, this study employed purposive sampling techniques, as suggested by Creswell (2012). The aim was to encompass a variety of educational settings including different types of schools and locations. All school names are pseudonyms.

Table 4.1

Research sites

No.	Name (Pseudonyms)	Type of schools	Location	Textbook selected
1	Starlight Academy	Public, Specialized school	Urban	Global Success
2	Meadowview Secondary School	Public school	Rural	iLearn Smart World
3	Horizon Global School	International school	Urban	Global Success
4	Oakwood Institute	Public, Boarding school	Urban	iLearn Smart World
5	Metropolitan High School	Public school	Urban	iLearn Smart World

Starlight Academy is part of a network of specialized upper secondary schools in Vietnam, renowned for its academic excellence. Specialized upper secondary schools offer a diverse array of majors, spanning mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, geography, social sciences, and foreign languages. Starlight Academy stands out as the best upper secondary school in the province. This school selected the Global Success textbook and has used this series for the past almost two years.

Oakwood Institute is a boarding school specifically designed to cater to the needs of ethnic minority students. This institute has adopted the iLearn Smart World textbook series for nearly two years.

Horizon Global School is a newly established educational institution situated in the city center. This school provides a comprehensive international education spanning from kindergarten to upper secondary levels. It has state-of-the-art facilities and a wide range of educational services. This school has used the Global Success book series continuously for the past almost two years.

Metropolitan High School is a distinguished public upper secondary school known for its long-standing tradition of delivering high-quality education. It holds the distinction of being one of the oldest schools in the region. This school selected iLearn Smart World textbook for the academic year 2022-2023. However, for the academic year 2023-2024, this school transitioned to using Global Success.

Meadowview Secondary School is a public upper secondary institution located in one of the district areas. It is one of the largest public upper secondary schools in that district. This school selected the same textbook series it had been already using: the iLearn Smart World textbooks for the past nearly two years.

Participant Recruitment

All high school teachers in those five institutions in the mountainous area of Northern Vietnam who were teaching English to Vietnamese upper secondary school students and who participated in the summer 2022 textbook selection process were eligible to participate in the study. I contacted the head of the English department in each of the participating schools via email (Appendix E) and informed them of the research. I attached a study advertisement flier (Appendix F) to the email and explained the study further in the body of the email to the department heads. After that, the heads of the English departments informed the teachers in their schools about the research in school meetings and shared the flier. These department heads collected the names and email addresses of teachers who were interested in learning more about the study and sent the lists of names and email addresses to me so that I could contact each interested teacher by email with the recruitment letter (Appendix E) and a consent form (Appendix C).

If the department heads wanted me to participate in the meeting directly, I was willing to join the meeting and share the research focus and procedures via Zoom. This happened in none of the schools because all department heads were able to inform the teachers of this study using the flier (Appendix F) during their department meetings. I collected signed consent forms from all interested teachers. There was one survey for all participants to complete in about 30 minutes total. If the teachers expressed interest in the study and completed the survey, they were invited for individual semi-structured interviews that lasted 45-60 minutes each and were conducted through an online Zoom meeting.

The Survey

Employing surveys offered a notable advantage in terms of reaching a substantial number of participants and generating a considerable volume of data in relation to the research investment (Chadwick et al., 1984). Surveys facilitate the collection of extensive data from a larger sample, and these findings can be generalized to broader populations (Ruel, Wagner & Gillespie, 2016). Surveys have the capability to solicit factual information, including demographics, and are frequently employed to investigate individual viewpoints, gather opinions, and record personal experiences and behaviors (Leavy, 2014).

In this study, an online survey administered through UIUC Google Forms was chosen as the data collection method due to its efficiency in terms of time-saving during distribution, data collection, and subsequent processing. The primary objective of the survey was to investigate how teachers approached textbook preparation and selection. Additionally, it served as an initial step to pique respondents' interest and encouraged their participation in more in-depth interviews designed to explore facets of the research questions comprehensively. The survey was structured into three main sections: Part 1 focused on gathering demographic information from respondents, including gender, years of teaching experience, and the institutions where they were employed. Part 2 delved into the topic of teacher preparation for textbook selection, while Part 3 examined the actual textbook selection process. Notably, the survey intentionally omitted inquiries about the teaching experience with the new textbook and the teachers' perspectives on their professional development, as these aspects were intended for more in-depth exploration through semi-structured interviews.

Various question types were utilized in the survey, including multiple-choice items, checklists, and limited open-ended inquiries. A deliberate choice was made to restrict the use of

open-ended questions to minimize respondent burden, a phenomenon that can lead participants to perceive their involvement as unduly stressful or time-consuming (Leavy, 2014). Such a burden can, in turn, result in respondent fatigue, increased non-response rates, and lower-quality responses (Ruel et al., 2016). This strategic design of the survey primarily aimed at investigating teachers' perspectives on the textbook selection process and cultivating teachers' interest in the study, with other research questions addressed during the subsequent interviews. Both Vietnamese and English versions of the survey are included in Appendix A.

As a component of the research protocol, consent forms and survey materials were exclusively dispatched via email to teachers who had conveyed their willingness to partake in the study. This outreach extended to a total of 23 teachers in the initial stages of August 2023. Following a span of one month, survey responses were successfully secured from 19 teachers. This corresponded to an approximate survey response rate of 83%. Of the 19 teachers who completed the survey, 10 expressed their desire to engage in interviews. I interviewed all 10 of those teachers. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2, presented below, furnish demographic insights into the 19 teacher participants involved in the survey. This table presents variables such as gender, current institutional affiliations, and years of teaching experience.

Table 4.2

Participant data

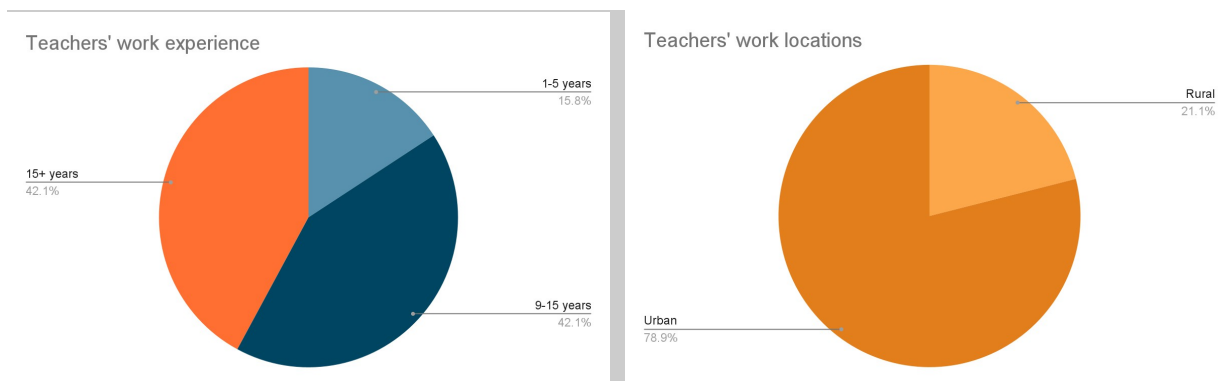
No.	Names (pseudonyms)	Gender	Schools (pseudonyms)	Years of teaching experience
1	Emily	Female	Starlight Academy	3 years
2	Sarah	Female	Starlight Academy	20 years
3	Jessica	Female	Starlight Academy	19 years
4	David	Male	Starlight Academy	27 years

Table 4.2 (cont.)

No.	Names (pseudonyms)	Gender	Schools (pseudonyms)	Years of teaching experience
5	Elizabeth	Female	Starlight Academy	15 years
6	Jennifer	Female	Starlight Academy	2 years
7	Megan	Female	Meadowview Secondary School	9 years
8	Rachel	Female	Meadowview Secondary School	7 years
9	Olivia	Female	Meadowview Secondary School	17 years
10	Lauren	Female	Meadowview Secondary School	13 years
11	Michael	Male	Horizon Global School	5 years
12	Amanda	Female	Oakwood Institute	16 years
13	Stephanie	Female	Oakwood Institute	22 years
14	Samantha	Female	Oakwood Institute	15 years
15	Rebecca	Female	Oakwood Institute	12 years
16	Natalie	Female	Metropolitan High School	27 years
17	Michelle	Female	Metropolitan High School	8 years
18	Danielle	Female	Metropolitan High School	15 years
19	Christopher	Male	Metropolitan High School	20 years

Figure 4.2

Teachers' work experience and work locations



The final phase of data collection for this study concluded in September 2023. The research cohort encompassed a total of 19 individuals, comprising 3 males and 16 females. All participants are Vietnamese and speak Vietnamese as their first language. These participants actively engaged in the survey component (n=19), while a subgroup of these interested teachers also participated in interviews (n=10) for an in-depth exploration of their perspectives and experiences within the study's context. Notably, approximately 85% of the participants identified as female, which mirrors the prevalent gender distribution in English language education at the upper secondary level, and within the broader educational sector in Vietnam. To qualify for employment at this level, all teachers held a bachelor's degree in a pertinent field. The research participants demonstrated a wide spectrum of experience, ranging from novice teachers with 1-5 years of teaching practice (n=3), 6-15 years (n=8) to seasoned educators with over 15 years of professional involvement (n=8). Furthermore, it is worth noting that the proportion of teachers from the rural school constitutes 21.1% of the entire research cohort.

The Semi-Structured Interviews

The most crucial part of this study involved in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are often described as “knowledge-producing conversations” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 128) or a “conversation with a purpose” (Dexter, 1970, p. 136). Semi-structured interviews are considered a powerful tool as they are more flexibly worded, enhance interaction between the researchers and interviewees and offer opportunities for explanations and clarification of responses (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In addition, semi-structured interviews in educational inquiries allow the researcher to “respond to the situation at hand to the emerging worldview of the respondent and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74).

The interview data set was composed of interviews 10 teacher participants from four schools. All four teachers at Oakwood Institute informed me that their schedules before the opening of the new academic year were too tight for them to participate. In addition, five other teachers from Starlight Academy, Meadowview Secondary School and Metropolitan High School could not participate due to their schedules. 70% of the interview participants were female. All semi-structured interviews lasted 45 minutes to one hour and were conducted in audio-recorded, one-on-one meetings on Zoom. The language for the meetings was Vietnamese. Interviews were transcribed in Vietnamese and translated into English within a week. After the interviews were transcribed, the original recordings were stored to be kept until my thesis has been defended successfully. As soon as that defense is completed, all audio recordings will be deleted.

Semi-structured interview protocols were developed, in which most of the questions were open-ended and covered all areas in this study, including four main parts. Part 1 focused on *Training or preparation for completing this task* in which teachers were asked questions about how they were prepared for the task. The data collected from this section was compared with documents from the governments and ministry to get a better understanding of the policy implementation and how well the teacher participants understood the reform. Part 2 of the interviews concentrated on *How the task was completed* as the teachers explained the textbook adoption process such as how they worked with their school and how they finalized their decision. Part 3 of the interview was about *Implementation in teaching practice*. In this section of the interview, teachers shared their experiences of teaching the textbooks of their choice and compared those experiences with their previous experiences with the mandated textbooks. It is notable that not all teachers participating in the interviews had the experience of teaching the

new textbooks. Even though they participated in the textbook selection process, the new textbook was implemented at the tenth grade for the academic year 2022-2023. Therefore, eight out of 10 teachers had teaching experience of their chosen textbooks. One head of the department did not teach the new textbook, but she managed the teaching quality and textbook evaluations, thereby allowing her to share unique collective perspectives from her department's teachers. Finally, *Recommendations or plans for future* was the section during which teachers discussed and shared possible professional activities that could make a positive impact on their profession and teachers within your community. It is worth noting that there was one teacher who wanted to share some information off-recording. These data will be included in the data analysis without mentioning the teacher's name.

The four overarching themes of the interview protocol are presented in Appendix B.

Details of the teachers participating in the interviews are presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3

Interview participant data

No.	Name (pseudonyms)	Gender	School (pseudonyms)	Role	Teaching experience	Years working at the current school	Taught the new textbook
1	Emily	Female	Starlight Academy	Classroom teacher	3 years	3 years	Yes
2	Sarah	Female	Starlight Academy	Classroom teacher	20 years	7 years	No
3	Jessica	Female	Starlight Academy	Classroom teacher	19 years	19 years	Yes
4	David	Male	Starlight Academy	Head of the department	27 years	20 years	Yes
5	Jennifer	Female	Starlight Academy	Classroom teacher	2 years	2 years	Yes
6	Olivia	Female	Meadowview Secondary School	Head of the department	17 years	11 years	Yes
7	Michael	Male	Horizon Global School	Classroom teacher	5 years	3 years	Yes

Table 4.3 (cont.)

No.	Name (pseudonyms)	Gender	School (pseudonyms)	Role	Teaching experience	Years working at the current school	Taught the new textbook
8	Natalie	Female	Metropolitan High School	Head of the department	27 years	15 years	No
9	Michelle	Female	Metropolitan High School	Classroom teacher	8 years	3 years	Yes
10	Christopher	Male	Metropolitan High School	Classroom teacher	20 years	15 years	Yes

It is worth mentioning that the majority of teachers included in this study had prior experience working in upper-secondary institutions. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that among the 10 teachers interviewed, two of them, namely Michael and Sarah, had backgrounds in higher education with respective work experiences of 2 years and 13 years. The number of years these teachers had spent at their current schools was taken into consideration as it could potentially indicate their teaching positions and their influence within the department, particularly in activities like voting or discussions regarding the textbook selection process.

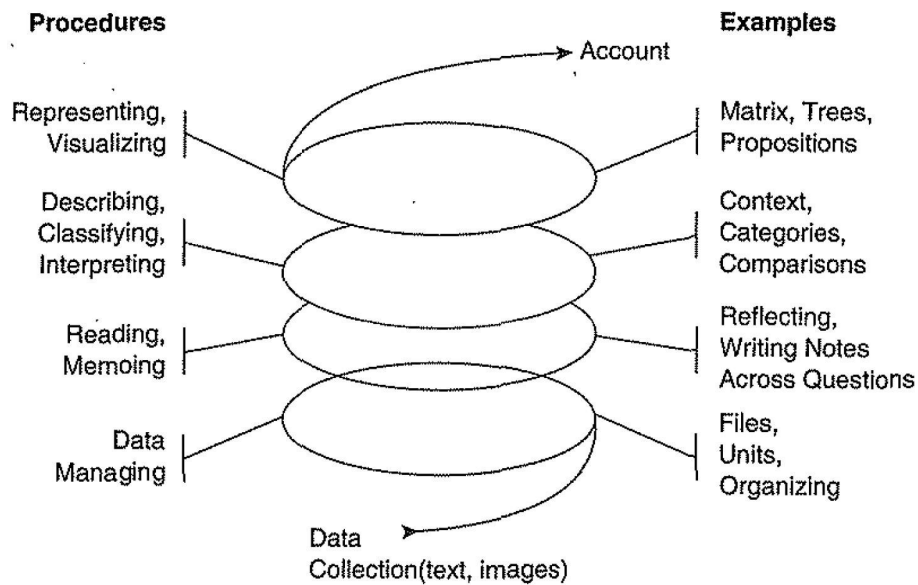
Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2016) argued that data analysis processes “conform to a general contour” (p. 150) that takes the form of a spiral (Figure 4.4). When analyzing qualitative data, the researcher employs a dynamic process characterized by iterative analysis, rather than following a rigid linear approach. The process begins with the examination of textual data or visual materials, such as photographs or videotapes, and culminates in the creation of an account or narrative. This process involves moving from reading and note-taking to describing, classifying, and interpreting data. At the heart of qualitative data analysis is the formation of codes or categories. Researchers provide detailed descriptions, develop themes, and offer interpretations based on their perspectives or existing literature.

This spiral concept greatly influenced the data analysis procedures used in this study. As described by Creswell and Poth (2016), the data, primarily consisting of text, go through a process of entering and exiting, resulting in a narrative or what they referred to as an account, which is presented in Chapter 5's findings. The interviews were transcribed in Vietnamese then translated into English. There were 258 pages of interview data in total. After verbatim transcription, data were organized for qualitative analysis using a descriptive thematic analysis to examine the interview data. This qualitative method involves the identification and exploration of recurring themes and patterns within the interview transcripts to offer valuable insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Figure 4.3

The Data Analysis Spiral by Creswell and Poth (2016, p. 151)



Through all the coding cycles, the Figured Worlds framework, a theory of self and identity, can be strongly connected to the lived experiences of upper secondary English teachers as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of how individuals interpret and navigate their social environments. By examining how upper secondary English teachers constructed and

negotiated meanings within the context of their professional roles, the Figured Worlds framework provides insights into the complex interplay between personal experiences, institutional structures, and cultural norms influencing textbook adoption and implementation practices. Moreover, the Figured Worlds framework allows for an exploration of the dynamic interactions between teachers, students, and educational stakeholders. It helps shed light on the socio-cultural dynamics shaping pedagogical decision-making processes. In addition, among the frameworks introduced during the researcher's master's program, this framework fits this study the most. By employing this framework, this study aims to elucidate the multifaceted dimensions of teacher agency and professional identity amidst educational reforms, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers alike.

Within the Figured Worlds framework, the lenses, including *space*, *improvisation*, *judgments*, *acts*, *interpretation*, and *contributors*, were employed to delve into different facets of the teachers' encounters with textbook selection and implementation, as well as their viewpoints on professional development. The data guided the selection of appropriate lenses for specific sections of the interview data, which enabled an in-depth analysis of the teachers' perspectives.

In the initial coding cycle, the data analysis commenced with a thorough review of all interview transcripts, accompanied by a simultaneous review of the audio recordings and necessary corrections. I then incorporated detailed annotations and extensive memos into the process. Subsequently, I pinpointed the primary themes. During this initial coding cycle, I adopted a deductive analysis approach, which aligned with the nature of the questions posed and their associated topics.

During the second coding cycle, I embraced an inductive approach (Saldaña, 2013). In this phase, I aimed to identify overarching patterns within the data, which were subsequently

organized into thematic categories. Under each primary topic, child nodes were established, each representing *in vivo* codes transcribed verbatim from the data. Many passages within the data demonstrated connections to multiple themes. While certain themes may exhibit overlaps, I meticulously ensured that each theme encapsulates unique aspects that emerged from the data. This deliberate approach allowed for a nuanced exploration of the diverse facets inherent in the phenomenon under study. As a result, they were coded under different nodes. The process of code and category development involved a systematic search for "recurring regularities" (Patton, 2002, p. 465). These identified regularities were grouped systematically into distinct categories. In the final stage, the researcher revisited the individual narratives of the respondents and carefully contextualized the identified patterns within their personal stories (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Saldaña, 2013).

Following the completion of the coding cycles, a member checking process was employed to enhance the relevance and credibility of this study. The researcher shared the coded data and preliminary findings with the participating teachers. The feedback and insights provided by the teachers were incorporated into the final analysis to reinforce the trustworthiness of the study.

Regarding survey data analysis, descriptive statistics and data visualization were utilized to provide a concise summary, identify patterns, and simplify complex data. I used survey data to complement interview data and thematic analysis, support the development of comprehensive themes, and enrich the understanding of collected responses.

To further strengthen the research and enhance its credibility, methodological triangulation was employed. This involved collecting data through surveys and interviews with both teachers and department heads. Additionally, the study's findings were compared with

official documents from the Vietnamese MOET, as detailed in Chapter 2. This approach served to triangulate the research by comparing educational policies and practices, as well as discerning nuanced differences in the experiences of these specific teachers and department heads as well as between participating teachers who were working in urban and in rural settings.

It is important to note that this study incorporates a quantitative approach to data analysis, although the quantitative data is modest in scope. Specifically, the research utilizes basic mean and mode statistics to analyze the survey responses. This approach offers a quantitative summary of the central tendencies and the most common responses within the dataset.

Ethical Considerations

Level of Risk

While participating in the survey and interviews, some individuals may recollect unfavorable emotions related to their textbook selection experience, particularly if they found it challenging or lacked support during the process. However, apart from potential minor negative recollections, there were no anticipated significant risks or discomforts. The main concern pertained to confidentiality, which was protected by the use of pseudonyms for all teachers and schools. This was the best way to avoid teachers being compromised by the publication of identifiable information. The discussions during the research interviews resembled the conversations that teachers routinely engage in regarding textbook adoptions and implementation process as well as professional development activities. The primary objective of this study was to document this information to explore potential enhancements in supporting upper sec

Confidentiality

All research information underwent deidentification before being stored and used for analysis. The identification key was maintained separately from the data and was disposed of

once all data collection was completed. All data were securely stored on computers with password protection, overseen by the two co-researchers (myself and my advisor who is also the director of research for this thesis), and in a secure UofI Box folder or within the secure UofI Google Apps at Illinois application.

Furthermore, all the data were safeguarded either on UIUC-issued computers with password protection or on a personally owned computer with password protection. For added security, data stored online was placed within a restricted UIUC Google Drive folder or UIUC Box Folder, with access limited to the two co-researchers.

Storage of Data

The research record will only include transcriptions of the audio recorded interviews, the text-based survey findings, and my researcher notes. All of the data will be kept in a de-identified state. No photographs or video data were included. After the research is finished and my master's thesis defense is completed successfully, all of the original audio recordings will be deleted.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the absence of teacher interviews from the boarding school setting introduced a limitation in terms of the comprehensiveness of the study's data. The perspectives and experiences of teachers from this particular context were not captured in-depth through interviews, which might lead to an incomplete representation of the overall findings. Nevertheless, the study sought to mitigate this limitation by incorporating survey responses from teachers in the boarding school to gather their insights. However, survey responses do not provide the same depth and context-rich information as interviews.

Secondly, the scope of quantitative data collected through the survey is relatively restricted. With a modest sample size of 19 participants, the survey primarily focused on gathering essential demographic information and gauging teachers' perspectives on the textbook adoption process. This limited dataset may present challenges in terms of generalizability, as findings derived from such a confined sample may not be easily extrapolated to a more extensive and diverse population of educators.

Thirdly, while the study includes 10 in-depth interviews, providing valuable qualitative insights into teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding textbook adoption, the relatively small number of interviews conducted limits the potential generalizability of the findings. The insights expressed by these 10 interviewees may not necessarily represent the broader population of teachers involved in textbook selection processes across different educational settings. Thus, researchers should exercise caution when attempting to generalize the findings and recognize that the insights gained from these interviews offer depth and context but may not capture the full spectrum of perspectives within the educational community. It is important to note that generalizability of findings is not a goal of most small-scale qualitative studies.

Lastly, the study's primary reliance on teacher interviews as the main data source presents a limitation, as it may not provide a fully comprehensive understanding of textbook adoption and implementation practices. The absence of other data sources, such as classroom observations and extensive document analysis, limits the depth of insights into how teachers interacted with selected textbooks and the actual classroom dynamics related to these materials. Classroom observations could have offered direct insights into teaching strategies and student engagement. Furthermore, an extensive document analysis could have provided a deeper understanding of how textbooks align with educational objectives. While the interviews provide

valuable qualitative data, the study's narrow data collection methods, necessitated in part by the distance between the US and Vietnam, do not allow for a holistic exploration of textbook adoption practices. Additionally, the narrow examination of government documents related to MOET decisions around English as a foreign language instruction and textbook adoption as well as their decision on the 2018 GEC helped me frame the study, but analysis of these documents and others governing education in Vietnam were not the focus of my research.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research design, data collection, and analysis processes employed in the study. Embracing a constructivist approach, the research focused on understanding the experiences of upper secondary school English educators in Vietnam regarding textbook adoption. The chapter elaborated on participant selection, recruitment, and data collection methods, including an online survey and in-depth interviews. Data analysis followed an iterative, thematic approach, incorporating the Figured Worlds framework and various lenses. In addition, ethical considerations were addressed. The chapter acknowledged limitations related to time constraints, limited quantitative data, incomplete sources, and interview scope. The subsequent chapter will report the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

“Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes, we can navigate and explore such universes.”

(Van Manen, 1990, p. 90)

This chapter aims to delve into the experiences of upper secondary English teachers in the northern mountainous regions of Vietnam as they navigated the processes of textbook selection, and implementation, and their own professional development. Utilizing data collected from surveys and individual semi-structured interviews, this chapter presents a chronological account of these teachers’ lived experiences, aligning them with the overarching research question and four sub-questions that guide this study. The data sources included survey responses and 258 pages of interview transcripts that provide insight into the journey of these educators as change agents in their schools. The themes explored here are intertwined with the methodological spiral, which originates from the researcher’s personal teaching experiences and vision as detailed in Chapter 1. This spiraling approach is employed to extract deeper meaning, stimulate reflection, and encourage further inquiry.

Therefore, in this chapter, I present the findings derived from the analysis of 19 survey responses and 10 interviews and aim to discern the critical aspects of teacher agency during the textbook adoption and implementation process. The overarching research question and its sub-questions serve as the compass in this exploration:

What is the journey of the upper secondary school teachers through the textbook selection process and the first year of its use?

1. How did the training the upper-secondary school teachers (USSTs) receive prepare them for the role of selecting the English language textbook (ELTs)?

2. What is the USSTs' experience with the new textbook across the dimensions of their teaching responsibilities?

3. How has this experience of selecting and teaching impacted their sense of themselves as educators and change agents in their schools?

4. Knowing what they know now, what do teachers believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure the teachers have the knowledge and information needed for adoption decisions and application of new textbooks in the future?

Consequently, this chapter delves into the factors influencing these narratives, exploring themes grounded in the participants' personal experiences and providing an authentic interpretation of these themes. Through in-depth interviews, participants in this study shed light on their past and present experiences and illustrated their journey within the context of educational reform in the Vietnamese educational system. Emotions expressed during these conversations were taken into account when categorizing themes as these emotions revealed the dynamic nature of the participant teachers' experiences, including their accomplishments, challenges, concerns, and future aspirations.

The results are presented chronologically in four main sections with each addressing specific aspects related to each research sub-question. The first section, based on data collected from surveys and interviews, provides insights into the training received from the MOET and DOET by teachers and their preparations for the selection of English language textbooks. In addition, this section delves into the actual implementation process, which took place during the academic year 2022-2023. In the second section, drawing on data drawn from in-depth interviews, I delve into the firsthand experiences of teacher participants as they implemented the textbooks they chose. In the third section, I investigate the role of teachers as catalysts for change

within schools by analyzing the textbook selection and implementation processes in relation to the agency expressed by the participating teachers. Finally, the last section focuses on the visions that teacher participants had for their professional development activities with an aim to better equip them for future educational environments.

Teacher Preparedness and the Journey to Textbook Adoption

Teacher Preparedness

Limited Formal Training

A key finding of this research was that, although training and support for teachers to enact a robust textbook selection process was promised, a significant number of the participants were not able to recall having the opportunity to develop the necessary background and skills. In fact, four out of ten teachers recalled no training before the textbook adoption process took place. Jessica said, “Before the textbook selection process, there was no training in which criteria we should base on and how to assess the book.” Emily concurred, “Regarding official training, I didn't receive any.” Michael noted, “Well then at school I didn't receive any training from the ministry or the department, or the school to choose books.” Finally, Olivia echoed what her peers experienced, “There is no training, coaching, or guidance in choosing books.” Despite her lack of recent training, Emily, a recent graduate, mentioned a university course on material development and applied it to this process as she stated, “I gained an understanding of syllabi and the process of evaluating educational materials in one of my college courses. When I was deciding among the textbooks, I reviewed the content from that course to select the most appropriate textbook.”

The rest of the teachers recalled receiving some training from the provincial Department of Education and Training and publishers of the textbooks. For example, David noted:

Before making our final decision, in addition to receiving and evaluating the books, the provincial Department of Education and Training organized sessions during which authors and publishers introduced their books and supplementary resources to teachers, explaining how to utilize them. These sessions were conducted online. For books like ‘Global Success,’ the author personally visited our province to introduce the book series to our teachers. Our school selected core teachers to attend these sessions, and upon their return, they shared the key concepts and insights with their colleagues.

In addition, Christopher could remember some training in previous years in support of the textbook adoption process, “Before that [the textbook adoption process], every year in the summer, the provincial Department of Education and Training always organized training sessions and courses.”

Reliance on Personal Experience

Importantly, the training sessions mentioned by the participants in the previous section served as more introductions on how to use each of the book series. They were not focused more specifically on comprehensive training on textbook assessment. In essence, the lack of formal guidance on textbook evaluation forced all of the teacher participants to rely on their teaching experience to navigate the textbook selection process. Sarah’s comment underscored this sense for the teachers when she commented: “There was limited detailed training in book assessment and how to choose the right book effectively. So, we had to figure it out on our own, sometimes we did it following our teaching experience.” Natalie also wished the teachers had had more support through the process: “We made our decision based on our work experience, but if the leaders had had training sessions, it would have been great.”

Textbook Adoption Process

Time Constraint

Teachers collectively did not remember exactly the time allotted for the whole process. Some teachers said that they had about three months, and some recalled three weeks. However, most teachers found the allotted time too short to make a decision. For Emily, part of the time confusion may have stemmed from the timelines for teachers receiving the books: “It seems that the book sets were sent at different times, so I remember that there wasn't too much time to evaluate the books. I think I had to make a decision within three days.” Sarah relied on estimating, likely since the process felt rushed to her: “Considering the time, let's see, in about 3 weeks for 9 sets. The time dedicated to selecting books was too short. It was challenging to assess the books carefully.” This sense of being a bit overwhelmed timewise was echoed by Oliva, who added that during this allotted time, the teachers had other academic commitments to fulfill, so it was not as if everything else stopped to create space for the textbook selection process to be completed. Interestingly, Michael revealed that due to time restriction as well as the fact that other levels of education at his school were already using the textbook series, the teachers at the upper secondary level agreed on one textbook series in advance of receiving the choice selections to evaluate: “In fact, teachers agreed with each other in advance, asking for ideas to agree on a common book to run for the whole school. There was not enough time to examine all nine books.”

Lack of Specific Criteria for Textbook Assessment

Due to the short timeframe, each school's department had to decide quickly on a book series. Each teacher was given a set of the same evaluation sheets for the nine textbooks. A sample of the textbook evaluation sheets is included in Appendix G. Criteria presented in the

evaluation sheet were (1) relevance to students' learning needs, (2) compatibility with teachers' instructional settings, (3) alignment with the socio-economic characteristics of the local community, and (4) assurance of necessary conditions. For some of the teachers, this was not sufficient in light of the lack of information on how to select between the nine options. Olivia expressed this feeling clearly: "But there were assessment sheets. They had some criteria. And the criteria match the local socio-economic conditions. I read the sheets and ticked the appropriate or inappropriate column. There is no training, coaching or guidance in choosing books."

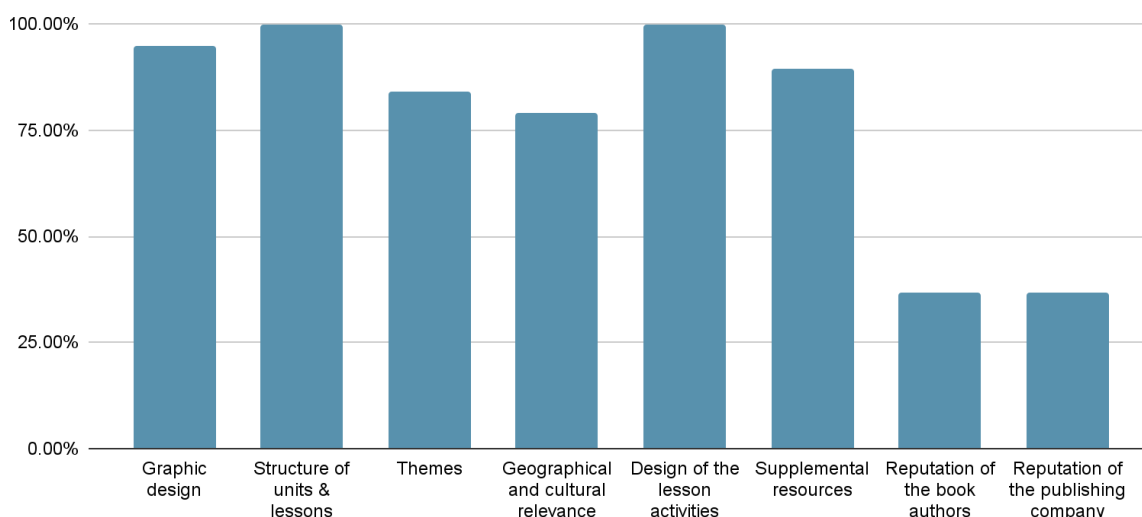
Natalie mentioned that, because the teachers did not receive specific criteria on how to choose textbooks, they tended to select books intuitively based on factors like design, colors, and perceived complexity. She shared: "Teachers read, researched by themselves and then gave their opinions, without a manual containing specific criteria on how to choose books. So actually, in fact, many teachers still selected books intuitively, or they evaluated the books based on the design, colors, or how subject matter was presented in those books."

Analysis of the survey data unveiled key factors influencing teachers' textbook selection decisions as illustrated in Figure 5.1. Foremost among these factors were the textbook's unit and lesson structure, as well as the design of lesson activities. Each of these factors garnered a unanimous 100% consensus in terms of assessed importance as part of selection decisions. Visual design closely followed at 94.7%. Additionally, teachers considered supplemental resources with a high regard at 89.5%, while the inclusion of themes for the entire academic year held importance at 84.2%. Notably, among the surveyed elements, the reputation of book authors and publishing companies received the least attention, each garnering a 36.8% response rate.

Furthermore, only one teacher added the importance of support from publishers as an additional influencing factor.

Figure 5.1

Factors influencing the textbook decision-making process



Different teachers utilized different strategies to evaluate the book sets. For example, Jessica articulated:

First, we assessed the difficulty level of each book to ensure it aligned appropriately with our students' capabilities, avoiding both overly challenging and excessively easy material. Second, we scrutinized the cultural content to determine whether the book incorporated Vietnamese cultural elements or foreign cultural references. Given that Vietnamese students learning English should maintain a connection with their own culture, this aspect was deemed significant. Subsequently, I evaluated the structure and knowledge distribution to ascertain if it was well-organized and suitable for students at the lower secondary school level. Our book selection process focused solely on materials for grades 10 through 12. However, we also considered the

proficiency levels of students in their earlier secondary school years to anticipate their performance in high school. For instance, if students were at a certain proficiency level in lower secondary school, selecting a corresponding level book would facilitate their learning process. Conversely, opting for a more advanced level book could pose challenges, such as encountering complex vocabulary and grammar structures. As I curated books specifically for upper secondary school levels, rather than the entire curriculum spanning grades 1 through 12, it was imperative to factor in these considerations to ensure a seamless progression across grade levels.

Regarding supplementary resources, Emily gave a quick analysis on the textbooks *Global Success* and *iLearn Smart World*. Her school decided on the *Global Success* series, even though she felt that the supplemental resources in the book her school selected were not as impactful for learning as the resources in the other series. “The biggest difficulty, as I said, is that the supporting resources are not very good, this one, I think the publisher can update and can be changed. I think if publishers can provide such a wide range of resources, it will be all the better because there will be more variety of teaching resources to choose from.” Some teachers considered supplemental resources, such as lesson plans and software, but did not prioritize the quality of these resources over other factors. For example, Sarah explained: “Having those materials is an obvious advantage, but they were neither everything nor decisive.”

The teachers considered aspects of the books such as the influence of authors and the reputation of and the support offered by the publishers, but these were not decisive factors. Rather than foregrounding the reputation of publishing companies and authors, teachers mentioned that these factors had some influence, but emphasized more the importance of a book’s content and structure. Jessica expressed this common sentiment: “I relied on the book's

content, not the authors.” Sarah was even more direct: “Education Publishing has a good reputation and reliability. It was not a decisive factor, but it partly contributed to the making of the decision.”

Visual design and structure of the books were other important factors on which many teachers relied on when assessing the textbooks. Sarah stated, “Design and Presentation. For example, appropriate photos. I had to see if the visual design is appropriate.” When considering the structure of the textbooks, the teachers placed great emphasis and how the textbook structure would align with the curriculum. As Sarah articulated this aspect: “The structure of a lesson. How closely do the themes and topics align with the curriculum? It's essential to ensure their relevance to Vietnamese culture and practical applicability.”

Finally, the teachers also examined the level of difficulty in vocabulary and grammar. Michelle best captured this important aspect:

This new textbook is simpler in terms of vocabulary. While some exercises may seem too easy, they are appropriate for students below average. For students performing above average, I can create additional activities and provide supplementary resources. This is why I chose it.

Smooth Adoption Process

Despite some difficulties in textbook assessment criteria and time constraint, interestingly, and maybe somewhat surprisingly, all the teacher participants expressed that they found the adoption process quite smooth, even if more support and more information would have been helpful and appreciated. Emily commented: “I find it quite smooth although more detailed evaluation sheets are needed so people can rely on them.” Olivia attributed much of the

smoothness of the adoption process to the preference of the teachers to have a single textbook publisher across the grade span in her district.

The process proceeded quite smoothly, with minimal controversy or conflict regarding textbook selection. This may be attributed to the teachers' consensus and the convenience of using the same set of books for grades six through nine within the district. One notable advantage is that teachers believe in the continuity of using these textbooks when students transition to upper secondary school, thus reducing competition. Nearly all the teachers in the department, close to 100%, unanimously chose this textbook without any objections or opposing viewpoints. However, it's possible that controversy may arise in the future if the upper secondary graduation results do not meet expectations after one or two years. On the school's side, they respected the department's opinions and did not impose any decisions. There was no external influence exerted on the process.

David was the only teacher who was also a member of the provincial committee for the academic year 2022-2023. As a result, David was able to detail the whole process from start to finish. Firstly, teachers individually assessed the textbooks, followed by department meetings where they discussed each book's strengths and weaknesses ("First, we received the books and each teacher assessed the books individually. Second, there were department meetings where each teacher gave his or her opinions of the books.") Three out of four schools chose to evaluate textbooks individually and collectively voted at departmental meetings. Metropolitan High School implemented a different process. They divided teachers into groups, with each group responsible for evaluating three textbook series. Secondly, consensus was reached through democratic voting among teachers with the goal of selecting the most suitable textbook. David described voting as "completely democratic ...Each teacher voted for the book they thought

would be the best choice.” Next, a provincial textbook selection committee, consisting of 18 members, further evaluated and selected the textbooks based on the recommendations from schools. Again, in David’s words: “We compiled the votes... Because most of the schools focused on two books, the committee members continued to vote and make a decision.” Lastly, since schools recommended textbooks based on their preferences and needs, the committee considered these recommendations in the selection process. David concluded: “From the schools’ recommendations, according to the number of votes, they could use either one of these books.”

While all teachers commented that they found the adoption process of the new textbooks to be seamless, it is important to note that during interviews, one teacher confidentially shared information about ways the provincial Department of Education and Training exerted influence on their selection choices. It appeared that the province actively promoted specific book series. As a result, a significant number of teachers in that province tended to align with these recommendations.

Experiencing the New Textbooks

Satisfaction With the New Textbooks

The majority of the teachers were satisfied with the textbooks of their choice. David mentioned that the new book was designed in a way that enhanced all language skills: “All four skills have been enhanced. So, over the past year, I am quite pleased with the new book.” Christopher agreed: “I’m very pleased with my choice.” In line with David and Christopher, Natalie highlighted several positive aspects of her district’s new book. She mentioned the book’s visual appeal, interesting content, and vocabulary that is simple and easy for students to remember. “The interesting point that helps students is that the book is beautifully designed, and

the pictures are attractive. The content is also interesting. Students can remember new words right away.” Olivia provided an overall high satisfaction rating for her choice of new books. She also mentioned that the book was suitable for her students’ levels in the rural school in which she taught. She articulated, “Overall, satisfaction stands at around 60-70%. It’s not that I’m dissatisfied. I believe this book is suitable for my students’ level, provided I know how to utilize it effectively.”

Project-based learning is a notable feature in the new curriculum. It offers both teachers and students the opportunity to engage in self-directed activities that align with the themes and knowledge acquired during the units. Jennifer highlighted the allure of this aspect, stating, “Projects allow teachers and students to independently explore activities rooted in the subjects and information covered in the units....That's what makes it so captivating.” Michael echoed this sentiment, expressing his enthusiasm for the Projects section in the new book his school selected. He valued the creative teaching possibilities it provided and highlighted how it enabled students to apply their knowledge effectively through presentations. He remarked, “What’s particularly intriguing is the Projects section....I’ve observed that my students can glean extensive knowledge, while teachers can harness their creativity, all centered around these topics and themes.”

Furthermore, Michelle found teaching the new book easier compared to the previous pilot books, which she described as labor-intensive and challenging. The new book allowed her to cover basic knowledge more comfortably within the class time. Michelle shared, “To be honest, my experience has been pretty easy and comfortable. Teaching the pilot books was tiring and overwhelming....So when I began to teach the new book, it was easier. 45 minutes of class time passed quickly with lots of joy.” Michelle appreciated the simplicity, relevance, and modernity

of the new book's content. She provided examples of how the book introduced real-life themes and technology-related topics that engaged her students:

In this new book, there are two noteworthy examples that significantly enhance its value for students. Firstly, it introduces the topic of how native speakers communicate through text messages, a departure from previous editions. Exploring texting habits, phone conversations, and the use of acronyms or short forms by English native speakers, this aspect captivated my students' interest, prompting further inquiry. Secondly, unlike its predecessors which focused on world-famous or UNESCO tourist attractions, the new book delves into ecotourism, presenting a modern perspective. It discusses various accommodation methods such as homestays and bungalows, resonating with students due to its relevance and contemporary approach. These updates represent a departure from past content centered on well-known landmarks and UNESCO-recognized sites such as Ha Long Bay and Hue Imperial City, offering fresh and exciting experiences that enrich my students' learning journeys.

Similarity Between the Old and New Textbooks

The majority of teachers who opted for *Global Success*, considered the revised version of the pilot book, noted a significant degree of similarity between the two sets. Emily delved into the parallels between the new and previous textbooks, exploring their potential impact on teaching methods and student engagement. While she acknowledged the resemblances, she also suggested that any changes in student participation might be attributed more to teaching techniques than to the new textbooks themselves. She added, "I've observed that their themes are almost identical, with only a couple of topics being newer. It's quite good, and I find it rather similar. I'd say it's still about 70% similar." Jessica echoed these sentiments, stating, "In

comparison with the pilot book and the older editions, I must admit that there aren't many disparities between the new textbook and the pilot books."

David emphasized the new book's benefits in terms of structured content and opportunities for students to practice language skills. He highlighted the relevance of topics and the presence of pair-work and group-work activities. This theme underscores the evolution of textbooks towards more comprehensive skill development in comparison with the previous book. David commented: "This newest book is the most interesting one, most useful one compared with other books I taught earlier. There are more pair-work and group-work activities in this book." Jennifer compared the new textbook with the pilot books and highlighted similarities and differences. She noted improvements in the new textbook, particularly in presenting more practical and relevant themes: "Somewhat similar. Somewhat different. Maybe 60% similar. They changed some of the themes though, more relevant to the Vietnamese contexts."

Regarding the other textbook choice *iLearn Smart World*, Natalie provided an in-depth comparison.

In fact, grammar hasn't been reduced in comparison to the pilot books; the reduction has primarily been in the number of new words introduced. For instance, previously, each lesson featured 5 to 6 exercises, but now there are only 4 tasks, so *iLearn Smart World* effectively reduces the workload. While there may be fewer vocabulary words, the grammar remains as comprehensive as in the pilot books. The *Global Success* series, however, has an advantage over this series. A distinctive feature lies in the reviews. They are designed to resemble the upper secondary school graduation exam format, so students are more familiar with the test style.

Adaptive Teaching Approaches

Many teachers expressed varying levels of satisfaction with the new textbooks, highlighting that publishers incorporated improvements based on teacher feedback. These revamped textbooks were widely regarded as enhancements over their predecessors, particularly in their provision of additional support and their alignment with students' interests. These improvements empowered teachers such as Jessica to modify their teaching methods and foster a more communicative classroom environment. Jessica noted her “genuine passion for teaching English” and added, “I routinely harness the materials to rejuvenate my teaching strategies.” She highlighted her ability to tailor her teaching methods to suit students' English proficiency levels and the specific class type she was instructing. She employed a variety of teaching strategies to effectively engage students in specialized and regular classes alike.

For David, an overhaul of the textbooks that reduced filler elements and increased material for skills practice was a positive change. This worked well for him since he utilized the textbook for skills and drew on other resources to enhance engagement with the overall content of his lessons. David noted:

The writers have eliminated unnecessary elements, placing greater emphasis on skills practice. This has resulted in students displaying a heightened enthusiasm for learning English.... As an educator, I firmly believe that creativity holds a pivotal position in the realm of education. There is a well-known adage that likens teachers to ‘engineers for the souls.’ In my capacity as an instructor for a specialized class, I find it imperative to blend various teaching materials, integrating this book with others to enhance the learning experience.

David's approach indicated a shift towards more interactive and communicative activities, with a specific focus on listening, reading, and speaking skills. Michael concurred, stating, "I will also emphasize listening, reading, and speaking exercises. I need to adapt in that direction as well."

Moreover, Michelle explained how her teaching approach has evolved thanks to the new book's user-friendliness. She emphasized her ability to incorporate additional activities and technology into her lessons, a task that proved challenging with the previous textbooks. According to Michelle, "With the new book being more accessible, I've been able to introduce extra activities beyond the book's content. Integrating games into the classroom has become enjoyable. Something I couldn't do before due to the numerous mandatory tasks and limited class time." Olivia, on the other hand, reflected on the transformation in her teaching style brought about by the new books and the learner-centered principles emphasized in the updated curriculum. She underscored a shift towards fostering more student-centered activities and assessments. Olivia elaborated, saying, "My teaching approach has undergone significant changes. Now, students actively engage in speaking, with their contributions also subject to comments and evaluations."

Jessica highlighted the profound impact teachers had in not only inspiring students, but also motivating them to excel in their English language learning journey. For her, it was important to emphasize how the significant impact of teachers complemented the impact of textbooks. She firmly believed that teachers play a pivotal role in establishing learning objectives and directing students towards proficient English communication. In her words:

As English teachers, it is incumbent upon us to provide guidance and direction to our students. In essence, we must pinpoint the most suitable learning objectives for our

students. It is our duty to spark their enthusiasm and drive, thus facilitating more effective learning outcomes.

However, it is worth noting that one teacher, Christopher, expressed the belief that his teaching style remained consistent regardless of the textbooks used. Christopher explained:

I don't believe my teaching style has undergone any significant changes. It's more of a constant. It adapts to the content; sometimes, I can be more active, while at other times, I might adopt a more passive approach. However, my fundamental teaching style remains unaltered, irrespective of the specific book in use. The key for me is to ensure that each activity and action contributes to creating a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for the students. This holds true for virtually every book, whether old or new, as my aim remains consistent in ensuring a positive learning experience for my students. Thus, I don't perceive the choice of textbooks as having a substantial impact on my teaching style.

Increases in Student Engagement

One noticeable theme that was evident in the teachers' discussions was the increased level of student engagement with the new textbooks and curriculum. This reflected a positive shift in students' attitudes and motivation toward learning English. Jessica stated, "I've adapted my teaching approach differently for each textbook. I simplify things for regular students, and they seem quite engaged." She highlighted how contemporary students displayed higher motivation levels, clearer learning objectives, and improved listening skills, underscoring a positive shift in their attitude towards English learning. Jessica emphasized, "Students nowadays exhibit enhanced listening skills....They grasp that English isn't just about passing a test; it's about using it for communication." David added, "They're more self-assured when

communicating with foreigners or native speakers. Students nowadays exhibit a heightened interest in learning English....That self-confidence makes a substantial difference.”

Michael observed that students actively engaged with the new textbook, fostering greater participation and interaction during class, particularly during project-based activities. He noted, “In terms of the enthusiasm and energy in the lessons using this book, students following the new curriculum participate more actively and dynamically.” Olivia also underscored the growing student initiative in English learning, remarking, “In past student generations, we had to compel them. Today, there has been a shift in the perception of the importance of learning a foreign language.” Meanwhile, Christopher discussed the positive attributes of students who have learned from the new books, mentioning their good abilities, confidence, and active participation in activities. However, he acknowledged that the high entrance scores at his school made it challenging to determine whether the success is solely due to the new program or other factors. According to Christopher, “Students who study the new program see that they have good abilities, are also confident, and actively participate in activities. However, it is not known whether the success is due to the new program or the school's entrance exam for high-achieving students.”

Challenges in Teaching the New Textbooks

Jessica identified teaching listening skills as a particular challenge, especially when it came to equipping students with the necessary vocabulary for pre-listening activities. This theme underscores the pivotal role of teachers in assisting students in overcoming hurdles related to listening comprehension. Jessica elucidated, “Listening presents a unique challenge because I must ensure that students have a solid vocabulary foundation prior to engaging in pre-listening activities. It is the teacher’s responsibility to adequately prepare students for effective listening.”

Jennifer, in turn, highlighted writing and lesson structure as challenging aspects within the new textbook. She pointed out the difficulties in adhering to the prescribed lesson sequence due to time constraints and the necessity to adapt to the school's timetable. Jennifer noted,

The most formidable aspect lies in writing, as well as the overall lesson structure. The assumption seems to be that every school follows the same lesson structure and order. However, at my school, certain lessons had to be omitted due to time constraints.

Michael, on the other hand, pinpointed challenges in teaching listening skills, with a significant portion of students struggling with listening comprehension. Additionally, he addressed the complexities of teaching writing, specifically pertaining to grammar, vocabulary usage, and paragraph formation. Michael expounded, “While instructing the Listening sections, I’ve observed that more than half of the class faces challenges with listening comprehension. Furthermore, many students exhibit notable weaknesses in their writing abilities.”

Natalie delved into the textbook’s simplicity and its dual nature as both an advantage and a drawback. While students found the book her school selected to be approachable and enjoyable, Natalie raised concerns about the potential ease of assessments, which could lead to overconfidence among students. She remarked, “Students are drawn to the book due to its engaging vocabulary. However, if we restrict assessments solely to these few words, tests might become excessively straightforward, ultimately leaving students unprepared for more rigorous evaluations.”

Michelle, an urban teacher, acknowledged some limitations of the new book, including fragmented grammar explanations and the necessity to design supplementary activities due to its simplicity. She also expressed reservations regarding whether the book’s level aligned with adequately preparing students for upper secondary graduation examination. Michelle observed,

“I’ve noticed certain drawbacks in the new book, particularly in terms of fragmented grammar explanations. Its simplicity might not be suitable for the more advanced city students in my class. It may not adequately cater to their needs.”

Olivia, a teacher at a rural school, identified several challenges posed by the new textbooks, most notably the simplicity of activities, which include questions with only two answer choices, and the integration of listening and reading components. She also underscored the requirement for specific (and often hard-to-access) classroom resources, such as internet access and projectors, to effectively implement the curriculum. Olivia commented, “One of the most significant challenges lies in the activities, particularly the ones with only two answer choices. They tend to be too simplistic. It’s somewhat wasteful.” She further highlighted the need for adapting assessments and evaluations to align with the content taught in the new textbook, with a pronounced emphasis on listening, reading, and writing skills. Christopher reinforced this point, explaining, “When it comes to midterm and final exams, we assess students primarily on their listening, reading, and writing abilities.”

Broader Challenges and Uncertainties

Michael delved into the overarching challenges facing English education in Vietnam, such as students’ limited English language proficiency and their limited exposure to English outside the classroom. He highlighted the prevalent perception of English as a subject rather than a second language, a viewpoint that could have ramifications when students seek employment. Michael articulated, “This is of paramount importance. Because, when it comes to applying these skills in jobs, and job applications, people will take English more seriously to get a certification. At the upper secondary level, English is just a regular subject.” Furthermore, Michael highlighted his uncertainty about the trajectory of English education and the potential impact of

the new textbooks on the national upper secondary school graduation exam. He acknowledged that certain aspects of the future remain shrouded in uncertainty, stating, “It's also unclear whether there will be changes in the evaluation test or not. It's hard to predict.”

Olivia also expressed the potential uncertainty surrounding her students' performance in the upper secondary graduation exams in two-year's time following the school's adoption of the new textbook series. She highlighted the pivotal role these exam results play in the evaluation of schools by the provincial department, which would impact both the school's standing and the recognition of its educators. Olivia candidly asserted,

With our school's graduation exam results looming on the horizon, if they were to disappoint, textbooks would inevitably share a portion of the blame. However, a significant part of the responsibility rests on our teaching methods. Thus, I will find myself compelled to reevaluate and reconsider my choice of instructional materials.

Natalie recognized the present scenario at her school, characterized by the simultaneous use of three distinct textbook series tailored to different grade levels: the old book for the seniors, *iLearn Smart World* for the juniors, and *Global Success* for the freshmen. She anticipated the forthcoming academic year to pose considerable challenges, primarily concerning the organization of substitute teachers who might not possess familiarity with all three series. While her department initially opted for the *iLearn Smart World* series for the academic year 2022-2023, a shift to the *Global Success* series was decided for 2023-2024. This change was motivated by the observation that the *iLearn Smart World* series proved to be relatively less challenging, whereas the *Global Success* series was deemed to provide better preparation for students preparing for the upper secondary graduation exam.

Despite the inherent complexities of this transitional phase, Natalie underscored her school's unwavering commitment to ensuring the success of the new series. Natalie emphasized the imperative need for practical implementation and subsequent evaluation to determine the suitability of the new series, stating, "We are currently navigating this transitional phase, and we are fully committed to investing extra effort into it. Each aspect necessitates rigorous testing in real-world scenarios, followed by meticulous re-evaluation to ensure its appropriateness."

Teachers as Change Agents at School

In examining teacher agency, the application of the Figured Worlds framework provides valuable insights into the experiences of upper secondary English teachers. This framework comprises the diverse contexts teachers navigate, including *physical and virtual spaces* as well as *policy dimensions* within their educational institutions, including classrooms and online resources. Within the dynamic process of textbook evaluation, teachers frequently resorted to *improvisation* and drew upon their educational backgrounds and adaptability. Their decision-making processes are notably influenced by their qualifications, prior experiences, and self-acquired knowledge.

Moreover, teachers actively engage in specific *actions* throughout the textbook selection process. These actions were guided by their individual academic foundations and pedagogical philosophies. Notably, they *interpreted* new textbooks and the selection process through the lens of their past teaching experiences. Additionally, the influence of various *contributors*, such as school leadership and colleagues, exerted a significant impact on teachers' decision-making processes during textbook adoption. Those contributors reflected the collaborative nature and shared perspectives within the teaching community. These distinct lenses, grounded in the Figured Worlds framework, were instrumental in identifying the themes discussed herein. This

section revisits the data analysis presented in the previous sections of this chapter as well as incorporates additional data to examine teacher agency. In this section, I will discuss themes of (1) navigating spaces and constraints, (2) the art of improvisation, (3) the power of interpretations, judgments and acts, and (4) the impact of contributors.

Navigating Spaces and Constraints

This theme delves into the intricate interplay of physical, curricular, and policy-driven dimensions of space that significantly influenced teachers' identities as agents of change. It includes the myriad challenges and opportunities teachers encounter as they grapple with limited time, adapt to digital resources, seek well-defined curricular guidelines, and navigate policy shifts. These spatial constraints serve as the backdrop against which teachers perceive their agency and adapt to the ever-evolving educational landscape.

Time Constraints

Olivia's experience sheds light on the daunting challenges posed by the constraints of time. Her candid remark, "Time was insufficient. Within just about a month, it encompassed both work and study time," highlighted the immense pressure teachers confront as they navigate the temporal dimensions of book selection.

Physical and Virtual Spaces

Emily's account also highlighted the shift towards virtual spaces and digital resources. She recalled her preparations for textbook introductions, stating, "Yes, I remember working online and receiving sample books for all the textbooks in advance. Subsequently, we engaged in numerous consultations, training sessions, and book assessments, often conducted via platforms like Zoom and YouTube." Olivia added, "As there were no physical books provided to the teachers, only soft file links were sent via the internet. Teachers had to allocate time to access

these materials online, which presented its own set of challenges.” This shift highlighted the growing reliance on digital materials in lieu of physical textbooks, which necessitated teachers’ adeptness in accessing and utilizing online resources.

Curricular Spaces

The curricular dimension of space played a pivotal role in shaping teachers’ identities and their capacity to act as agents of change. Emily's call for more detailed evaluation sheets underscores the significance of clear curricular guidelines. Her suggestion, “I emphasized the need for more comprehensive evaluation sheets in the book selection process,” reflected a desire for increased clarity within the curriculum. Furthermore, Jessica’s experience underscored the challenges teachers encounter within this curricular space. She noted the absence of formal training in textbook assessment and selection, stating, “Prior to the textbook selection process, there was no training provided on the criteria we should base our assessments on or how to evaluate the books.” This gap placed teachers in a position where they had to navigate this curricular space independently. This, in turn, raised questions about their preparedness and perceived agency when making curriculum-related decisions during the book selection process. Additionally, Natalie’s account of teachers forming groups to analyze textbooks exemplified the adaptability required within the curricular dimension. She explained, “Certainly, we couldn’t feasibly review all nine books individually as it would be unfocused. Therefore, we divided into groups.” This decision by her and her teacher peers highlighted how teachers had to adapt to both physical and curricular constraints to make the selection process more manageable.

Policy Dimensions

Sarah's statement, “We are granted the authority to select books that best suit our needs,” emphasized the influential role of policy dimensions in empowering teachers as agents of

change. This policy shift, which entrusted teachers with the autonomy to choose instructional materials aligned with their teaching context and student requirements, significantly shaped their sense of agency. Within this policy-driven space, teachers bore a heightened responsibility for their students' education and the curriculum they delivered. However, Michelle's experience also revealed the lack of training in textbook assessment and selection within this policy-driven dimension. She remarked, "There was no training provided for textbook assessment and selection," thus exposing a gap in policy support.

Despite teachers' participation in training sessions related to the 2018 General Education Curriculum (GEC) and the Enhanced Teacher Education Program (ETEP) as presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, many did not recall receiving specific training on textbook assessment, selection and implementation regarding the significance of the qualities and competencies in the new curriculum. This discrepancy highlights a gap between policy intentions and implementation realities. It potentially undermines teachers' confidence and capacity to make informed decisions, thus impacting their perceived agency. This finding underscores the importance of examining not only the explicit policies but also the implicit norms and practices shaping teachers' experiences and decision-making processes within the educational landscape.

The Art of Improvisation

This thematic exploration sheds light on how teachers harness their improvisational skills and showcase their ability to adapt and craft responses in the face of challenges posed by new instructional materials. This theme emphasizes the dynamic nature of teaching as teachers adjust their teaching approaches and demonstrate their capacity to act as agents of change in shaping curriculum and pedagogical practices.

Adaptation of Instructional Materials

Several teachers, including Emily, Sarah, and David, exemplified their improvisational skills by adapting selected textbooks or coursework to better align with their teaching objectives and their students' needs. David amalgamated elements from various textbooks to create what he felt was a more engaging and tailored learning experience for his students. These teachers' adeptness in adapting instructional materials exemplifies their improvisational approach, contributing significantly to their identity as educators who actively shape their curriculum. David explained it this way:

As a teacher responsible for a specialized class, I often find it necessary to integrate various teaching materials, including this textbook and others. While this approach may reflect my personal teaching experience, it is particularly relevant in English specialized classes where students exhibit exceptional language learning abilities. To ensure the most effective learning experience, I carefully select and combine the most valuable components from multiple sources. For instance, if I come across an engaging reading passage in a different textbook that isn't currently in use, I incorporate it as an additional assignment for my students. Similarly, if there's an intriguing listening exercise elsewhere, I incorporate it into our lessons. The key is to infuse creativity into the lessons to prevent monotony. Recognizing that no single textbook can encompass all the best materials, I extract the most valuable content from multiple sources to replace any less engaging material, ultimately creating a more enjoyable and enriching learning environment for my students.

Student-Centered Adaptation

Teachers place a strong emphasis on adapting their teaching methods and materials to cater to the specific needs of their students. This theme highlights their role as change agents who respond dynamically to classroom challenges, while striving to provide optimal learning experiences. Jessica, for instance, tailored her teaching style differently for specialized and regular classes to align with her students' varying English proficiency levels. David highlighted the importance of selecting materials suitable for his students' needs and goals, which reflected his commitment to student-centered adaptation. Moreover, Olivia's shift toward more engaging and tailored additional activities illustrated her commitment to enhancing her students' English proficiency.

Teaching Approach Flexibility

The ability to adapt and craft responses to challenges posed by new instructional materials extended to teachers' teaching approaches. Jessica and Michelle served as prime examples of this adaptability, adjusting their teaching methods to cater to different student needs and engagement levels. Michelle, recognizing the simplicity of the new textbook, discussed the design of additional activities and resources, exemplifying her ability to adapt and create new learning opportunities for her students. Olivia included students' families in the evaluation process.

I even extended invitations to parents to take part in the evaluation process. Students created a video that was then uploaded to Google Drive, and I provided them with a rubric to establish evaluation criteria. These criteria were solely for parents and encompassed aspects such as content, presentation skills, video design, and the video's duration, which should fall within the three to five-minute range. I subsequently

communicated these criteria to the group of students' parents, requesting them to download and sign the evaluation form while also providing their contact information. This allowed for potential discussions if the teacher found any issues with the evaluation. Many parents took the evaluation process seriously and provided realistic assessments, even determining grades for their children. On the other hand, some parents opted for a more hands-off approach, delegating the assessment to their children.

These instances highlight the teachers' flexibility and creativity in refining their teaching approaches to enrich the overall learning experience.

In essence, through the lenses of the Figured Worlds framework, teachers' agency and adaptability were central to their role as change agents, which contributed significantly to the quality of education and the growth of their students. Their experiences highlight the importance of ongoing support, training, and collaboration to empower teachers as effective agents of change in the dynamic landscape of education.

The Power of Interpretations, Judgments, and Acts

Within the dynamic landscape of educational reforms, teachers play a pivotal role in interpreting, judging, and acting upon curriculum changes. This theme highlights the power of interpretations, judgments, and acts exhibited by educators in response to the evolving educational framework. Through positive interpretations of curriculum changes, adaptation, motivation, informed and holistic evaluation, leadership, committee participation, and collaborative decision-making, participant teachers navigated the complexities of curriculum adjustments with resilience and innovation. Their proactive engagement underscores their influence as change agents in shaping the trajectory of education at both the classroom and systemic levels.

Positive Interpretation of Curriculum Changes

Teachers such as Emily and Sarah expressed positive perspectives on the curriculum changes and textbook selection process. Emily, in particular, noted a noticeable increase in student engagement when topics aligned with their daily experiences, suggesting a beneficial impact of the changes. Additionally, she regarded the adoption of the new book series as a means to equip students for global integration, demonstrating a forward-thinking outlook. Emily emphasized, “I observed a significant uptick in student engagement when we addressed topics directly relevant to their lives. It's encouraging to see that the curriculum adjustments are yielding positive results.”

Adaptation and Motivation as Key Interpretations

David’s interpretation centered on the positive impact of the new textbook on improving students’ language skills, engagement, and confidence. He saw the changes as an opportunity for students to practice and gain confidence in their language abilities. Additionally, he recognized the importance of creativity and flexibility in combining different teaching materials to make learning more engaging and relevant. Other teachers, such as Jessica, Sarah, Michelle, and Michael shared similar experiences.

Informed and Holistic Evaluation

Teachers prioritized thorough and holistic evaluations when selecting instructional materials. This theme reflects their role as change agents who make informed decisions to enhance the quality of education. Michelle shared:

Initially, I examined the table of contents on the first page, which outlines the key points of the book. Following this, I reviewed the corresponding activities according to the contents. Subsequently, I analyzed the lesson objectives, focusing on the content the

authors intended to cover. Then, I conducted a comparative analysis with the previous book to identify similarities and differences. I delved deeper into the first three units and typically the review lesson, as there should be a review after every three units, followed by a test and then a continuation of the units. This process informed my decision.

Leadership and Committee Participation

Some teachers took on leadership roles within their departments or participated in provincial textbook selection committees. This theme emphasized their active involvement in shaping educational policies and decisions, highlighting their role as change agents at a broader level. David mentioned, “As the head of the department, I counted the votes and sent the results to the provincial department. I am very lucky that over the past 2 years, I have been selected as a member of the provincial textbook selection committee.” Natalie and Olivia, both department heads, assumed the responsibility of delegating tasks to their colleagues and facilitating a seamless adoption process.

Collaborative Decision-Making

Collaboration and seeking external resources emerged as a subtheme in the context of acts. Olivia’s strategy of consulting with other teachers from different schools in the province when choosing textbooks highlighted the importance of collaboration and seeking external support. Teachers such as Christopher emphasized the need to read and evaluate multiple books, indicating their improvisation in crafting responses to the challenge of selecting suitable instructional materials. These actions demonstrate how teachers crafted responses and improvised by seeking external support and adapting to the resources available to them. Natalie explained, “For 4 weeks, I divided the whole department into 3 groups. Each group was assigned to read and analyze specific books.” Christopher elaborated:

The process, in theory, everyone would read all nine books. However, the team was going to have to teach grade 10 as the core, having to read it over and over to make a decision. Those teachers were required to go through the entire book itself. The group leader has assigned the leader of the 10th grade group, the 11th grade group leader, the 12th grade group leader. Teachers had to read and evaluate nine different books to make a decision.

The Impact of Contributors

This theme delves into the influence of external actors, including publishers, university educators, and educational departments, on teachers' decision-making processes. Additionally, it explores the role of collaboration and teacher community in shaping teachers' perspectives and practices. Through insights into the influence of past experiences, external educational factors, and collaborative decision-making, this theme illuminates the interconnected nature of contributors in shaping the educational landscape. As participant teachers navigated the complexities of curriculum changes, their interactions with external actors and internal collaborators play a crucial role in shaping their roles as educators and change agents.

Influence of External Actors

The first theme arising from the perspective of contributors highlights the significant impact of external actors, including publishers, university educators, and educational departments, on teachers' decisions and their identities as educators and change agents. Several participants emphasized how these external actors played a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions and decision-making processes. For example, Emily acknowledged the influence of her university teachers and the textbooks she used during her college education. This illustrates how past experiences and external educational factors contribute to her role as an educator.

Conversely, Sarah placed significant emphasis on the reputation and reliability of publishing companies like Education Publishing when considering which textbooks to select. She articulated, “Education Publishing has a good reputation and reliability,” underscoring the substantial influence of external entities on teachers' decision-making processes. Moreover, numerous educators underscored the invaluable contributions of the provincial department, noting its provision of online resources and facilitation of introductory sessions. These observations shed light on the pivotal role of department-level initiatives in shaping teachers' practices and perceptions.

Role of Collaboration and Teacher Community

Several participants highlighted the significant role of fellow teachers, colleagues, and department-level discussions as contributors to their decisions. David, for instance, recognized the importance of communication and collaboration among schools and teachers in the decision-making process. He mentioned, “If there is an additional change, I’d say we’ll need the choice at the provincial level. Schools should communicate with each other, exchange, and provide feedback even before the provincial committee meets.” This insight illustrates how collaboration among schools can influence teachers’ perspectives and enhance their effectiveness as change agents within the educational system.

Similarly, Michelle’s perspective on influential contributors encompassed both external actors and internal contributors, such as her fellow teachers who actively participated in the selection process. Her acknowledgement of the role played by a committee of experts suggests a potential contributor to improving the textbook selection process in the future. This further highlighted the collaborative nature of decision-making among teachers and the value placed on input from various stakeholders within the educational community. Michelle explained:

I believe it would be advantageous if both the provincial department and the national ministry of education actively participated in the process. Establishing a specialized committee for textbook assessment, comprising experienced and knowledgeable teachers, could be a valuable initiative. Collaboratively, this committee could thoroughly evaluate all available textbook options and make recommendations for the best sets. Schools could then follow these recommendations, ensuring a more efficient process with minimal wastage.

Preparing for the Future Educational Environments

In this section, teachers shared valuable insights and recommendations not only for improving the textbook adoption process but also for their ongoing professional development. These suggestions aim to enhance the quality of education and empower educators.

Enhancing the Textbook Selection Process

Guidelines and Templates

To streamline textbook selection, teachers suggested providing clear guidelines, templates, and detailed instructions. Emily emphasized the importance of dividing the assessment into smaller categories for clarity, stating, “In my opinion, I need a template or a guide to choose books more clearly and in detail.” This perspective was echoed in many other teachers’ responses.

Time and Resources

Many participants advocated for extending the time allocated for textbook assessment to ensure a thorough selection process. David noted, “There should be some small changes, such as more time for the teachers to assess the books.” Additionally, the participants proposed that publishers include actual implementation examples and detailed lesson plans in teachers’ books,

facilitating effective textbook use. Emily framed this concern this way: “Maybe there’s an implementation sample or they can come up with the points, topics that are more novel, or some ideas that have been well thought out.”

Professional Development and Teacher Empowerment

Teacher Agency

Empowering teachers to play a more significant role in the selection process is essential. Natalie emphasized the need for training on how to choose not only textbooks, but also workbooks and reference books, enabling teachers to make informed decisions more holistically. She shared:

There should be training on how to choose a good textbook. Not only textbooks, workbooks or reference books as well. What workbook is considered a good workbook? What criteria should be assessed? Teachers should know this stuff, and they will be better equipped for future textbook selection processes.

Mindset Change

Encouraging a shift in mindset towards effective textbook use and student motivation is vital. Olivia stressed the need to motivate both teachers and students, especially in rural and remote areas, to emphasize the importance of education for a better future. Jessica suggested providing students with good examples and motivating them to overcome obstacles. This type of mindset change was seen as a catalyst for positive change in education. From Olivia’s perspective, “The most useful activity is to change our mindset. As for many other teachers, it’s like they’ve been stuck in the same routine for years, and there hasn’t been any noticeable change.” Jessica concurred, underscoring the need to motivate as a key component of student

success: “They should set good examples for their students and inspire them to overcome poverty. We must motivate ourselves in order to motivate our students.”

Continuous Teacher Training

The significance of continuous training and guidance for teachers in the context of textbook assessment and selection was a recurring theme among participants. They emphasized the need for ongoing training programs, available both in person and online, with a primary focus on enhancing the skills necessary for effective textbook assessment and selection. Jennifer’s query—“How can we help upper secondary school teachers, when holding a book in their hands, know that this book’s design is okay?”—encapsulated the fundamental question that underscores the need for comprehensive training. Michael echoed this sentiment by expressing his desire for more extensive training opportunities, underlining the importance of facilitation, and advocating for updated courses in teaching methods. He asserted, “I still want to receive more training, wait for more facilitation, get newer and more updated courses on teaching methods.”

Natalie highlighted the transformative potential of training, such training equips teachers with the knowledge required to better comprehend the textbooks they utilize. She commented, “From the training, teachers would understand the books better. So, training is crucial so that teachers can apply the knowledge to the books they are teaching.”

Michelle offered a perspective that reinforced the importance of training. She argued that if schools intend to empower teachers to select their own textbooks, they should invest in training programs specifically tailored to this area. For Michelle, it is simply that, “If they want to allow teachers to select the book themselves, teachers should be trained in this area.”

Christopher added another layer to the discussion, stressing the value of training sessions and seminars, especially those fostering intentional learning. He also underscored the importance of peer-to-peer learning within teacher communities, where colleagues and teammates become valuable sources of knowledge. “When we learn intentionally, when we don’t learn from what they teach, we can still learn from our teammates, and from our coworkers,” added Christopher.

Sarah introduced the concept of exchange and sharing sessions, akin to inspirational sessions to underline teachers’ role in uplifting the field of education. These collaborative interactions inspire educators and contribute to their growth and development. She hoped for “more exchange and sharing sessions, akin to inspirational gatherings. I believe fostering mutual inspiration within the field of education is imperative.”

Summary

In conclusion, teacher participants shared valuable recommendations and insights aimed at improving the textbook adoption process and fostering ongoing professional development. Their suggestions highlighted the need for clearer guidelines and extended assessment time frames during textbook selection. Furthermore, teachers emphasized the importance of continuous training and guidance to empower educators in making informed decisions. The teacher voices incorporated into this section also emphasized the significance of a mindset shift towards effective textbook use and the need to motivate students. These ideas form the basis of the transformative potential of such changes in the field of education. The teacher participants’ collective insights offer a comprehensive approach to enhancing the quality of education and the professional growth of teachers.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I will present a summary of the research findings addressing each of the research questions. Subsequently, I will delve into the implications of these findings on several aspects including the textbook adoption process, its implementation, and the associated teacher professional development initiatives. Finally, the chapter will conclude by highlighting the imperative for further research in the field.

Summary of Major Findings

Teacher Preparedness and the Textbook Adoption Process

Firstly, teacher preparedness for textbook adoption varied among the participants. Some teachers mentioned receiving limited formal training in textbook assessment, while others recalled no training at all. This discrepancy highlights the necessity for ongoing, thorough training in textbook selection, alongside an exploration of both explicit policies and implicit norms and practices that influence teachers' experiences and decision-making within the educational landscape.

Secondly, teachers faced various challenges and constraints during the textbook adoption process. One significant challenge was the limited time available for evaluation. The majority of the teachers mentioned short evaluation periods, making it challenging to thoroughly assess multiple sets of books. Due to this constraint, teachers often relied on their teaching experiences and individual textbook assessment criteria to make quick decisions.

Thirdly, the lack of specific criteria for textbook assessment posed another challenge. While some evaluation sheets with criteria were available, teachers often relied on their intuition, personal preferences, and teaching experience when selecting books. Design, colors, and perceived complexity played a role in their decision-making process. Additionally, some

teachers considered supplementary resources (e.g., lesson plans and software), but inclusion or omission of these materials were not always decisive factors.

Lastly, the influence of authors and publishing companies varied among teachers. While reputation and support from publishers were considered, teachers placed more emphasis on a book's content, structure, and alignment with the curriculum. Visual design, cultural relevance, and suitability for diverse student populations were also important factors.

Despite the challenges, some teachers found the adoption process relatively smooth, especially when there was a departmental consensus. Department meetings and democratic voting among teachers were common approaches to reaching a decision on the most suitable textbook. Additionally, a provincial textbook selection committee played a role in the final selection, considering recommendations from schools. It is worth noting that one teacher confidentially shared the influence of the provincial Department of Education and Training on the decision-making process.

Experiencing the New Textbooks

Firstly, satisfaction with the new textbooks among teachers was generally positive. Many teachers expressed contentment with the improvements in the textbooks, particularly in enhancing students' language skills. They appreciated the visual appeal, interesting content, and vocabulary simplicity, which helped students remember new words. Some found teaching with the new books easier compared to previous ones, since the new books allowed for more comfortable coverage of basic knowledge within class time. The new books were seen as relevant, modern, and engaging for students.

Secondly, teachers noted similarities between the old and new textbooks, with some suggesting that changes in student participation might be more attributable to teaching methods

than to the textbooks themselves. Overall, there was a consensus that the new textbooks were beneficial in terms of structured content and opportunities for students to practice language skills. However, one challenge identified by teachers was teaching listening skills, particularly in preparing students with adequate vocabulary for pre-listening activities. Some teachers also found aspects of the lessons challenging, such as writing and the prescribed lesson order, which did not always align with their school's schedule.

Thirdly, while the simplicity of the new textbooks was praised for making learning enjoyable, there were concerns that it might lead to overconfidence among students in assessments. Additionally, some teachers expressed doubts as to whether the books would be suitable for preparing students for more advanced levels or exams.

Lastly, broader challenges and uncertainties in English education in Vietnam were discussed, including students' weak English language skills and limited exposure to English outside of the classroom. Teachers also expressed some uncertainties about future changes in English education and the potential impact of the new books on the national upper secondary school graduation exam.

Despite these challenges and uncertainties, teachers were willing to work hard to make the new series successful during this transitional period, which emphasized the importance of real practice and re-evaluation to determine the perfect fit for their students. They also highlighted the role of teachers in inspiring and motivating students to learn English, in addition to the influence of textbooks. The participating teachers expressed beliefs in setting clear learning goals and guiding students toward effective communication in English.

Teachers as Change Agents at School

The Figured Worlds framework offers valuable insights into teachers' experiences, encompassing their navigation of physical and virtual spaces, their reliance on improvisation, and their judgment shaped by qualifications and experiences. Teachers engaged in specific actions during the textbook selection process as they drew from their academic backgrounds and applied past teaching experiences. Additionally, external contributors, including publishers and colleagues, were those to play a significant role in the teachers' decision-making processes.

Firstly, the teachers grappled with physical, curricular, and policy-driven constraints that impact their identities as change agents. Time constraints, the shift to digital resources, the need for clear curricular guidelines, and policy changes all influenced how teachers perceived their agency and adapted to evolving educational landscapes.

Secondly, teachers showcased their improvisational skills in adapting instructional materials, adjusting teaching approaches, and engaging in collaborative decision-making. Their ability to adapt and craft responses to challenges played a crucial role in shaping their identities as educators who actively shaped their curriculum and teaching practices.

Thirdly, teachers interpreted curriculum changes and textbook selection positively, for they viewed them as opportunities to enhance student engagement and language skills. They prioritized informed and holistic evaluations when selecting instructional materials. Leadership and committee participation also highlighted their active involvement in shaping educational policies and decisions.

Fourthly, collaboration was a vital aspect of the teachers' decision-making processes. The participating teachers actively engaged in collaborative decision-making which involved department meetings, discussions, voting, and collective decision-making at the school level.

This theme underscored their role as educators and change agents within the educational community.

Lastly, external actors, such as publishers, university teachers, and educational departments, significantly influenced teachers' decisions and their roles as educators and change agents. Collaboration and discussions with fellow teachers and colleagues also played a crucial role in shaping their Figured Worlds and decision-making processes.

Preparing for the Future Educational Environments

Teachers provided valuable suggestions to enhance the textbook adoption process and support their professional development in the context of selecting and using textbooks effectively. Firstly, in terms of the textbook selection process, teachers emphasized the importance of clear guidelines, templates, and detailed instructions to aid them in making informed choices. They suggested dividing the assessment into smaller categories to facilitate selection. Extending the time allocated for textbook assessment was also seen as crucial to ensure a thorough and thoughtful selection process. Additionally, teachers advocated for publishers to include implementation samples and detailed lesson plans in teacher's books, making it easier for them to understand how to use the textbooks effectively.

Secondly, supporting materials were highlighted as a key area of improvement. Teachers stressed the need for enhancing the quality and availability of supporting materials that aligned with the chosen textbooks to facilitate effective teaching.

Thirdly, regarding professional development and teacher empowerment, teachers expressed a desire for their greater involvement in the selection process and called for training programs focused on textbook assessment and selection. Continuous training, both in-person and online, was seen as essential to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to make

informed decisions. They emphasized that well-prepared teachers would be better equipped for future textbook selection processes.

Lastly, there was a consensus among teachers that a shift in mindset towards effective textbook use and student motivation is necessary. They encouraged teachers, especially in rural and remote areas, to motivate themselves and their students by emphasizing the importance of education for a better future. This mindset change was seen as a practical way to improve the overall educational experience.

Implications of the Research

Textbook Adoption Process

Firstly, the teacher participants in this study had limited recollection of the training they received, including the ETEP program outlined in Chapter 3, which was a substantial online training initiative as part of the 2018 GEC. This observation highlighted a significant deficiency in formal training for teachers participating in the textbook adoption process. Addressing this gap will necessitate educational authorities' investment in continuous training programs that are tailored to teachers, available in both in-person and online formats, and have a primary focus on equipping educators with the skills needed for effective textbook assessment and selection.

Enhanced teacher preparedness through comprehensive training is crucial for fostering a cadre of educators capable of making well-informed decisions aligned with educational objectives.

Secondly, teachers expressed a need for clear guidelines, templates, and detailed instructions for textbook selection. Providing high school teachers with comprehensive guidance on how to evaluate textbooks, including dividing assessments into smaller categories, would make the selection process smoother and more effective. Furthermore, teachers emphasized the importance of extending the time allocated for textbook assessment to ensure a thorough

selection process. A longer period would allow teachers to evaluate books more thoughtfully and make well-informed decisions. This extension of time should be considered when planning textbook adoption schedules.

Thirdly, to enhance the quality of teaching, publishers should focus on providing high-quality supporting materials, such as lesson plans and software. These resources should be readily available to assist teachers in using the textbooks effectively. While not the sole determinant for the teachers in their decision-making, supplementary resources could significantly contribute to a book's appeal and help teachers to see more clearly the possibilities the textbooks would or would not offer. In addition, teachers prioritized content and curriculum alignment when choosing textbooks. They valued textbooks that were culturally relevant, aligned with the curriculum, and appropriate for local student populations. Publishers should ensure that their textbooks meet these criteria to gain teachers' confidence and trust. Visual design, including appropriate photos and layouts, was also important to teachers. Publishers should pay attention to the visual appeal of their textbooks, as it can influence teachers' initial impressions and increase their own enjoyable engagement with the material along with the engagement of their students. An attractive design can make teachers more open to considering a textbook and more likely to use it.

Lastly, the research highlights the value of adopting a democratic approach to textbook selection which involves all teachers in the decision-making process. Schools should proactively promote consensus-building among educators to foster an environment for collective decision-making through mechanisms like voting or open discussions. This inclusive approach ensures that the selected textbooks align with the shared preferences and requirements of the teaching staff.

Despite the generally smooth perception of the adoption process, it remains essential to remain vigilant about potential external influences. Teaching is a complex profession in which the agency of language educators is influenced by diverse experiences, contexts, beliefs, and aspirations that are interconnected with their past, present, and future identities (Sanczyk, 2020). On the one hand, teachers may perceive that they exercise agency during the textbook selection process. On the other hand, external influences such as recommendations from provincial education authorities and marketing campaigns from major publishers, coupled with the substantial volume of textbooks to evaluate within constrained time frames, may raise questions about the extent of their autonomy. Hence, it is incumbent upon educational stakeholders to take measures that guarantee transparency and impartiality in the selection process.

Textbook Implementation

The overall satisfaction expressed by teachers with the new textbooks highlights the importance of providing high-quality and engaging instructional materials. Teachers' positive experiences with the textbooks highlight the potential for improved learning outcomes and student engagement when educators are satisfied with the resources at their disposal. Therefore, educational authorities should continue to invest in the development and evaluation of textbooks that align with teachers' and students' needs, ensuring their satisfaction.

In addition to the prominence of project-based learning and student-centered activities in the new curriculum, which implies a shift towards more interactive and student-centered pedagogical approaches, policymakers should acknowledge the value of such methods in fostering critical thinking, creativity, and active learning among students. Encouraging the integration of project-based learning and student-centered approaches into classrooms can significantly enhance the overall educational experience.

However, it is important to consider that, as noted by Hallinger (2010) in his examination of educational reforms in other Southeast Asian nations, the positive responses from teachers may not necessarily indicate wholehearted endorsement but rather passive compliance. This could be attributed to the influence of a strongly centralized administrative system and a cultural tradition that places a high emphasis on respect for authority, age, hierarchy, and social status.

Ho and Dimmock's (2023) findings align with Hallinger's observations, indicating similar issues in the education system. Their study suggests that primary school teachers and principals generally have embraced the objectives of reform policies, leading to greater diversity in classroom teaching methods (e.g., more group work, games, and role-playing activities) compared to the past. However, it is worth noting that any deviations from the predetermined lesson plans, whether in ideas, phrases, or actions, were often disregarded. Students typically adhered to teachers' directives and instructions, with limited opportunities for genuine personal reflection and self-expression.

The challenges and uncertainties surrounding English education in Vietnam, such as limited proficiency and external examination pressures, require sustained attention. Policymakers should continue to explore strategies for improving English language proficiency among students, both inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, efforts to address uncertainties, such as changes in evaluation tests, should be made transparent to educators to ensure effective planning and preparation.

According to Le and Le (2022), Vietnamese teachers were significantly influenced by external factors, with the most prominent factor being the outcomes of their students' learning. Chinese and Vietnamese teachers, who share numerous similarities in their cultures, traditions, and educational philosophies, face substantial pressure regarding their students' academic

performance (Lan, 2017). In a worst-case scenario, this pressure may even result in negative consequences for English teaching and learning, where educators might resort to practices like lenient grading to meet students' grade expectations (Stroebe, 2016). This concern is further substantiated by a recent study conducted by Nguyen (2023), which revealed a discernible downward trend in content alignment between 150 English past exam papers designed for upper secondary students and the content of the six English textbooks currently in use.

Finally, the transitional phase involving the simultaneous use of multiple textbook series highlights the importance of careful planning and evaluation when introducing new materials. Educational institutions should engage in thorough testing and evaluation of new series to assess their suitability for specific grade levels and teaching contexts. This process should involve input from teachers and administrators to make informed decisions about textbook adoption.

Teacher Professional Development

The research findings have profound implications for the professional development of teachers, particularly in the context of textbook selection and their role as agents of change in education. While some studies have showcased successful and diverse approaches to professional development for teachers in Vietnam (Hallinger et al., 2023), persistent challenges remain. The MOET (2013) has identified two critical issues: (i) many teachers lack the essential professional and pedagogical skills required to meet the demands of educational reform, and (ii) policies pertaining to teacher training, recruitment, monitoring, and quality assessment are inconsistent and do not align with the new requirements for enhancing professional capacity.

Vietnam's bureaucratic reporting system operates under political priorities that prioritize achieving "success" through process compliance (London, 2023). This focus on meeting targets has given rise to the phenomenon known as "achievement disease" in Vietnam, characterized by

a significant emphasis on reporting success, but a relatively limited focus on monitoring and enhancing overall educational performance in terms of learning outcomes.

To address these issues effectively, this study proposes several key recommendations:

Empower Teacher Agency

Professional development programs should highlight the importance of teacher agency in the textbook selection process. Teachers should be encouraged to take a more active role in shaping curriculum decisions, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. Training programs should be designed to offer continuous guidance and support to teachers in assessing and selecting textbooks.

Mindset Shift

There should be an emphasis on promoting a mindset shift among teachers, focusing on the effective use of textbooks and the role of education in motivating students towards a brighter future. Special attention should be given to teachers, particularly those in underserved areas, to encourage them to serve as role models who inspire students to overcome challenges and pursue education with determination. Ho and Dimmock (2023) highlighted the risk of teachers reverting to traditional methods during reforms in Vietnam due to a lack of guidance and professional development. To ensure successful implementation, a structured sequence of teacher professional development is essential. This approach would help teachers understand the core principles of learner-centered education and gradually grant them the autonomy to adapt these reforms to their local contexts.

Facilitate Collaboration

Professional development programs should facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among teachers, as engaging with others plays a crucial role in fostering and

empowering agency (Agustin & Lengkanawati, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Van der Heijden et al., 2015). Inspirational sessions and platforms for educators to exchange ideas and experiences can be invaluable in creating a supportive teaching community. Professional development initiatives should also consider the needs of teachers in various contexts, including those in rural and remote areas. Tailored support and motivation programs can help teachers in such regions become effective agents of change in their communities.

Innovation in Teacher Training

To effectively address the challenges of educational reform, teacher professional development should undergo significant innovation, starting with teacher training institutions to better prepare pre-service teachers. Additionally, for in-service teachers to meet the demands of the new Education law, there is a need for (1) further education, including a 4-year bachelor's degree for primary teachers and licensing for preschool teachers, and (2) professional development focused on adopting teaching approaches tailored to students' competencies (Hai and Kendall, 2023)

Personalized PD Approaches

Hayes et al. (2024) highlighted the need for personalized professional development approaches. Firstly, teachers should receive support to reflect on their teaching beliefs and how these affect their classroom practices across different subjects. Secondly, teachers can be supported to draw motivation from recognizing students' strengths and their learning progress, even when facing challenges within the organization. One of these practices, co-coaching, has gained significant attention as teachers are increasingly recognized as vital contributors to educational reform and improved student learning outcomes (Taddese & Rao, 2022). Peer coaching among teachers fosters reflective practices, allowing professionals to “shift their way of

seeing” (Lord et al., 2008, p. 31). The positive impact of pedagogic coaching interventions on teachers’ experiences confirms that video co-coaching influences their dialogic teaching methods (Bignell & Holliga, 2023).

It is important to acknowledge that while various professionalism practices for educators have been explored worldwide, it is impractical to anticipate discovering a universally applicable solution to determine the effectiveness of a particular professional development approach (Asterhan & Lefstein, 2024; Desimone, 2023).

The Need for Future Research

In future research, it is imperative to delve deeper into the dynamics of teacher agency between urban and rural schools. Expanding the scope of data collection to encompass educators serving various positions, such as principals or specialists at the provincial departments, will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher agency manifests across different administrative levels. Moreover, incorporating a wider range of data sources, including individual interviews and focus groups, will allow for a richer exploration of the factors influencing teacher agency, as well as the nuances of their experiences.

To further enhance the empirical basis of future research, the inclusion of in-depth analysis from various data sources (e.g., from government document analysis and classroom observations) will provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of English language education in Vietnam. Examining the impact of Circular No. 27/2023/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2023a) on the textbook selection process and its outcomes will be a key focus. Understanding how the specialized team of teachers exerts a greater influence in this process and how it differs from previous academic years will shed light on the changing dynamics within Vietnamese education.

In addition, it is essential to investigate teacher agency and educational practices in the academic year 2024–2025, when English will no longer be compulsory for the upper secondary graduation exam. This significant shift in policy raises critical questions about how textbook adoption and implementation will differ in the absence of the high-stake test pressure. Building on the findings of this study, which revealed the substantial influence of the upper secondary graduation exam on book selection and teaching practices, future research can assess whether the removal of this pressure will have a positive or negative effect on English language instruction in Vietnam.

Furthermore, the need for future research in the field of PD is paramount, with a particular focus on identifying and implementing effective PD practices that can aid teachers in successfully embracing and implementing educational reforms. To ensure the seamless integration of these reforms and innovations, it is essential to investigate and refine PD strategies that not only provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills but also foster a supportive and collaborative learning environment. Future research should aim to pinpoint the most effective PD models, delivery methods, and content, taking into account the unique needs and contexts of educators.

In future educational research, it is crucial to explore teacher agency differences between urban and rural schools and analyze the effects of policies like Circular No. 27/2023/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2023a) on English education, especially in terms of textbooks and teaching dynamics. Additionally, understanding how teachers adapt to the removal of English as a compulsory subject for the upper secondary graduation exam in the 2024-2025 academic year is essential. Lastly, research should prioritize effective professional development strategies tailored to

educators' unique needs and contexts to facilitate the successful implementation of educational reforms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the evolving landscape of textbook adoption, implementation, and teacher professional development in the context of English language education in Vietnam. Through an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, challenges, and perspectives, several key findings have been identified.

Firstly, the research reveals the varying levels of teacher preparedness for textbook adoption, highlighting a critical gap in formal training and support. Teachers face challenges such as time constraints, lack of specific assessment criteria, and varying influences from authors and publishing companies during the selection process. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrate agency in adapting to curriculum changes and engaging in collaborative decision-making within the teacher community.

Secondly, the study underscores the positive reception of new textbooks among teachers, emphasizing improvements in content, structure, and engagement opportunities. However, concerns regarding students' overreliance on textbooks and challenges in teaching listening skills warrant attention. Moreover, broader issues in English education, including limited proficiency and external examination pressures, necessitate sustained efforts for improvement.

Thirdly, the research highlights the pivotal role of teacher professional development in facilitating successful educational reforms. Recommendations include empowering teacher agency, promoting a mindset shift towards effective textbook use and student motivation, fostering collaboration among educators, and embracing innovative approaches to professional development.

Finally, future research should delve deeper into teacher agency differences between urban and rural schools, analyze policy effects on English education, and explore effective professional development strategies tailored to educators' diverse needs and contexts. By addressing these areas of inquiry, policymakers and educators can work collaboratively to navigate the complexities of English language education in Vietnam and drive positive change for both students and teachers.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, F., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2023). Teacher agency in different teaching communities: A Narrative Inquiry into Shifting Teaching Experiences. In *20th AsiaTEFL-68th TEFLIN-5th iNELLTAL Conference (ASIATEFL 2022)* (pp. 234-246). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-054-1_20
- Andersen, H. C. (2011). *The complete fairy tales and stories*. Anchor.
- Anderson, L. (2010). Embedded, emboldened, and (net)working for change: Support-seeking and teacher agency in urban, high-needs schools. *Harvard Educational Review, 80*(4), 541–573. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.80.4.f2v8251444581105>
- Asterhan, C. S., & Lefstein, A. (2024). The search for evidence-based features of effective teacher professional development: a critical analysis of the literature. *Professional development in education, 50*(1), 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2283437>
- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teaching and teacher education, 27*(1), 10-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.184.15bak>
- Baldauf, R. B. (2012). Introduction to language planning: Where have we been? Where might we be going? *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada, 12*(2), 233–248. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1984-63982012000200002>
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*(2), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x>

- Bandura, A. (2018). Toward a psychology of human agency: Pathways and reflections, toward a psychology of human agency: Pathways and reflections. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 13*(2), 130–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617699280>
- Bao, M., Ren, W., and Wang, D. (2020). Understanding the professional practice of teachers of Chinese as an additional language through the lens of teacher agency. *Sustainability 12*, 74–93. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187493>
- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching, 21*(6), 624–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>
- Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2006). How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-as-achievement. *Learning lives: Learning, identity, and agency in the life course*, 132-149.
- Bignell, C., & Holligan, C. (2023). It's good to talk: professional development through dialogic co-coaching in the primary school classroom in England. *Education 3-13*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2206412>
- Buczynski, S., & Hansen, C. B. (2010). Impact of professional development on teacher practice: Uncovering connections. *Teaching and teacher education, 26*(3), 599-607. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.09.006>
- Bui, T. T. N., & Nguyen, H. (2016). Standardizing English for educational and socio-economic betterment – A critical analysis of English language policy reforms in Vietnam. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (pp. 363-388). Boston, MA: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-22464-0_17
- Calhoun, C. (2002). *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Campbell, E. (2012). Teacher agency in curriculum contexts. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 42(2), 183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873x.2012.00593.x>
- Chadwick, B. A., Bahr, H. M., & Albrecht, S. L. (1984). *Social science research methods*. Prentice-Hall.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elpreg/Source/Key_reference/CEFR_EN.pdf
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. (2005). The design of teacher education programs. *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, 1, 390-441. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.43-1083>
- Desimone, L. M. (2023). Rethinking teacher PD: a focus on how to improve student learning. *Professional Development in Education*, 49(1), 1-3.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2162746>
- Dexter, L. A. (1970). *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- Do, H. T. (2006). The role of English in Vietnam's foreign language policy: A brief history. 19th *Annual EA Education Conference 2006*, Perth, Australia. 1-12.

- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231294>
- French, A., Lambert, L., Hong, N. T., M., & Yen, T. T. N. (2023). The role of policy reform in developing teacher educator professional competencies and identities in Vietnam: implications, tensions and possibilities. *Practice*, 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/25783858.2023.2177189>
- Fuchs, S. (2001). Beyond agency. *Sociological Theory*, 19, 24-40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0735-2751.00126>
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (5th ed). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203986561>
- Gill, J. & Johnson, P. (2010). *Research Methods for Managers (4th edition)*. London: Sage
- Goh, E., & Nguyen, B. (2004). Vietnam. In H. W. Kam, & R. Y. L. Wong (Eds.). *Language policies and language education: The impact in East Asian countries in the next decade* (2nd ed., pp. 342-353). Marshall Cavendish: Eastern Universities Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2001.10801067>
- Hagen, A., & Nyen, T. (2009). Kompetanseutvikling for lærere [Competence development for teachers]. *Utdanning 2009*, 149-65.
- Hai, P. T. T., & Kendall, A. (2023). Conceptualizing reform and professional learning in the contemporary Vietnamese context. *Practice*, 1-8.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/25783858.2023.2177186>
- Hai, P. T. T., & Linh, D. N. (2022). Teacher professional development in the context of education reform in Vietnam: policy and practice. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, 22(17). <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v22i17.5654>

- Hallinger, P. (2010). Making education reform happen: Is there an ‘Asian way’?. *School leadership and management*, 30(5), 401-418. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2010.502524>
- Hallinger, P., Tran, N. H., & Truong, T. D. (2023). Mapping the professional learning of primary teachers in Vietnam: A multi-method case study. *Professional Development in Education*, 49(5), 856-870. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2021.1879218>
- Hamid, M. O. (2010). Globalization, English for everyone and English teacher capacity: Language policy discourses and realities in Bangladesh. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 11(4), 289-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2011.532621>
- Hamid, M.O., & Nguyen, H.T.M. (2016). Globalization, English language policy, and teacher agency: Focus on Asia. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 15(1), 26–43.
- Hayes, K. N., Preminger, L., & Bae, C. L. (2024). Why does teacher learning vary in professional development? Accounting for organizational conditions. *Professional development in education*, 50(1), 108-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2283433>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *The practice of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Ho, L., & Dimmock, C. (2023). Changing teachers’ beliefs and practices towards learner-centered education: experiences and lessons from Vietnam’s education system reforms. *Practice*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25783858.2023.2177191>
- Hoang, V. V. (2011). The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam. *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture*, 22(1), 7-18.

- Hoang, V. V. (2018). MOET's three English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam: Rationale, design and implementation. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(2), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4258>
- Hoang, V. V. (2020). The roles and status of English in present-day Vietnam: A socio-cultural analysis. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 36(1). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4495>
- Holland D., Lachicotte W. Jr., Skinner D., & Cain C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural Worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Huynh, V. S. (2022). The preparation of teachers and pedagogical universities when reforming the general education curriculum in Vietnam. In *International Handbook on Education Development in Asia-Pacific*, 1-21. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2327-1_106-1
- Ishihara, N., Carroll, S.K., Mahler, D. and Russo, A. (2018). Finding a niche in teaching English in Japan: Translingual practice and teacher agency. *System* 79: 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.06.006>
- Jary, D., & Jary, J. (1991). *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*. London: Harper Collins.
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B. (1997). *Language planning from practice to theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800418059>
- Lan, N. T. (2017). Exploring the washback effects of VSTEP on the teaching of English at ULIS-VNU. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 33(4), 122-136.
- Lavoie, C. (2011). The educational realities of Hmong communities in Vietnam: The voices of teachers. *Critical Inquiries in Language Studies*, 8(2), 153-175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2011.571348>

- Le, M.D., Nguyen, H.T.M. and Burns, A. (2021). English primary teacher agency in implementing teaching methods in response to language policy reform: A Vietnamese case study, *Current Issues in Language Planning* 22(1–2), 199–224.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2020.1741209>
- Le, S. T. (2011). *Teaching English in Vietnam: Improving the provision in the private sector* [Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University].
- Le, V. C. (2007). A historical review of English language education in Vietnam. In Y. H. Choi & B. Spolsky (eds.), *English education in Asia: History and policies*, 167-180. Seoul, South Korea: Asia TEFL.
- Le, V. C. (2011). *Form-focused instruction: A case study of Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Waikato]. New Zealand.
- Le, V. C. (2015). English language innovation for the Vietnamese secondary school: The Project 2020. In B. Spolsky & K. Sung (Eds.), *Secondary school English in Asia: From policy to practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315760636-22>
- Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors: A Vietnamese case study. *Prospect*, 24(2), 20-33.
- Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2019). Building teacher capacity for ELT in Vietnam. In V. C. Le, H. T. M. Nguyen & T. T. M. Nguyen (Eds.), *Building teacher capacity in English language teaching in Vietnam: Research, policy and practice*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429457371-12>
- Le, X. M & Le, T. T. (2022). English language teaching pedagogical reforms in Vietnam: External factors in light of teachers' backgrounds, *Cogent Education*, 9:1, 2087457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2022.2087457>

- Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.001.0001>
- Leite, C., Fernandes, P., & Figueiredo, C. (2018). Challenges of curricular contextualization: teachers' perspectives. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 45, 435–453. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0271-1>
- Liddicoat, A. J. & Baldauf, R. B. (2008). Language planning in local contexts: agents, contexts and interactions. *Language Planning and Policy: Language Planning in Local Contexts*. Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters, 3-17. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690647-002>
- Liu, S., Hallinger, P., & Feng, D. (2016). Learning-centered leadership and teacher learning in China: Does trust matter?. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(6), 661-682. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-02-2016-0015>
- Liu, Y., Wang, H. & Zhao, R. (2020). Teacher agency and spaces in changes of English language education policy. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 21(5), 548–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2020.1791532>
- London, J. D. (2011). *Education in Vietnam*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- London, J. D. (2023). *Vietnam's Education System: How Coherent Is It for Learning?* https://doi.org/10.35489/bsg-rise-wp_2023/131
- London, J. D., & Duong, B. H. (2023). *The Politics of Education and Learning in Vietnam*. <https://doi.org/10.35489/bsg-rise-2023/pe10>
- Lord, P., Atkinson, M., & Mitchell, H. (2008). Mentoring and coaching for professionals: A study of the research evidence. *Variations*, 1(4).

- Mai, H. N. T., & Hall, C. (2017). Changing views of teachers and teaching in Vietnam. *Teaching Education, 28*(3), 244–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2016.1252742>
- McMahon, T., Barrett, T., & O'Neill, G. (2007). Using observation of teaching to improve quality: Finding your way through the muddle of competing conceptions, confusion of practice and mutually exclusive intentions. *Teaching in higher education, 12*(4), 499-511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701415607>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and expanded from " Case Study Research in Education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2006). *General School Curriculum, Decision No. 16/2006/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 5/5/2006*. Hanoi, Vietnam. <https://vbpl.vn/bogiaoducdaotao/Pages/vbpq-toanvan.aspx?ItemID=15367>
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2013). *Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW (2013) on Resolution of the 8th Central Conference Session XI on fundamental innovation, all education and training*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2014a). *The six-level language proficiency framework for Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2014b). *Official Dispatch No.5555/BGDĐT – GDTrH dated 8/10/2014 on guidelines for professional activities on innovating teaching methods and assessment, organizing and managing regular professional activities of high schools/educational centers through online platforms*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018a). *Decision of the change of the project name*. Hanoi, Vietnam

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018b). *Implementing the project “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System” in the period 2017-2025*. Hanoi, Vietnam

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018c). *Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT dated 26/12/2018 on promulgation of the new general education curriculum*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
<https://moet.gov.vn/vanban/vanban/Pages/chi-tiet-van-ban.aspx?ItemID=1301>

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018d). *The Ministry of Education and Training announced the General Education Curriculum in 2018*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
<https://moet.gov.vn/tintuc/Pages/tin-hoat-dong-cua-bo.aspx?ItemID=5755>

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018e). *Circular No. 20/2018/TT-BGDĐT promulgating regulations on professional standards for teachers of educational institutions*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2019a). *Circular No. 17/2019/TT-BGDĐT promulgating the regular training program for teachers of educational institutions*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2019b). *Circular No. 19/2019/TT-BGDĐT promulgating the regulation on continuing training for teachers, managers of preschool education institutions, general educational institutions and teachers of continuing education centers*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (2020a). *Official Dispatch No 5512/BGDĐT – GDTrH on building and organizing the implementation of the school’s educational plans*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2020b). *Official Dispatch No. 1315/BGDĐT – GDTH on guiding professional activities to implement the Primary Education Program at the primary school level*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2020c). *Official Dispatch No. 1201/KH-BGDĐT, dated April 8th, 2020, on general teacher training to implement the 2018-general educational curriculum*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2020d). *Circular No. 25/2020/TT-BGDĐT dated 26/8/2020 on the selection of textbooks in general education institutions*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
<https://moet.gov.vn/van-ban/vanban/Pages/chi-tiet-van-ban.aspx?ItemID=1360>
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2023a). *Circular No. 27/2023/TT-BGDĐT dated 28/12/2023 on the selection of textbooks in general education institutions*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
<https://moet.gov.vn/van-ban/vanban/Pages/chi-tiet-van-ban.aspx?ItemID=1524>
- Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2023b). *Decision 4068/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 28/11/2023 on the approval of the plan for organizing the high school graduation examination and certification from 2025*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
<https://xaydungchinhsach.chinhphu.vn/toan-van-quyet-dinh-4068-qd-ttg-phuong-an-thi-tot-nghiep-thpt-tu-2025-11923112916510334.htm>
- Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters*. Learning Forward. 504 South Locust Street, Oxford, OH 45056. <https://doi.org/10.1787/2a2e1906-en>
- Murray, G. (1997). *Vietnam: Dawn of a new market*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2019). *Publication on the 2019 census of population in Vietnam*. Retrieved from <http://tongdieutradaso.vn/cong-bo-ket-qua-tong-dieu-tra-dan-so-2019.html>

- Napier, N. K., & Nguyen, T. T. M. (2003). Bridging Vietnam and America: Cooperation between the National Economics University and Boise State University. Business Education Systems and Emerging Market Economies: *Trends and Prospects Conference*, Atlanta, Georgia. 1-32. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-8072-9_20
- Nguyen, A. (2023). Mind the gap between English textbooks and test papers: a corpus-based discourse from Vietnam. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2624635/v1>
- Nguyen, C.H., Pham, H.T.T., Pham, H.T. (2022). Renovation in curriculum design and training programs for teacher education in Vietnam. In: Khine, M.S., Liu, Y. (eds) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9785-2_41
- Nguyen, H., Nguyen, H. T., Nguyen, H. V., & Nguyen, T. T. T. (2018). Local challenges to global needs in English language education in Vietnam: The perspective of language policy and planning. In C. C. S. Kheng (Ed.), *Un(intended) language planning in a globalizing world: Multiple levels of players at work*. Warsaw, Poland: De Gruyter Open. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110518269-012>
- Nguyen, H., & Nguyen, Q. (2007). Teaching English in primary schools in Vietnam: An Overview. *Current issues in language planning*, 8(2), 162-173. <https://doi.org/10.2167/cilp106.0>
- Nguyen, H. T. M., & Bui, T. (2016). Teachers' agency and the enactment of educational reform in Vietnam. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 17(1), 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2016.1125664>
- Nguyen, H. T., Vu, N. T. T., Ha, X. V., Dinh, H. V. T., Truong, T. D., & Reynolds, B. L. (2023). Principal instructional leadership and its influence on teachers' professional development

- at Vietnamese primary schools. *Education 3-13*, 1-9.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2195409>
- Nguyen, L., Hamid, M. O., & Renshaw, P. (2016). English in the primary classroom in Vietnam: Students' lived experiences and their social and policy implications. *Current issues in language planning*, 17(2), 191-214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2016.1089629>
- Nguyen, M. T. (2017). Learners' quality and competence-based reform of general education curriculum. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 1, 1–6.
- Nguyen, N. D., & Pham, Q. H. (2022). Improving Teacher Education Curriculum in Vietnam. In *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Innovations and Practices in Asia* (pp. 633-649). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9785-2_31
- Nguyen, P. Q., & Vo, X. D. (2012). *Vietnamese History from Ancient Times to the Modern Era*. Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House.
- Nguyen, Q. A. T., Hai-Tran, N., Thi-Do, L. H., Nguyen, H. T., Dau, L. M., & Phung-Dinh, B. P. (2023). Professional Learning Communities in Vietnamese Primary Schools in the Educational Reform Context: Forms and Challenges. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.12.1.551>
- Nguyen, T. M. P., Jin, P., & Gross, M. U. (2013). Confucian values in Vietnamese gifted adolescents and their non-gifted peers. *Gifted and talented international*, 28(1), 227-238.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15332276.2013.11678417>
- Nguyen, V. H., Nguyen, V. B. H., Vu, T. M. H., Hoang, T. K. H., & Nguyen, T. M. N. (2020). Vietnamese education system and teacher training: Focusing on science education. *Asia-Pacific Science Education*, 6(1), 179–206. <https://doi.org/10.1163/23641177-bja10001>

- OECD. (2022). *PISA: Program for International Student Assessment*. Available at: <https://www-oeecd-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/pisa/>
- Oliveira, A. (2012). Teacher agency in the performance of inquiry-oriented science curriculum reform. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 7, 569–577. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-012-9419-x>
- Oolbekkink-Marchand, H., Linor, L., Smith, K., Helleve, I., & Ulvik, M. (2017). Teachers' perceived professional space and their agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 62, 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.11.005>
- Paltridge, B., & Phakiti, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Pappa, S., Moate, J., Ruohotie-Lyhty, M. and Eteläpelto, A. (2019). Teacher agency within the Finnish CLIL context: tensions and resources. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 22(5), 593–613. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2017.1286292>
- Parise, L. M., & Spillane, J. P. (2010). Teacher learning and instructional change: How formal and on-the-job learning opportunities predict change in elementary school teachers' practice. *The elementary school journal*, 110(3), 323-346. <https://doi.org/10.1086/648981>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3rd ed.)* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pedder, D., & Opfer, V.D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 81, 376–407. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311413609>
- Pellicano, L., Bölte, S., & Stahmer, A. (2018). The current illusion of educational inclusion. *Autism*, 22(4), 386–387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318766166>

- Pham, H. H. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal*, 61(3), 193-201. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm026>
- Pham, H. L., & Fry, G. W. (2004). Education and economic, political, and social change in Vietnam. *Educational research for policy and practice*, 3(3), 199-222. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-005-0678-0>
- Pham, K. T., Thi Do, L. H., Dinh, H. V. T., Nguyen, Q. A. T., Phan, Q. N., & Ha, X. V. (2023). Professional development of primary school teachers in Vietnamese educational reform context: an analysis from a sociocultural perspective. *Education 3-13*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2168502>
- Pham, T. H. T. (2011). Renovation and higher education reform in Vietnam. *International journal of educational reform*, 20(3), 210-225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105678791102000302>
- Phan, Q. N. (2017). *Professional learning communities: Learning sites for primary school English language teachers in Vietnam* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Technology Sydney].
- Plaisance, M. (2014). *Into the Figured Worlds of first-grade teachers: Perceptions and enactments of instructional grouping and differentiation for English learners in New South classroom contexts* [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina].
- Postholm, M. B. (2012). Teachers' professional development: A theoretical review. *Educational research*, 54(4), 405-429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2012.734725>
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2013). Teachers as agents of change: teacher agency and emerging models of curriculum. In M. Priestley & G.J.J. Biesta (eds.), *Reinventing*

- the curriculum: new trends in curriculum policy and practice* (pp.187-206). London: Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472553195.ch-010>
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2016a). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2016b). Chapter 10: Teacher Agency What is it and why does it matter? In J. Evers & R. Kneyber (Eds.), *Flip the System Changing Education from the Ground Up*. NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678573-15>
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G. J. J., Philippou, S., & Robinson, S. (2015). The teacher and the curriculum: Exploring teacher agency. In D. Wyse, L. Hayward, & J. Pandya (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment* (pp.187-201). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473921405.n12>
- Priestley, M., Edwards, R., Priestley, A., & Miller, K. (2012). Teacher agency in curriculum making: Agents of change and spaces for maneuver. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 42(2), 191–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873x.2012.00588.x>
- Prime Minister. (2001). *Directive on the Renovation of the General School Education Curriculum to Implement Resolution No. 40/2000/QH10 of the National Assembly*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Prime Minister (2008). *Decision on the Approval of the Project “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008-2020”*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Prime Minister. (2016a). *Decision No. 1981/QĐ-TTg dated 18/10/2016 on approving the structural framework of the national education system*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=2&mode=detail&document_id=187037

Prime Minister. (2016b). *Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated 18/10/2016 on approving the Vietnamese national qualification framework*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=2&_page=2&mode=detail&document_id=186972

Prime Minister. (2017). *Decision on the Approval, Adjustment and Supplementation of the Project “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period of 2017 – 2025”*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Professional Development. (2024). Retrieved 17 January 2024, from

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/professional-development/2004/09>

Rowling, J. K. (2003). *Harry Potter and the order of the phoenix*. New York: Listening Library

Ruel, E., Wagner, W. E., & Gillespie, B. J. (2016). *The practice of survey research: Theory and applications*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483391700>

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sanczyk, A. (2020). *A narrative inquiry of second language teacher agency in promoting culturally responsive pedagogy* [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Charlotte].

Sritanayarat, D., Kanjanajuta, C., & Tanawattanakorn, C. (2010). Positivism: to see, to hear, to taste, to smell and to touch, but not to feel. *Human Resource and Organization Development Journal*, 2(2), 27-34.

- Stroebe, W. (2016). Why good teaching evaluations may reward bad teaching: On grade inflation and other unintended consequences of student evaluations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 11*(6), 800-816. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916166650284>
- Taddese, E. T., & Rao, C. (2022). School-based continuous professional development of teachers: a case study of primary school teachers in Ethiopia. *Education 3-13, 50*(8), 1059-1071. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2021.1929382>
- Taylor, K. W. (1983). *The birth of Vietnam*. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520343108>
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. Sage.
- The Committee of Ministers of Vietnam. (1990). *Directive on the Eradication of Illiteracy, No. 1-HDBT, 1/2/1990*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- The National Assembly of Vietnam. (1991). *on Compulsory Primary Education by The National Assembly of Vietnam No. 56-LCT/HĐNN8, dated 08/12/1991*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- The National Assembly of Vietnam. (2013). *The Constitution of Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Retrieved from <http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/NuocCHXHCNVietNam/ThongTinTongHop/hienphapnam2013>
- The National Assembly of Vietnam. (2014). *Resolution Number 88/2014/QH13 dated 28/11/2014 on curriculum and textbook for general education reform*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- <http://vbpl.vn/bogiaoducdaotao/Pages/vbpq-van-bangoc.aspx?ItemID=144398>

- The National Assembly of Vietnam. (2019). *Education law*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=1&page=1&mode=detail&document_id=197310
- Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., & Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher professional learning and development. Best evidence synthesis iteration (BES)*. Wellington, New Zealand.
- Tomlinson, B., & Dat, B. (2004). The contributions of Vietnamese learners of English to ELT methodology. *Language teaching research*, 8(2), 199-222.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168804lr140oa>
- Tran, H. (2019). Teacher agency in times of educational change: The case of transitioned teachers in Vietnam. *Current issues in language planning*, 20(5), 544-559.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2018.1553912>
- Tran, L. T., Marginson, S., Do, H. M., Do, Q. T. N., Le, T. T. T., Nguyen, N. T., Vu, T. T. P., Pham, T. N., Nguyen, H. T. L., & Ho, T. T. H. (2014). *Higher Education in Vietnam*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- UNESCO & MOET. (2015). *Education for all 2015 National Review: Viet Nam*. Retrieved from Hanoi, Vietnam: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232770_eng
- United Nations Population Fund. (2023). *Viet Nam's population to reach 100 million in 2023 – A significant milestone*. UNFPA Vietnam. <https://vietnam.unfpa.org/en/news/information-for-media-viet-nams-population-reach-100-million-2023>
- Urrieta, L. (2007). Figured Worlds and education: An introduction to the special issue. *The Urban Review*, 39(2), 107–117. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-007-0051-0>

- Vähäsantanen, K. (2015). Professional agency in the stream of change: Understanding educational change and teachers' professional identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 47*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.11.006>
- Van der Heijden, H. R. M. A., Geldens, J. J., Beijaard, D., & Popeijus, H. L. (2015). Characteristics of teachers as change agents. *Teachers and Teaching, 21*(6), 681-699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044328>
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Varghese, M. M., & Snyder, R. (2018). Critically examining the agency and professional identity development of novice dual language teachers through Figured Worlds. *International multilingual research journal, 12*(3), 145-159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2018.1474060>
- Vietnam Courrier. (1982). *Education in Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences. (1989). *Curriculum for Vietnamese upper secondary schools*. Ha Noi: Education Publishing House.
- Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences. (2012). *An evaluative report on the development of Vietnamese general education curricula from 1945 to the present*.
- Vitanova, G. (2018). “Just treat me as a teacher!” Mapping language teacher agency through gender, race, and professional discourses. *System, 79*, 28-37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.05.013>
- Von Kopp, B. (1992). The Eastern European revolution and education in Czechoslovakia. *Comparative education review, 36*(1), 101-113. <https://doi.org/10.1086/447084>

- Vu, T. T. (2020). *English language curriculum reform at the national level: A case of intentions and realities in Vietnam* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Adelaide].
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>
- Walter, M. (2010). *Social research methods (2nd ed.)*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Wedell, M. (2009). *Planning for educational change: Putting people and their contexts first*. London, England: Continuum International Publishing Group.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq048>
- Western Governors University. (2021). What Is Professional Development in Education? Retrieved January 17, 2024, from <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/professional-development-education2102.html#close>
- World Bank. (2019). *Vietnam's adult literacy rate*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?end=2019&locations=VN&start=1997>
- World Bank. (2023). *Vietnam's Annual GDP growth*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=VN>
- Wright, S. (2002). Language education and foreign relations in Vietnam. In J. W. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language policies in education: Critical issues* (pp. 225-244). Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Young Lives. (2022). *Young Lives longitudinal research in Vietnam*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachme>

[nt_data/file/279493/Young_Lives.pdf](#)

Zhao, S. H., & Baldauf, R. B. (2012). Individual agency in language planning: Chinese script reform as a case study. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 36(1), 1–24.

<https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.36.1.01zha>

APPENDIX A: THE SURVEYS

English Version

Survey for teachers who participated in the textbook selection process in the summer 2022

Academic year: 2021 - 2022

Time: Summer 2022

1. Enter your name*
2. Enter your email address*
3. Select the school you currently work for
4. Phone number*
5. Gender*
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
6. Years of teaching experience*
7. Years at grade levels
 - a. Grade 10
 - b. Grade 11
 - c. Grade 12
8. Grade level(s) teaching this academic year* (check boxes)
 - a. Grade 10
 - b. Grade 11
 - c. Grade 12
9. Which educational institutions have you worked for?*
10. How long have you been working for the current school?*
11. To what extent do you think that textbook is important in English instruction?
12. Did you receive any relevant training before you were given the right and responsibility to select the textbook?*
13. If yes, how did the training prepare you for the textbook choices?*
14. If no, how did you prepare yourself?*

15. Tick all the boxes that indicate the elements that influenced your textbook decision*

- Graphic design
- Structure of the units and individual lessons
- Themes included in one academic year
- Geographical and cultural relevance to the learner's
- Design of the lesson activities
- Supplemental resources (i.e. pre-designed tests, homework assignments, mobile applications etc)
- Reputation of the book authors
- Reputation of the publishing company
- Others (specify)

16. Which book did you select?*

17. What is the main reason you selected the textbook?*

18. What went especially well in the text selection process?

19. What concerns do you have about how the process went?

20. Is there anything else about this process that you would like to add in the box below.

Vietnamese Version

Khảo sát đối với giáo viên tham gia quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa vào mùa hè năm 2022

1. Nhập tên của thầy cô*
2. Nhập địa chỉ email của thầy cô*
3. Chọn trường thầy cô đang làm việc
4. Số điện thoại*
5. Giới tính*
 - Nam giới
 - Nữ giới
 - Khác
 - Không muốn chia sẻ
6. Số năm kinh nghiệm giảng dạy*
7. Năm ở các cấp lớp (các ô để nhập số)
 - a. lớp 10

b. Lớp 11

c. Lớp 12

8. (Các) cấp lớp giảng dạy trong năm học này* (các ô đánh dấu)

a. Lớp 10

b. Lớp 11

c. Lớp 12

9. Thầy cô làm việc cho cơ sở giáo dục nào?*

10. Thầy cô đã làm việc cho trường hiện tại bao lâu rồi?*

11. Thầy cô nghĩ rằng sách giáo khoa quan trọng như thế nào trong việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh?

12. Thầy cô có được đào tạo liên quan trước khi được trao quyền và trách nhiệm chọn sách giáo khoa không?*

13. Nếu có, khóa đào tạo đã chuẩn bị cho thầy cô như thế nào để lựa chọn sách giáo khoa?*

14. Nếu không, thầy cô đã tự chuẩn bị như thế nào?*

15. Đánh dấu vào tất cả các ô cho biết các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến quyết định về sách giáo khoa của thầy cô*

- Thiết kế đồ họa
- Cấu trúc của các đơn vị và bài học cá nhân
- Chủ đề bao gồm trong một năm học
- Sự liên quan về địa lý và văn hóa đối với người học
- Thiết kế các hoạt động bài học
- Tài nguyên bổ sung (tức là các bài kiểm tra được thiết kế sẵn, bài tập về nhà, ứng dụng di động, v.v.)

16. Thầy cô đã chọn cuốn sách nào?*

17. Lý do chính thầy cô chọn sách giáo khoa là gì?*

18. Điều gì đã diễn ra đặc biệt tốt trong quá trình lựa chọn văn bản?

19. Thầy cô có mối quan tâm nào về quá trình diễn ra như thế nào?

20. Có điều gì khác về quy trình này mà thầy cô muốn thêm vào ô bên dưới không.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

English Version

Training/Preparation for completing this task

1. What kind of training did you receive that enabled you to select the appropriate textbooks for your school?

How the Task Was Completed

1. How did you work with your colleagues to determine the procedure you would use to evaluate and select the right textbook for your school from among the choices?
 - What were the steps that your department of English took to come to a consensus among the teachers?
2. How did you evaluate each of the 10 textbooks and determine the most appropriate one?
 - How did you make it work in terms of time, given the short timeline. What strategies did you use?
 - What criteria did you use to differentiate and choose your textbook?
3. Which other factors during the textbook selection process influenced your decision?
 - Did the reputation of the authors and/or publishing companies impact your decision? In what ways? Or why not?
 - Did the extra materials that some publishing company offered impact your decision? If so, which were the most important: on-site campaigns to choose specific books, the inclusion of extra teaching and assessment materials and online tools for teachers and students, other materials or offers, etc.?
 - In general, what were your main goals when you were making your selection: inclusion of additional teaching resources, overall quality of design of the textbook, specific content, engagement potential for your students?

Implementation in Teaching Practice

1. How do you describe your experience applying the new textbook to your teaching practice?

- Please tell me about the easiest or most interesting and engaging part of your experience teaching with the new textbook?
 - Please tell me about the most difficult or least interesting and engaging part of your teaching experience with the new textbook?
2. How has the experience of using the textbook of your choice been different from using the mandated textbooks in earlier years?
- Are you happy with your choice? Why or why not?
 - How has your teaching changed while using the new textbook?
 - Have you seen any changes in student learning and/or engagement? If so, what are some examples you can share?

Recommendations/Plans for Future

1. Given your experience, what ideas do you have for how the Ministry of Education and Training, the Provincial Department of Education and Training, and the core teachers should prepare high school teachers for the textbook selection process the next time?
- What went really well for you and your school?
 - What did not go as well as you had hoped for you and your school?
2. Will you participate in the selection of the textbook for 11th grade this year?
- If yes, how does the experience last year impact your decision this year? What will you do differently this year?
 - If no, why not?
3. As you think toward the future, do you have anything to add on this question I asked earlier: How has the experience of using the textbook of your choice been different from using the mandated textbooks in earlier years?
- Are you happy with your choice? Why or why not?
 - How do you anticipate use of the book supporting your teaching and your students' learning in the coming years?

Vietnamese Version

Câu hỏi phỏng vấn dành cho giáo viên

Đào tạo/Chuẩn bị để hoàn thành nhiệm vụ này

1. Loại hình đào tạo nào thầy cô đã nhận được giúp thầy cô chọn sách giáo khoa phù hợp cho trường học của mình?

Nhiệm vụ đã được hoàn thành như thế nào

1. Thầy cô đã làm việc với các đồng nghiệp của mình như thế nào để xác định quy trình thầy cô sẽ sử dụng để đánh giá và lựa chọn sách giáo khoa phù hợp cho trường học của mình trong số các lựa chọn đó?
 - Các bước mà khoa tiếng Anh của thầy cô đã thực hiện để đạt được sự đồng thuận giữa các giáo viên là gì?
2. Làm thế nào thầy cô đánh giá từng cuốn sách giáo khoa trong số 10 cuốn sách giáo khoa và xác định cuốn sách phù hợp nhất?
 - Làm thế nào thầy cô đưa ra quyết định trong thời gian ngắn? Thầy cô đã sử dụng những chiến lược nào?
 - Thầy cô đã sử dụng tiêu chí nào để phân biệt và chọn sách giáo khoa của mình?
3. Những yếu tố nào khác trong quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa đã ảnh hưởng đến quyết định của thầy cô?
 - Danh tiếng của các tác giả và/hoặc công ty xuất bản có ảnh hưởng đến quyết định của thầy cô không? Ảnh hưởng như nào? Hoặc vì sao không có ảnh hưởng?
 - Các tài liệu tham khảo mà một số công ty xuất bản cung cấp có ảnh hưởng đến quyết định của thầy cô không? Nếu vậy, đâu là điều quan trọng nhất: các chiến dịch quảng bá SGK tại trường để chọn những cuốn sách cụ thể, việc đưa vào các tài liệu đánh giá và giảng dạy bổ sung cũng như các công cụ trực tuyến cho giáo viên và học sinh, các tài liệu hoặc ưu đãi khác, v.v.?
 - Nói chung, mục tiêu chính của thầy cô khi thầy cô lựa chọn là gì: bao gồm các tài nguyên giảng dạy bổ sung, chất lượng tổng thể của thiết kế sách giáo khoa, nội dung cụ thể, tiềm năng thu hút học sinh của thầy cô?

Áp dụng trong thực tế giảng dạy

1. Thầy cô mô tả kinh nghiệm của thầy cô khi áp dụng sách giáo khoa mới vào thực tế giảng dạy của thầy cô?
 - Xin vui lòng cho tôi biết kinh nghiệm của thầy cô về phần dễ nhất hoặc thú vị và hấp dẫn nhất khi dạy học theo sách giáo khoa mới?
 - Xin vui lòng cho tôi biết về kinh nghiệm giảng dạy sách giáo khoa mới của thầy cô về phần khó nhất hoặc ít thú vị và hấp dẫn nhất?
2. Kinh nghiệm sử dụng sách giáo khoa thầy cô chọn khác với việc sử dụng sách giáo khoa bắt buộc trong những năm trước như thế nào?
 - Thầy cô có hài lòng với lựa chọn của mình không? Tại sao hay tại sao không?
 - Việc giảng dạy của ông đã thay đổi như thế nào khi sử dụng sách giáo khoa mới?
 - Thầy cô có thấy bất kỳ thay đổi nào trong việc học tập và/hoặc sự tham gia của học sinh không? Nếu vậy, một số ví dụ thầy cô có thể chia sẻ là gì?

Khuyến nghị/Kế hoạch cho tương lai

1. Qua kinh nghiệm của mình, thầy cô có ý kiến gì để Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo, Sở Giáo dục và Đào tạo các tỉnh, thành và đội ngũ giáo viên cốt cán chuẩn bị cho giáo viên phổ thông trong quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa thời gian tới?
 - Việc áp dụng nào đã có hiệu quả cho thầy cô và trường học của thầy cô?
 - Điều gì đã không diễn ra không hiệu quả như thầy cô mong đợi đối với thầy cô và trường học của thầy cô?
2. Thầy cô sẽ tham gia tuyển chọn SGK lớp 11 năm nay chứ?
 - Nếu có, trải nghiệm năm ngoái ảnh hưởng như thế nào đến quyết định của thầy cô trong năm nay? Thầy cô sẽ làm gì khác biệt trong năm nay?
 - Nếu không, tại sao không?
3. Khi thầy cô nghĩ về tương lai, thầy cô có điều gì muốn bổ sung cho câu hỏi mà tôi đã hỏi trước đó không: Trải nghiệm sử dụng sách giáo khoa mà thầy cô chọn khác với việc sử dụng sách giáo khoa bắt buộc trong những năm trước như thế nào?

- Thầy cô có hài lòng với lựa chọn của mình không? Tại sao hay tại sao không?
- Thầy cô dự đoán việc sử dụng cuốn sách sẽ hỗ trợ việc giảng dạy và học tập của học sinh như thế nào trong những năm tới?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS

English Version Consent Form

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Karla J. Möller, Ph.D Department and Institution:
Curriculum and Instruction Contact Information:
Rooms 142 & 317, College of Education, MC 708 1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL, 61820
217-265-4039
kjmoller@illinois.edu

BACKGROUND

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask Dr. Möller or me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you want to volunteer to take part in this study.

The purpose of the study is to document the thoughts and experiences of the high school teachers (HSTs) in the mountainous area of Northern Vietnam in response to their textbook selection process and the first year of their use of the textbook. Firstly, the study aims to investigate the HSTs' thoughts on how the training they received prepared them for the role of selecting the English Language Textbooks (ELTs). Secondly, this paper explores the HSTs' experience with the new textbook across the dimensions of their teaching responsibilities and how this experience impacted their sense of themselves as educators. Thirdly, this study will report on what teachers believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure that HSTs have the knowledge and information they need for future adoption decisions and application of new textbooks. Finally, this paper seeks to investigate how the experience of selecting the textbook and teaching has impacted their sense of themselves as change agents in their schools.

STUDY PROCEDURE

It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete a survey and 1 hour for an optional

interview. Questions in the survey and the interview are about your experience participating in the textbook selection process and your teaching practices using the selected textbook for the past one academic year.

RISKS

The risks of this study are minimal. You may feel upset thinking about or talking about personal information related your experience selecting and teaching the textbook. These risks are similar to those you experience when discussing personal information with others. If you feel upset from this experience, you can tell the researcher, and he/she will tell you about the resources available to help. There will be a risk of confidentiality loss if identifiable data is used in this study.

BENEFITS

We cannot promise any direct benefit for taking part in this study. However, possible benefits are as follows.

Benefits to you: You will have the opportunity to reflect on their textbook selection process, evaluate the use of the selected textbook and its influence on your teaching practice, and consider the kind of training you hope to receive in the future that could better prepare you for future educational changes and reforms.

Regarding benefits for society, the findings of this study will provide insights into how to better prepare Vietnamese high school teachers to select suitable and effective educational materials, which will later help improve the development of the English curriculum, English instruction quality, and students' English competence.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

If you do not want to be in the study, you may inform us that you won't be able to join. We respect your decision.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHERS PROTECT MY INFORMATION?

WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION COLLECTED DURING THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. We will, however, use a pseudonym (a “fake” name) when we talk about anything you said or wrote.

There are reasons why information about you may be used or seen by other people beyond the research team during or after this study. Examples include:

- University officials, government officials, study funders, auditors, and the Institutional Review Board may need access to the study information to make sure the study is done in a safe and appropriate manner.

If we learn about current or ongoing child abuse or neglect, we may be required or permitted by law or policy to report this information to authorities.

HOW MIGHT THE INFORMATION COLLECTED IN THIS STUDY BE SHARED IN THE FUTURE?

We will keep the information we collect about you during this research study for study recordkeeping. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be stored securely and separately from the rest of the research information we collect from you.

The results of this study could be shared in articles and presentations but will not include any information that identifies you unless you give permission for the use of information that identifies you in articles and presentations.

PERSON TO CONTACT

If you have questions, complaints or concerns about this study, you can contact Huong at (+1) 447-902-1485 or via email at huongn2@illinois.edu. In addition, you can also contact principal investigator, Dr. Karla J. Möller., Her contact information is at the top of this consent letter. You can also get in touch with our local contact, Huyen Vu, via email

at vulehuyenctn@gmail.com or at (+84) 984-792-478.

Review Board: If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu. If you would like to complete a brief survey to provide OPRS feedback about your experiences as a research participant, please follow the link [here](#) or through a link on the OPRS website: <https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/>. You will have the option to provide feedback or concerns anonymously or you may provide your name and contact information for follow-up purposes.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Research studies include only people who choose to take part. You can tell us that you don't want to be in this study. You can start the study and then choose to stop the study later. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION TO PARTICIPANTS

There is no cost or compensation for participating in this study.

CONSENT

By signing this consent form, I confirm I have read the information in this consent form and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I will be given a signed copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Vietnamese Version

Giấy chấp thuận

Tên và chức danh của Nghiên cứu viên chính: Karla J. Möller ,

Ph.D Khoa: Chương trình giảng dạy và Hướng dẫn

Thông tin liên lạc:

Phòng 142 & 317, Trường Giáo dục, MC 708

1310 Phố South Sixth

Champaign, IL, 61820

217-265-4039

kjmoller@illinois.edu

TỔNG QUÁT

Thầy cô đang được yêu cầu tham gia vào một nghiên cứu. Trước khi thầy cô quyết định tham gia nghiên cứu, điều quan trọng là thầy cô phải hiểu lý do tại sao nghiên cứu đang được thực hiện và nó sẽ bao gồm những gì. Xin vui lòng dành thời gian để đọc các thông tin sau một cách cẩn thận. Hãy hỏi Tiến sĩ Möller hoặc tôi nếu có điều gì chưa rõ hoặc nếu thầy cô muốn biết thêm thông tin. Thầy cô dành thời gian đọc Giấy chấp thuận sau đây để quyết định xem có muốn tình nguyện tham gia vào nghiên cứu này hay không.

Mục đích của nghiên cứu là tìm hiểu những suy nghĩ và kinh nghiệm của giáo viên THPT ở khu vực miền núi phía Bắc Việt Nam đối với quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa và năm đầu tiên sử dụng sách giáo khoa. Thứ nhất, nghiên cứu nhằm mục đích điều tra suy nghĩ của giáo viên THPT về cách đào tạo mà họ nhận được đã chuẩn bị cho họ vai trò lựa chọn Sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh. Thứ hai, bài nghiên cứu này khám phá trải nghiệm của giáo viên THPT với sách giáo khoa mới trên các khía cạnh trách nhiệm giảng dạy của họ và trải nghiệm này tác động như thế nào đến ý thức của họ với tư cách là nhà giáo dục. Thứ ba, nghiên cứu này sẽ báo cáo về các chương trình đào tạo và các bước chuẩn bị khác để đảm bảo giáo viên THPT có kiến thức và

thông tin cần thiết cho các quyết định áp dụng và áp dụng sách giáo khoa mới trong tương lai. Cuối cùng, nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu xem kinh nghiệm lựa chọn sách giáo khoa và giảng dạy đã tác động như thế nào đến ý thức của giáo viên THPT về bản thân họ với tư cách là tác nhân thay đổi trong trường học.

QUY TRÌNH THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Thầy cô sẽ mất khoảng 30 phút để hoàn thành một cuộc khảo sát và 1 giờ cho một cuộc phỏng vấn (không bắt buộc). Các câu hỏi trong cuộc khảo sát và phỏng vấn là về kinh nghiệm của thầy cô khi tham gia vào quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa và thực hành giảng dạy của thầy cô bằng cách sử dụng sách giáo khoa đã chọn trong một năm học vừa qua.

RỦI RO

Những rủi ro của nghiên cứu này là tối thiểu. Thầy cô có thể cảm thấy khó chịu khi nghĩ về hoặc nói về thông tin cá nhân liên quan đến trải nghiệm của thầy cô khi chọn và dạy sách giáo khoa. Những rủi ro này tương tự như những rủi ro thầy cô gặp phải khi thảo luận về thông tin cá nhân với người khác. Nếu thầy cô cảm thấy khó chịu vì trải nghiệm này, thầy cô có thể thông tin với nhà nghiên cứu và họ sẽ cho thầy cô biết về các nguồn trợ giúp hiện có. Ngoài ra, sẽ có nguy cơ mất tính bảo mật nếu dữ liệu có thể nhận dạng được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu này.

NHỮNG LỢI ÍCH

Chúng tôi không thể hứa hẹn bất kỳ lợi ích trực tiếp nào khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Tuy nhiên, những lợi ích có thể có như sau.

Lợi ích cho thầy cô: Thầy cô sẽ có cơ hội suy ngẫm về quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa của mình, đánh giá việc sử dụng sách giáo khoa đã chọn và ảnh hưởng của nó đối với thực tiễn giảng dạy của thầy cô, đồng thời xem xét loại hình đào tạo mà thầy cô hy vọng nhận được trong tương lai có thể giúp thầy cô chuẩn bị tốt hơn cho những thay đổi và cải cách giáo dục trong tương lai.

Về lợi ích cho xã hội, kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ cung cấp cái nhìn sâu sắc về cách chuẩn bị tốt hơn cho giáo viên phổ thông Việt Nam để lựa chọn tài liệu giáo dục phù hợp và hiệu quả, giúp cải thiện sự phát triển của chương trình tiếng Anh, chất lượng giảng dạy tiếng Anh và tiếng Anh của học sinh. thẩm quyền.

THỦ TỤC THAY THẾ

Nếu thầy cô không muốn tham gia nghiên cứu, thầy cô có thể thông báo cho chúng tôi rằng thầy cô sẽ không thể tham gia. Chúng tôi tôn trọng quyết định của thầy cô.

CÁC NHÀ NGHIÊN CỨU SẼ BẢO VỆ THÔNG TIN CỦA TÔI NHƯ THẾ NÀO?

AI SẼ ĐƯỢC TIẾP CẬN THÔNG TIN THU THẬP TRONG QUÁ TRÌNH NGHIÊN CỨU NÀY?

Những nỗ lực sẽ được thực hiện để hạn chế việc sử dụng và tiết lộ thông tin cá nhân của thầy cô, bao gồm cả hồ sơ nghiên cứu, cho những người có nhu cầu xem xét thông tin này. Chúng tôi không thể hứa hẹn giữ bí mật hoàn toàn. Tuy nhiên, chúng tôi sẽ sử dụng bút danh (tên “giả”) khi chúng tôi nói về bất cứ điều gì thầy cô đã nói hoặc viết.

Có những lý do tại sao thông tin về thầy cô có thể được sử dụng hoặc nhìn thấy bởi những người khác ngoài nhóm nghiên cứu trong hoặc sau cuộc nghiên cứu này. Những ví dụ bao gồm:

- Các quan chức đại học, quan chức chính phủ, nhà tài trợ nghiên cứu, kiểm toán viên và Hội đồng đánh giá thể chế có thể cần truy cập vào thông tin nghiên cứu để đảm bảo nghiên cứu được thực hiện một cách an toàn và phù hợp.

Nếu chúng tôi biết về việc lạm dụng hoặc bỏ rơi trẻ em hiện tại hoặc đang diễn ra, chúng tôi có thể được luật pháp hoặc chính sách yêu cầu hoặc cho phép báo cáo thông tin này cho cơ quan chức năng.

THÔNG TIN THU THẬP TRONG NGHIÊN CỨU NÀY CÓ THỂ ĐƯỢC CHIA SẺ TRONG TƯƠNG LAI NHƯ THẾ NÀO?

Chúng tôi sẽ giữ thông tin mà chúng tôi thu thập về thầy cô trong quá trình nghiên cứu này để lưu trữ hồ sơ nghiên cứu. Tên của thầy cô và các thông tin khác có thể trực tiếp nhận dạng thầy cô sẽ được lưu trữ an toàn và tách biệt với phần còn lại của thông tin nghiên cứu mà chúng tôi thu thập từ thầy cô.

Kết quả của nghiên cứu này có thể được chia sẻ trong các bài báo và bài thuyết trình nhưng

sẽ không bao gồm bất kỳ thông tin nào nhận dạng thầy cô trừ khi thầy cô cho phép sử dụng thông tin nhận dạng thầy cô trong các bài báo và bài thuyết trình.

NGƯỜI LIÊN HỆ

Nếu thầy cô có thắc mắc, khiếu nại hoặc quan tâm về nghiên cứu này, thầy cô có thể liên hệ với Hương theo số (+1) 447-902-1485 hoặc qua email tại huongn2@illinois.edu. Thầy cô cũng có thể liên hệ với nhà nghiên cứu chính, Tiến sĩ Karla J. Möller. Thông tin liên hệ của Tiến sĩ Möller ở phần đầu của Giấy chấp thuận này. Thầy cô cũng có thể liên lạc với cô Vũ Lệ Huyền qua email vulehuyenctn@gmail.com hoặc số điện thoại (+84) 984-792-478.

Hội đồng xét duyệt: Nếu thầy cô có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào về quyền của mình với tư cách là một đối tượng nghiên cứu, bao gồm các mối quan tâm, khiếu nại hoặc để cung cấp thông tin đầu vào, thầy cô có thể gọi cho Văn phòng Bảo vệ Đối tượng Nghiên cứu (OPRS) theo số 217-333-2670 hoặc gửi email cho OPRS tại irb@illinois.edu. Nếu thầy cô muốn hoàn thành một cuộc khảo sát ngắn để cung cấp phản hồi của OPRS về trải nghiệm của thầy cô với tư cách là người tham gia nghiên cứu, vui lòng theo liên kết [tại đây](#) hoặc thông qua liên kết trên trang web của OPRS: <https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/> Thầy cô sẽ có tùy chọn cung cấp phản hồi hoặc mối quan tâm ẩn danh hoặc thầy cô có thể cung cấp tên và thông tin liên hệ của mình cho các mục đích tiếp theo.

THAM GIA TỰ NGUYỆN

Các nghiên cứu chỉ bao gồm những người tự nguyện tham gia. Thầy cô có thể cho chúng tôi biết rằng thầy cô không muốn tham gia nghiên cứu này. Thầy cô có thể bắt đầu nghiên cứu và sau đó chọn dừng nghiên cứu sau. Điều này sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của thầy cô với các nhà nghiên cứu.

CHI PHÍ VÀ BỒI THƯỜNG CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA

Không có chi phí hoặc bồi thường cho việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

CHẤP THUẬN

Khi ký vào mẫu chấp thuận này, tôi xác nhận rằng tôi đã đọc thông tin trong mẫu chấp thuận

này và đã có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi. Tôi sẽ được cung cấp một bản sao có chữ ký của mẫu chấp thuận này. Tôi tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Tên viết in hoa của người tham gia

Chữ ký của người tham gia

Ngày

NGUYEN THI DIEU HUONG

Tên viết hoa của người nhận giấy chấp thuận

13-8-2023

Chữ ký của người nhận giấy chấp thuận

Ngày

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research & Innovation

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
1901 S. First St., Suite A, MC-685
Champaign, IL 61820

Notice of Exempt Determination

July 20, 2023

Principal Investigator	Karla Moller
Protocol Title	<i>Vietnamese High School Teachers' Thoughts on Their English Textbook Adoption Decision and Its First Year of Use</i>
Protocol Number	24201
Funding Source	Unfunded
Review Category	Category 2
Approval Date	July 19, 2023
Expiration Date	July 18, 2028

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) has reviewed your application and determined the criteria for exemption have been met.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:

- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing major modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.

Changes to an exempt protocol are only required if substantive modifications are requested and/or the changes requested may affect the exempt status.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

IORG0000014 • FWA #00008584
217.333.2670 • irb@illinois.edu • oprs.research.illinois.edu

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Dear Teacher,

My name is Huong Nguyen. I am currently a Mmaster's degree student in the Curriculum & Instruction program at the School of Education, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to the academic year 2022-2023, I worked full-time as an English foreign language teacher at Thai Nguyen Specialized High School for six years.

I am writing to invite you and your fellow high school teachers to participate in a research project for my master's thesis entitled "Vietnamese High School Teachers' Thoughts on Their English Textbook Adoption Decision and Its First Year of Use." The aim of this qualitative exploratory study is to document the thoughts and experiences of high school teachers in Northern Vietnam in response to their textbook selection process and the first year of the textbook's use in the classroom.

The study will investigate the following areas:

- HSTsHigh school teachers' (HSTs) thoughts on how the training they received prepared them for the role of selecting English Language Textbooks (ELTs).
- HSTs' experiences with the new textbook across the dimensions of their teaching responsibilities and how these experiences impacted their sense of themselves as educators.
- What the teachers believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure that HSTs in their positions have the knowledge and information they need for future adoption decisions and in the application of new textbooks.
- How the experience of selecting and teaching with the textbook has impacted their sense of themselves as change agents in their schools.

Participation in this study will provide the opportunity for the teachers to reflect on their textbook selection process, evaluate the use of the selected textbook and its influence on their teaching practice, and consider the kind of training they hope to receive in the future that could better prepare them for future educational changes and reforms.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will provide insights into how to better prepare Vietnamese high school teachers to select suitable and effective educational materials, which will later help improve the development of English curriculum, English instruction quality, and students' English competence.

All information collected during this study will be kept confidential, and there is no cost to participate in this research. All participants will be given the chance to choose or be assigned pseudonyms to keep their names private in any discussion of the information collected Inin the study.

We hope that you and your teachers will consider participating in this research. Please read and sign a consent form if you are interested in participating in this research. Our consent form is available to sign digitally. Please feel free to contact me at huongn2@illinois.edu if you have any questions or concerns about the study. Please feel free to contact the primary investigator, my academic advisor, Dr. Karla Möller at kjmoller@illinois.edu, if you have any questions for her.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Huong

Vietnamese Version

Kính thưa Thầy cô,

Tôi tên là Nguyễn Thị Diệu Hương. Tôi hiện đang là sinh viên Thạc sĩ chương trình Ngôn ngữ và Giảng dạy tại Trường Giáo dục, Đại học Illinois tại Urbana-Champaign. Trước năm học 2022-2023, tôi làm giáo viên chính thức môn Tiếng Anh tại Trường THPT Chuyên Thái Nguyên trong 6 năm.

Tôi viết thư này để kính mời thầy cô bậc Trung học phổ thông tham gia vào một dự án nghiên cứu cho luận án thạc sĩ của tôi với tựa đề "Suy nghĩ của giáo viên THPT Việt Nam về quyết định áp dụng sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh và năm đầu tiên sử dụng sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh mới." Mục đích của nghiên cứu định tính này là ghi lại những suy nghĩ và kinh nghiệm của giáo viên trung học phổ thông ở miền Bắc Việt Nam về quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa và năm đầu tiên sử dụng sách giáo khoa trong lớp học.

Nghiên cứu sẽ tập trung vào các lĩnh vực sau:

- Suy nghĩ của Giáo viên THPT về việc họ đã được đào tạo như thế nào để chuẩn bị cho vai trò lựa chọn Sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh.
- Trải nghiệm của Giáo viên THPT với sách giáo khoa mới về các khía cạnh trách nhiệm giảng dạy của họ và những trải nghiệm này ảnh hưởng như thế nào đến ý thức của họ với tư cách là nhà giáo dục.
- Những gì giáo viên tin là cần thiết về chương trình đào tạo và các chuẩn bị khác để đảm bảo rằng giáo viên THPT ở vị trí của họ có kiến thức và thông tin họ cần cho các quyết định áp dụng trong tương lai và trong việc áp dụng sách giáo khoa mới.
- Kinh nghiệm lựa chọn và giảng dạy với sách giáo khoa đã tác động như thế nào đến ý thức của giáo viên THPT về bản thân họ với tư cách là tác nhân thay đổi trong trường học.

Việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này sẽ tạo cơ hội cho thầy cô chiêm nghiệm về quá trình lựa chọn sách giáo khoa của mình, đánh giá việc sử dụng sách giáo khoa được chọn và ảnh hưởng của nó đối với thực tiễn giảng dạy của thầy cô, đồng thời xem xét hình thức đào tạo mà thầy cô hy vọng sẽ nhận được trong tương lai có thể tốt hơn chuẩn bị cho thầy cô những thay đổi và cải cách giáo dục trong tương lai.

Hơn nữa, kết quả của nghiên cứu này sẽ cung cấp cái nhìn sâu sắc về cách chuẩn bị tốt hơn cho giáo viên trung học Việt Nam để lựa chọn tài liệu giáo dục phù hợp và hiệu quả, giúp cải thiện việc phát triển chương trình tiếng Anh, chất lượng giảng dạy tiếng Anh và năng lực tiếng Anh của học sinh.

Tất cả thông tin thu thập được trong quá trình nghiên cứu này sẽ được giữ bí mật và thầy cô không mất chi phí để tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Tất cả những người tham gia sẽ có cơ hội chọn hoặc được chỉ định các bút danh để giữ bí mật tên của họ trong bất kỳ cuộc thảo luận nào về thông tin được thu thập trong nghiên cứu.

Chúng tôi hy vọng rằng thầy cô sẽ xem xét tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Vui lòng đọc và ký vào Mẫu chấp thuận nếu thầy cô muốn tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Mẫu chấp thuận của chúng tôi có sẵn để ký điện tử. Vui lòng liên hệ với tôi tại huongn2@illinois.edu nếu thầy cô có bất kỳ câu hỏi hoặc thắc mắc nào về nghiên cứu. Vui lòng liên hệ với nhà nghiên cứu chính, cố vấn học tập của tôi, Tiến sĩ Karla Möller tại kjmoller@illinois.edu, nếu thầy cô có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào cho Tiến sĩ Karla Möller.

Cảm ơn thầy cô đã dành thời gian và sự quan tâm tới nghiên cứu này.

Trân trọng,

Huong

APPENDIX F: FLIERS

English Version



**WE ARE
RECRUITING**

HIGH SCHOOL EFL TEACHERS

to share their experiences **selecting** and **teaching** the new English textbooks.

The banner features a teal background with a stack of books (green and orange) and a dotted pattern in the top right corner.

If you are a high school English as a foreign language educator, you are invited to share your experiences and insights on the textbook adoption process and its first year of use.

We would love to learn about

- your thoughts on how the training you received prepared you for the role of selecting English language textbooks.
- your experiences with the new textbook across the dimensions of your teaching responsibilities and how these experiences impacted your sense of yourself as an educator.
- what you believe is needed in terms of training programs and other preparation to ensure that you in your positions have the knowledge and information you need for future adoption decisions and in the application of new textbooks.
- how the experience of selecting and teaching with the textbook has impacted your sense of yourself as a change agent in your school.

You will be asked to participate in

- a 30-minute survey
- a 60-minute interview (optional)

Researchers

Huong Nguyen
Dr. Karla J. Möller, Principal Investigator (PI)

PARTICIPATE NOW

More Information:



(+1) 447-902-1485

huongn2@illinois.edu

Or scan the QR Code for further information on how to participate!



CHÚNG TÔI ĐANG TUYỂN



GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH BẬC THPT

để chia sẻ trải nghiệm **lựa chọn** và **giảng dạy** sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh mới.

Nếu thầy cô giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc THPT, chúng tôi kính mời thầy cô chia sẻ kinh nghiệm và hiểu biết của mình về quy trình lựa chọn và áp dụng sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh mới trong một năm qua.

Chúng tôi muốn tìm hiểu về

- suy nghĩ của thầy cô về cách khóa đào tạo thầy cô nhận được đã chuẩn bị cho thầy cô như nào trong vai trò chọn sách giáo khoa tiếng Anh.
- kinh nghiệm của thầy cô với sách giáo khoa mới trên các khía cạnh trách nhiệm giảng dạy của thầy cô, và cách những trải nghiệm này ảnh hưởng đến ý thức của thầy cô về bản thân với tư cách là một nhà giáo dục.
- những gì thầy cô tin là cần thiết về chương trình đào tạo và sự chuẩn bị khác để đảm bảo rằng thầy cô ở vị trí của mình có kiến thức và thông tin cần thiết cho các quyết định áp dụng trong tương lai và trong việc áp dụng sách giáo khoa mới.
- trải nghiệm lựa chọn và giảng dạy với sách giáo khoa đã tác động như thế nào đến cảm nhận của thầy cô về bản thân với tư cách là tác nhân thay đổi trong trường học.

Thầy cô được mời tham gia

- 01 khảo sát kéo dài khoảng 30 phút
- 01 cuộc phỏng vấn kéo dài khoảng 60 phút (không bắt buộc)

Người thực hiện nghiên cứu

Nguyễn Thị Diệu Hương
Tiến sĩ Karla J. Möller, Nhà nghiên cứu chính

THAM GIA NGAY

Tìm hiểu thêm



 (+1) 447-902-1485

 huongn2@illinois.edu

Hoặc quét mã QR để tìm hiểu thêm cách thức tham gia nghiên cứu!



APPENDIX G: TEXTBOOK EVALUATION SHEET SAMPLE

Publisher Editor Reviewer: Hue University of Education

Editor : Vo Dai Phuc

Reviewer : [Teacher's name]

Criteria (according to Decision No. 609/QĐ-UBND)	Comment	Evaluation	
		Fit	Not suitable
Criterion 1: Suitable for student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Books provide tasks to help students basically complete the requirements for language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) - The book is designed according to the PPP (Presentation - Practice - Production) approach to stimulate students' learning motivation, helping them not feel pressured in the process of receiving knowledge. - Topics appropriate to the age of the students 	X	
Criterion 2: Suitable for teachers' teaching organization conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The book is designed neatly, eye-catching, and uses colors in reasonable harmony. The layout of the sections is clear and scientific. Content is presented in a coherent and logical manner. From there, teachers can easily exploit and organize activities for students - Topics and activities are designed to be simple, consistent, and easy to help teachers prepare effective teaching materials. 	X	

Criteria (according to Decision No. 609/QĐ-UBND)	Comment	Evaluation	
		Fit	Not suitable
Criterion 3: Suitable for local socio-economic characteristics	- Content and images related to topics appropriate to the local socio-economic characteristics, do not violate basic human rights, do not contain reactionary elements, and are at the same time relevant. high humanity	X	
Criterion 4: Guaranteed conditions	The ecosystem and rich supporting learning resources are suitable for teaching and learning conditions in Vietnam. At the same time, it meets the teaching and learning needs of teachers and students	X	

CONCLUSION

Mark (x) in the appropriate box:

1. Suitable:

X

2. Not suitable:

[Province name], [date]

REVIEWERS

(Sign, write full name)

\