FROM TESTING TO ACTIVE STUDENT LEARNING: VIETNAMESE EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

HONG ANH MA

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education by Research

Of

Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

July 2021

ABSTRACT

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. The use of formative assessment and feedback for students is particularly conducive to language learning and teaching and is supportive of achieving language learning outcomes. However, in Vietnam, due to several factors such as large classroom size or insufficient in-class hours, Vietnamese language teachers generally place little emphasis on formative assessment. In recent years, Vietnamese teachers have re-evaluated the existing testing and assessment approaches and begun to recognise that constant feedback facilitates student-centered learning and promotes active learning. This qualitative study aims to examine the perceptions and in-class practices of formative assessment of Vietnamese EFL teachers in secondary schools, by means of semi-structured interviews with teachers, classroom audio recordings, and teachers' reflective notes. The findings show that there is a shift of teachers' focus from summative to formative assessment to varying degrees. Participating teachers also acknowledge in-class formative assessment practices via a cyclic process, and their formative assessment techniques are summarised in an inventory. The role of formative assessment in linking student language with classroom activities and therefore promoting active student learning in EFL classes is also discussed.

Key words: assessment, formative assessment, language learning, language teaching, EFL, Vietnamese teacher, active student learning

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Hong Anh Ma, declare that the Master by Research thesis entitled From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese EFL Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment is no more than 60,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (Application ID: HRE20-070).

Signed   Date

                                                                                        18 July 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been accomplished without the continuous support of many significant people. I would like to express my gratitude to those who have helped me during my two years in Australia.

I owe my deepest and sincerest gratitude to my academic supervisors at Victoria University – Doctor Oksana Razoumova and Doctor Neil Hooley for their wisdom, wholehearted support and intensive supervision during the past two years. They have empowered me to accomplish my research goals and taught me to be a competent researcher. Dr Razoumova, your academic expertise and research skills have been truly valuable to me. To be honest, your constructive feedback and thought-provoking questions have truly encouraged me to put on 'my thinking cap' when I talk with you, and thanks to that, my critical thinking skills have always been polished and enhanced after our meetings. Thank you for your continuous guidance, which has been a perfect balance between providing academic direction and emotional support. Dr Hooley, your ability to see my potential rather than acknowledging my limitations has sustained me in the intensely demanding yet rewarding process of conducting independent research. Your suggestions and professional advice about assessment and Freire's problem-posing education were fundamentally helpful. Despite your workload, you always dedicate your precious time to read my chapter drafts and give me prompt feedback. Without both of you and your committed support, this study would never have been possible.

My great thanks also go to Associate Professor Dianne Hall, Associate Professor Marcelle Cacciattolo, Dr Gabriella Pretto, Dr Karen Charman and Dr Peter Thomas for

their valuable feedback in the initial and final stages of my Master thesis. I also thank Petre Santry, my editor, for agreeing to help me at such short notice and constantly encouraging me with her kind words.

I would like to thank the Victoria University for providing me with an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship to support my master study. This financial support has enabled me to realise my dream of studying in my favourite country, Australia. I would like to acknowledge the Institute of Social and Liveable Cities (ISILC) at Victoria University, especially its supportive staff, who provided me with excellent facilities and a professional research and learning environment during my candidature. My thanks go to the teachers who participated in this study, for helping me gain insights into their teaching practice. I also thank my new friends in Australia with whom I have shared this journey.

Finally yet importantly, my heartfelt thanks go to my beloved family and friends in Vietnam for always being by my side and constantly encouraging me to do my best. They have been an excellent source of encouragement and support. In particular, special thanks go to my partner, Vu Dang Khoa Nguyen, for always believing in me and putting up with me through all my ups and downs. Being a novice researcher means that there were countless times when I felt lost and wanted to drop out, but Khoa kept telling me not to give up. Words cannot describe how I have cherished his support and encouragement during our time in Australia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CHC	Confucian Heritage Culture
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NFLP	National Foreign Language Project
NSW	New South Wales
TELL	Technology Enhanced Language Learning
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
WTO	World Trade Organisation

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher provides an orientation by offering an overview of English Language Teaching and learning across countries, specifically focusing on Vietnam. This chapter also describes the study's aims and research questions, concluding with a discussion of the study significance and organisation of the thesis.

1.1. Background and context

1.1.1. Overview of English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning across countries

English has been considered as the "global" language (Snyder & Beale, 2011) and is now the most widely used lingua franca in the world in multiple fields of business, science, communication, education, or culture (Cheshire, 1996; Crystal, 1997, 2012; Halliday, 2017; Nunan, 2003a). English is either the official or national language in a significant number of countries (e.g. Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, United States and New Zealand), the language of authority in certain other countries (e.g. Hong Kong, India and South Africa), and a foreign language taught in schools in more than 100 other nations (Crystal, 2003) including Vietnam.

English Language Teaching is increasingly pervasive in non-native English-speaking countries (Agrawal, 2004; Snyder & Beale, 2011). In the context of English as a second language (ESL) countries, there have been many similarities in the policies on promoting English Language Teaching and learning. These policies all place a major focus on the use of English for international communication and the introduction of ELT from an early age. A typical example for this reform is Singapore, a developed ESL country (Kam, 2002), whose policies aim at using English for communication purposes, including

acquiring and disseminating information, as well as social interaction and literacy expression. Furthermore, according to the Singaporean preschool policy, students should study English before attending primary school (Kam, 2002).

A considerable range of approaches to ELT has also been witnessed in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries. In the East Asia region, English has consolidated its status as the most dominant foreign language, especially in Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand (Bolton and Bacon-Shone, 2020; Kam, 2002). Many countries have made EFL a compulsory subject in their curriculum from very early grades (Dearden, 2014). For example, children start learning English when they are six years old in Hong Kong, six or seven in Taiwan, seven in Malaysia, nine in China, and twelve in Japan (Baldauf Jr. et al., 2011; Nunan, 2003a).

EFL countries' strategies to encourage English language development are varied. In Japan, for instance, ELT has undergone significant changes, with two notable reform policies including oral communication courses within the 'English Curriculum Revision and Strategic Plan' to cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities'. The former document was issued in response to national economic change, and the latter aimed to improve the Japanese economy and country status in the world. Both strategically focus on the importance of practical English abilities, as all graduates are required to attain a certain level of English language proficiency in order to use English in their work (Honna & Takeshita, 2005). What is more, Thailand has invested considerable resources and time in ELT, instituting some new changes in English teaching and learning in schools as a part of education reform. Three objectives in a Thai English language curriculum are introduced, which are knowledge (how to use English in communication, learning and working), skills

(communication strategies, soft skills and other high-level cognitive skills), and a positive attitude (appreciating the English language and its culture) (Wiriyachitra, 2002).

Despite significant investment in the ELT sector, the results in some EFL countries have still not met expectations. Many Japanese students are reported to lack confidence when communicating in English and have low English language proficiency (Chiya, 2003). Thai students' English language level of proficiency is relatively low in comparison with that of other ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore (Noom-ura, 2013). Reasons for this ineffective implementation of ELT development policies vary. Although EFL countries are trying to make progress in developing ELT, poor teaching conditions (e.g. unqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and lack of materials) and traditional teaching conventions still remain (Kam, 2002).

1.1.2. Overview of English Language Teaching and learning in Vietnam

In this study, the development of Vietnamese ELT is discussed in two periods: (1) before the Doi Moi (Renovation) policy; and (2) from the introduction of the Doi Moi policy in 1986 to the present.

The pre-Doi Moi era was characterised by the dominance of the Russian language, as the number of students majoring in this language vastly outnumbered that of all other foreign languages. Government policies predominantly focused on the development of the Russian language, with 70% of school pupils studying Russian, and only 20% and 10% learning English and French, respectively (Hoang, 2010).

While Russian dominated the scene, the status of the English language was quite restricted in Vietnam. English was taught in only a limited number of classes in upper secondary schools, mainly in urban areas. The prevailing method of teaching English was the structural method with a focus on lexico-grammar, reading and translation skills.

The Doi Moi policy in 1986 paved the way for the rapid growth and expansion of English Language Teaching and learning in Vietnam. The Sixth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party in December 1986 initiated an overall economic systemic reform and opened Vietnam to the whole world. In the context of the economic renovation of the open-door policy, English was positioned as the premier foreign language to be taught in Vietnam. This high status of English was also substantially enhanced after Vietnam joined the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) in 1995, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2006 (T. P. L. Nguyen & Phung, 2015; Phan, 2017). The Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam (MoET) identified English as having a key role in local and global integration (H. Le, 2015). As a result, English became a compulsory subject taught nationally for ten years (from grade 3 to grade 12), with the amount of time allocated to English classes since 2018 being 40% and 75% higher than that of the period 2006-2018 and 1982-2002, respectively (Hoang, 2020). With such time allocations, English has also been recognised as one of the three major subjects ranking third (after mathematics and Vietnamese literature). Consequently, it is now not only one of the three compulsory subjects in the national secondary school level graduation examination, but also a compulsory subject for both undergraduates and postgraduates in tertiary education.

Despite the growing popularity of the English language in Vietnam, there are still mismatches between curriculum and examination. Rather than focusing on communicative skills, most English teachers in Vietnam continue to apply grammar-translation methods in English classes (V. Le & Barnard, 2009; V. Le & Nguyen, 2017; T. P. L. Nguyen & Phung, 2015; Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). In both secondary and tertiary levels in Vietnam, the result of exam-driven instruction and teacher-centred language teaching methods is that although a number of students may excel in high-stake exams, many struggle to communicate in real-life settings. Assessment has been employed mainly for certifying students' learning results.

Many recent official documents such as the Resolution of Higher Education Reform Agenda (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2005), the Higher Education Law (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012b), and the Strategy for Educational Development by 2020 (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012c), encourage the transformation of teaching, learning and assessment, and highlight the need for a shift from a teacher-centred approach in teaching and learning in Vietnam's educational institutions, to a student-centred approach. For instance, the Vietnamese Government states that the ideal system requires "Innovating teaching and assessment methods, focusing on the development of learners' positiveness, self-awareness, activeness, creativity and independent learning capacity" (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012c). To be more specific, these policies call for teaching pedagogies that promote learners' autonomy, and diversified assessment approaches that provide more reliable and valid results of students' learning performance (T. Ho, 2015). The focus of assessment should not only be on summative testing, but also on formative assessment at the classroom level.

Based on the researcher's experience, the current study has been conducted to identify and understand the practice of formative assessment in assisting teachers and engaging students with their teaching and learning in Vietnam. It focuses on the impacts of formative assessment on promoting students' learning autonomy and agency in becoming self-directed learners in the context of secondary school education.

1.2. Aims of the study

Understanding how formative assessment practice is crucial in teaching English as a Foreign language in Vietnam, this study aims to investigate:

(1) how teachers perceive formative assessment in their class, and

(2) how formative assessment is situated within the classroom.

1.3. Research questions

As the overarching aim of this study is to investigate how teachers perceive and implement formative assessment in an EFL setting, this study has been framed by the following two research questions:

- What are Vietnamese EFL teacher perceptions of formative assessment?
- What are the in-class practices of formative assessment in an EFL class in the Vietnamese context?

1.4 Significance of the study

This present study contributes to the extant literature in terms of context. Despite the fact that formative assessment has received a lot of researchers' and policymakers' attention globally (Klenowski, 2009), a limited number of studies have addressed its implementation in TEFL in general. The majority of formative assessment research has been conducted in

the fields of science and mathematics (Buck & Trauth-Nare, 2009; Hill, 2011; Hondrich et al., 2015; Panadero & G. Brown, 2017; Yin & Buck, 2015; B. Zhang & Misiak, 2015). Nevertheless, to date, fewer studies have embraced the notion of formative assessment in the field of language learning and its implementation in TEFL in general (Britton, 2015; Defianty, 2018). This study aims to address this gap and provide novel insights to EFL discipline by investigating formative assessment in a TEFL context. In other words, this study explores an under-researched area by making connections between two research areas: foreign language learning and formative assessment.

In addition, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies have been conducted in the Vietnamese context, with previous Vietnamese related studies only being one-institution based. Besides, although some studies have been made to investigate assessment-related areas in tertiary education in the Vietnamese context (e.g. T. Ho, 2015; Tran, 2015; Duong, 2020), very few studies focus on secondary school settings. This study, on the other hand, has collected data from seven teachers from different secondary schools in Vietnam. By providing a detailed account of formative assessment from the secondary school teachers' perspective, this study will contribute to the existing literature of ELT in Vietnam in general and in secondary education specifically.

The findings of this research will help the policymakers, educators and stakeholders in Vietnam to become aware of the existing adaptation of formative assessment in EFL programs and thus promote active learning within classrooms, which is currently constrained due to the existing examination system.

1.5. Organisation of the study

This study is organised into five chapters. The current chapter has offered an orientation to this study with an overview of TEFL in the context of Vietnam. This is followed by a review of relevant research related to this study in Chapter 2. Then, Chapter 3 discusses how the researcher has operationalised this study using methodological considerations. Following this, Chapter 4 reports on Vietnamese participants' perceptions of formative assessment as well as their practices. Lastly, discussion, limitations and further research suggestions are presented. Figure 1.1 illustrates the logical progression of the thesis.

Orientation to this study
- The rapid growth and expansion of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam
- Mismatches between curriculum and examination

Significance
- Addressing the gap in the literature
- Investigating the teachers' perceptions and in-class practices of formative assessment
- Identifying the role of formative assessment in promoting student active learning

Central research questions

- *What are Vietnamese EFL teacher perceptions of formative assessment?*
- *What are in-class practices of formative assessment in an EFL class in the Vietnamese context?*

Literature review
- Human learning and student active learning
- Assessment
- Formative assessment
- Formative assessment types and characteristics
- The enactment of formative assessment in different contexts and in Vietnam

Research design
Mixed methods + Interpretivist paradigm
+ Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis
+ Classroom audio-recordings and analysis
+ Teacher reflective notes and analysis

Findings
- A shift of teachers' focuses from summative to formative assessment to a varying degree
- A cyclic process of formative assessment integration in the classroom
- An inventory of various formative assessment techniques

Discussion
- The role of formative assessment in linking student language with classroom activities and in promoting active student learning
- Vietnamese policies on English language teaching
- Active learning and formative assessment in secondary schools

Figure 1.1 The logic of the study

Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers four main areas, beginning with a general discussion of the implications of three learning theories, including behavioural, cognitive, and social-constructivist in human learning. The researcher then moves on to look at active student learning, particularly within the context of language learning. A brief introduction of assessment is provided in the following section, followed by a detailed description of formative assessment and an overview of the theoretical framework (which involves assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning). The researcher also presents a few studies on the formative assessment practices in Vietnam and other countries, as well as the Vietnamese policies aimed at encouraging formative assessment in recent years.

2.1. Human learning

Several definitions of learning have been discussed in a book written by H. Brown (2014) including: learning can be the knowledge acquisition of a skill by study, experience, or instruction; learning can be a relatively permanent change in a behavioural tendency; or learning can be the result of reinforced practice. Among those, three popular views of learning include (1) behavioural psychology; (2) cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics; and (3) social-constructivism (see Table 2.1). These three perspectives present the history of learning theory, including different teaching approaches and methods.

Table 2.1

Perspectives on human learning (adapted from H. Brown, 2014, p. 92).

Behavioural	**Cognitive**	**Social-Constructivist**
Key theorists: Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike, and Skinner	Key theorists: Ausubel and Piaget	Key theorists: Freire, Rogers, and Vygotsky
Emphasis: physical	Emphasis: mental	Emphasis: socioaffective
- Conditioning - Rewards - Stimulus-response connections - Reinforcement	- Language-cognition connection - Meaningful learning - Subsumption - Systematic forgetting	- Learner autonomy - Whole person - Empowerment - Social interaction - Language as mediation

The theory of behaviourism is concerned with stimulus-response learning, and has been developed through the works of Pavlov (1902), Watson (1913), Thorndike (1932), and Skinner (1938). Behaviourists believe that learning is a change in behaviour caused by external stimuli from the environment. The first behaviourist, Pavlov, was famous for his classical conditioning experiments with dogs. Through repeated occurrences, the dog linked the sound of a bell with food and therefore salivated whenever the bell rang. Pavlov concluded that a neutral stimulus (the sound of the bell) was able to elicit a response (salivation) that was originally elicited by another stimulus (the smell of meat).

Pavlov's findings paved the way for John Watson (1913), who acknowledged the role of stimuli in producing conditioned responses. He believed that the external environment and background plays a more dominant role than genetics when it comes to human behaviour. According to Watson, all learning can be explained by understanding the process of conditioning. Through conditioning, a set of stimulus-response connections could be established, and more complex behaviours learned by building up a series or chain of responses.

Later, in his Law of Effect, Thorndike (1932) built on classical conditioning models by demonstrating that stimuli that occurred following a behaviour could influence potential behaviours.

However, among all supporters of behaviourism, Skinner's (1938) theory has been the most influential. According to Skinner, the key principle of this theory is the reinforcement (rewards or punishment) of a new behaviour. He also stated that the absence of any positive reinforcement is synonymous with the best method of extinction.

Skinner's (1957) view of both language and language learning exerted significant influence on language teaching methodologies in the middle of the 20th century, resulting in a heavy reliance in the classroom on controlled verbal practice under carefully planned schedules of reinforcements. Here the Audiolingual Method is a striking example of how the behavioural theory of conditioning and rote learning impacts language learning. Other examples and applications of behaviourist learning theory can be drill/rote work, repetitive practice, or verbal reinforcement – all of which place emphasis on the role of frequency in language acquisition. However, although this conditioning paradigm can be sufficient for

animal training to some extent, it could not fully capture the complexities of the internal processing of information and individual cognitive characteristics.

According to H. Brown (2014), the next perspective is the cognitive theory, which supplements the inadequacies of the behavioural view in human learning. In fact, the cognitive theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for the rejection of conditional models of repeated practice and imitation in language teaching and learning. This theory focuses on the conceptualisation of students' learning processes and addresses how knowledge is received, organised, stored, and retrieved by the mind through significant, meaningful learning and retention/subsumption.

In language learning, rote learning practices such as mindless repetition or imitation can only be effective on a short-term basis. Such rote learning is defined as the process of collecting and obtaining materials as "discrete and relatively isolated entities" (Ausubel, 1968, p. 108), which has little or no relation to the existing cognitive structure. In contrast, learners need to play an active role in assimilating and discovering new information relevant to their existing cognitive structures. This is known as meaningful learning, which is described as the process of associating and anchoring new information to previously established entities in the cognitive structure. When new material enters our perceptual field, it belongs to a more inclusive and hierarchical conceptual system. H. Brown (2014) presented some key differences between rote learning and meaningful learning, which are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Comparison of rote learning and retention and meaningful learning and retention

(subsumption) (adapted from H. Brown, 2014, p. 83 – 84).

Rote learning and retention	Meaningful learning and retention
• Focus on memorising new information	• Focus on understanding new information
• Acquisition and storage of items as isolated and random identities and concepts	• Acquisition and storage of items anchored to an established conceptual hierarchy by subsumption
• Inefficient retention because of interfering contiguous items	• Subsumption process continues in retention
• Ability only to repeat the new information in the exact same context	• Ability to link new information with existing prior knowledge and apply the new information to real-life situations
• Loss of retention without repeated conditioning	• Systematic forgetting: subsumed items are "pruned" in favour of a larger and more global conception in cognitive structure

According to the cognitive perspective, meaningfully learned material could be forgotten, but forgetting occurs intentionally and systematically because it is a continuation of the subsumption process. H. Brown (1972) called this forgetting stage as cognitive pruning. When you prune a tree, you want to eliminate unnecessary clutter and make room for more growth. Thus, when subsumed items are pruned, they are actually contributing to a deeper cognitive structure.

In fact, the notion of automaticity in second language acquisition well exemplifies this cognitive perspective. For instance, an English foreign language learner in the early stages of acquisition is taught the order of adjectives in English using a mnemonic approach, OSASCOMP (opinion, size, age, shape, colour, origin, material, purpose). However, in later stages, the learner may no longer need to remember this rule anymore, as they can automatically produce the correct order of adjectives without any recourse to the rule learned earlier. Besides mnemonics, other applications of cognitive learning theory in language teaching are concept mapping, problem solving, discussion, associating new content with something known, and real-world examples.

Social constructivism has emerged in recent years as a dominant paradigm in education, with Rogers, Freire, and Vygotsky being three notable social-constructivist scholars. The essence of the social-constructivism perspective is that learning is constructed and externally mediated through social interactions, based on individual unique experiences.

From Rogers' (1977) point of view, the "whole person" is a physical, cognitive, and mainly emotional being, with "fully functioning persons" being at ease with all of their feelings and reactions, allowing them to achieve their full potential. By shifting the focus from teaching to learning, this position has significant implications for education (O'Hara & Wood, 2003; Rogers, 1983). Learning how to learn plays a more important role than being taught something from the superior vantage point of a teacher who determines the learning content (H. Brown, 2014).

Sharing the same viewpoint with Rogers (1983), Freire (1970) also stressed the importance of leaner-centered classrooms. In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire

strongly objected to the traditional "banking" method of education (which will be further

discussed in section 2.2.1). Instead, he advised that education should equip students with

the ability to research thoroughly and ask questions rather than accepting something

unconditionally. Students should be able to negotiate their learning outcomes, engage in

discovery learning with their teachers and peers, and relate course content to their real lives.

When knowledge is spoon-fed to students, they are robbed of the chance to become

independent learners. Therefore, in social-constructivism, teachers should only play the

facilitating role, and learning is based on how learners interpret and make sense of their

experiences and perceptions. Research projects, problem-based learning, and collaborative

learning are some examples of constructivism in practice.

For Vygotsky (1978), a Russian-born psychologist, the mediation of symbols, signs,

and language is the key to comprehend higher forms (beyond physical reflexes) of human

mental activity. In Vygotsky's view, language started as a communication tool, but then

developed to become a driving force in the development of cognition. Learning occurs as a

result of many external factors such as cultural, historical, and social interaction rather than

of individual construction, i.e. learning is co-constructed. Thus, individuals are able to learn

from each other rather than solely relying on the teacher.

A recent implication of constructivism is the experiential learning theory. Kolbs

(2009) and other experiential learning scholars share the following six propositions

regarding this theory: (1) learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes;

(2) learning is a continuous process grounded in experience (all learning is re-learning); (3)

learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of

adaptation to the world; (4) learning is a holistic process of human adaptation to the world;

(5) learning results from a synergetic transaction between the individual and the environment; and (6) learning is the process of creating knowledge (A. Kolb & D. Kolb, 2009).

D. Kolb (1984) defined learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 41). He saw the learning cycle as a lifelong process of exchange between the learners' internal world and the external environment. The experiential learning cycle portrays two dialectically related modes of understanding experience including Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and two dialectically related modes of transforming experience including Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). Here knowledge can be constructed in a learning spiral where the learner "touches all the bases" – of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. Immediate or concrete experiences are the ground for observations and reflections. Those are then assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts. Drawing from these concepts, implications for action are then tested and contribute to the creation of new experiences.
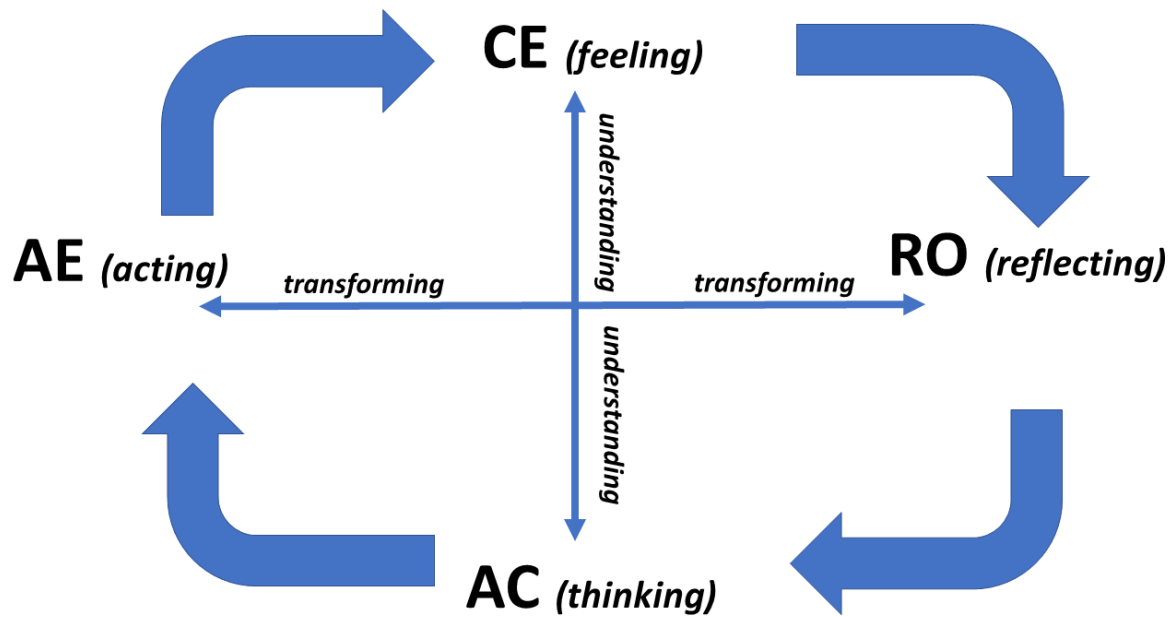
Figure 2.1 Experiential learning cycle (adapted from A. Kolb & D. Kolb, 2009, p. 42).

Drawing from the works of Kolbs, Scrivener (2005) introduced a teaching and experiential learning cycle that included five main steps in the learning process: doing a task; recalling what happened; reflecting on performance; drawing conclusions from the reflection; and using such conclusions to prepare for upcoming practices. In this cycle, individuals should experience learning by themselves, and information, instruction or feedback from other sources such as teachers, peers, or parents might come in at any time of the cycle.
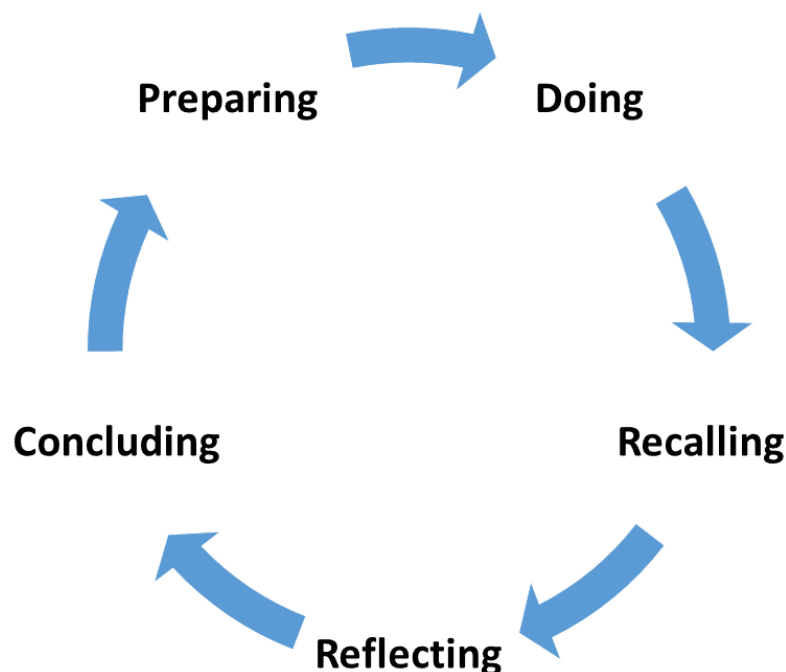
Figure 2.2 Teaching and experiential learning cycle (adapted from Scrivener, 2005, p. 20).

As in other fields, current English language pedagogies are also influenced by the changing paradigm of learning theory in which the central role of behaviourism was first replaced by cognitivism, and later by social-constructivism. The 'traditional paradigm' in language learning refers to teacher-centered, testing, language-focused, rote-learning and individual learning, which were among the notable characteristics of behaviourism (H. Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). In contrast, student-centered, communication-focused, collaborative learning together with an emphasis on meaning construction and higher-order thinking, are language learning aspects that underlie the constructivism theory (Aljohani, 2017; Birenbaum, 2016; L. Liu & Y. Zhang, 2014; Wilson, 2009).

In addition to the paradigm changes in human learning theories, the changing needs of EFL students from merely knowing the language to using the language for

communicative purposes play a crucial role in current ELT practice (Richards, 2017). Previously, ELT placed emphasis on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary, but this has failed to accommodate the various learning needs of English language learners. With needs shifting from simply knowing the language to using the language for communicative purposes in authentic contexts, oral and written communication have received more attention in recent years.

To conclude, the three major perspectives (behavioural, cognitive, and social constructivist) provide a comprehensive understanding of human learning and cognition. In recent years, in learning in general and language learning in particular, there has been a shift in focus from teachers to students and a need for developing learning responsibility and autonomy in students. Instead of being passive in class, learners should actively and directly involve in their learning process. Teachers, on the other hand, have the role of a "facilitator" (H. Brown, 2014, p. 92) – providing optimal learning conditions for students to thrive.

2.2. Student active learning

2.2.1. Student active learning definition

As noted above, the term banking concept of education refers to a metaphor of traditional education systems in which "the act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). According to this concept, knowledge lies with the teacher until being "narrated" to students, which makes students become "containers or receptacles to be filled by the teacher" (p. 72). Thus, minimal responsibility is required by students, as they only have to sit passively and

acquire information imparted by the teacher. This approach in education robs students of their chances to think critically, to communicate, or to contribute to their own learning. In fact, Chickering and Gamson (1987) claimed that the learning progress should not be considered as 'a spectator sport' in which students sit passively in class, listening to lectures, taking notes, completing assignments and formulating answers when being asked. Students must experience everything by themselves, discuss what they have learned, reflect on it, and then actively use higher-order cognitive tasks (e.g. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) in various learning activities and their daily lives (Bonwell & Eison, 1991) to turn what they learn into a part of themselves to make learning permanent.

In response to the need for communication and consciousness in learning, Freire (1970) offered the term "problem posing education". He pointed out that problem posing education, which lies in the constructivist learning theory, provides students with a dynamic learning experience. With this approach, "the students – no longer docile listeners – are now critically co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (p. 81). Rather than listening and restating introduced information, students are more critical about and engaged in what the educator is presenting to them. Table 2.2 below provides Freire's (1970) view of the banking concept compared with the problem posing pedagogy.

Table 2.3

Comparison of banking concept and problem posing education

	Banking concept	Problem posing education
Role of the teacher	"narrator", "bank clerk educator", "depositor" Teachers narrate and imparting knowledge to students through "acts of depositing" knowledge	Teachers are expected to be co-learner with students.
Role of students	"containers", "receptacles", "depositories" Students receive, collect, memorise, and repeat what have been narrated to them.	Students are active in their learning process. They need to think critically, evaluate objectively and communicate.
Dialogue	One-way (from the teacher to students)	Collaborative, dynamic, and constant between the teacher and students
Outcomes	- Anesthetising and inhibiting creative power - Maintaining the submersion of consciousness	- Involving a constant unveiling of reality - Striving for the emergence of consciousness and

		critical intervention in reality

One key term emerged from the problem of posing education is active learning. Active learning, also known as student-centered instruction, involves engaging students in an activity or task that will encourage them to think and analyse the content being delivered to them. Active learning may take place "at every stage or level of a lesson, from getting the students engaged in the topic, through actively and consciously taking part in discovering language and rules, to free, active production" (Gholami et al., 2014, p. 191). Additionally, Bell and Kahrhoff (2006) defined active learning as a process in which students are actively involved in the instructor's assigned tasks and activities, which can therefore lead to in-depth knowledge acquisition and practical skills development. In other words, since active learning places great emphasis on improving students' engagement and skills rather than imparting information, active learners do not simply want to pass an exam; they want to take the initiative and develop lifelong learning habits (Browne & Keeley, 2001). Having restricted active learning to in-class activities, Felder and Brent (2009 & 2016) understood active learning as a process involving students' participation in short course-related individual or small group activities. These activities are alternatives to instructor-led intervals during which students' responses are processed and new materials presented. In particular, students should be given a task and then have time for their thinking or doing. By this definition, if the teacher asks a question and immediately calls on a student for a response, it is not active learning. Approaches that promote active learning often require students to do something that requires higher-order thinking (e.g. reading,

discussing, or writing), thus focusing on students' metacognition (students' exploration of their own learning) (Brame, 2016).

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the subject of 'active learning' and its influence on students' performance. In science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, many studies have been conducted to compare student performance under traditional lecture approaches and active learning (Deslauriers et al., 2011; Efstathiou & Bailey, 2012; Freeman et al., 2014; Puspha et al., 2019). Their findings generally support that the overall implementation of various active learning strategies improves students' academic outcomes as well as increases their attendance and engagement in learning.

Promoting engagement in learning is another benefit that active learning brings. However, it is suggested that teachers should not completely give up lecturing and implement copious activities in their classes. In some circumstances, presenting new information through lectures, explanation, clarification or demonstration is a good way, since students need a certain amount of input first. Instead, teachers should balance the amount of lecturing or recitation sessions versus active learning activities. In this way, with a reasonably planned balance of lecture time and active learning, students will have intervals when they are awakened and stay more active in their own learning (Adkins, 2018).

In the context of language learning, many researchers have conducted their research on active learning in different contexts, e.g. the USA (Shaban, 2017; Wright et al., 2017), China (Qiao & Jin, 2010), Indonesia (Astawa, Artini, & Nitiasih, 2017), Arab (Nassim, 2018), with the focus varying from secondary students to undergraduates. Within the

language learning discipline, it has been discovered that active learning can facilitate student learning, help them retain the information longer, and promote a positive classroom atmosphere, compared to traditional teaching methods (e.g. lecturers) (Geressu, 2008; Gholami et al., 2014). During the active learning process, teachers play the role of 'directors', who guide their actors and actresses (i.e. the students) to reach their true potentials. In other words, the assistance of teachers enables their students to learn independently. In the learning process, another interesting analogy for the role of teachers and students is the gardener and the seed, respectively. The seed can only grow well if being taken care by the gardener, whose duties include planting the seed and providing optimum conditions for it to grow (Hannam, 2017).

Although active learning can offer many advantages in language learning, its implementation in classrooms still faces obstacles such as overloaded curricula, time constraints and large class size. One key emphasis in active learning is on engaging students during class, and one way to promote students' involvement in the classroom is to provide more formative assessment opportunities (Adkins, 2018), which are further discussed in section 2.4 of this study.

2.2.2. Examples of active learning

In order to promote students' participation in classroom activities and reduce the teacher's dominance, several common strategies have been suggested by researchers and educators around the world (Astawa, Artini, & Kerti Nitiasih, 2017; Baturay & Daloğlu, 2010; Gholami et al., 2014; Odom et al., 2009; Oros, 2007; Qiao & Jin, 2010; Qvortrup & Keiding, 2015; Reese-Durham, 2005; Seetharaman & Musier-Forsyth, 2003; Stevens,

2015; Yoko, 2018). Some of these strategies, which are suitable for the context of EFL classrooms in Vietnam, are summarised in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.4

Examples of active learning

Active learning strategy	Brief description	Purpose
Academic portfolio	Portfolios are a purposeful collection of the student's works.	- to reveal a clear picture of the student's growth and development - to provide students with an opportunity to self-assess their language development and to contemplate how they could improve their future work - to highlights the best work(s) of students
Role play	Students play roles based on a scenario provided. Role-play allows students to apply content in a relevant, real-world context.	- to encourage engagement among passive learners - to bring dynamism to the classroom - to promote the material retention - to foster a supportive learning environment by breaking the ice among students and motivate them to learn
Debate	Teams of students prepare, evaluate, and discover the complexity in big issues in advance.	- to develop several students' high-level skills (e.g. acknowledging opposite viewpoints, listening skills, oral communication skills,

		analyzing supporting evidence, researching skills, or critical thinking skills) - to encourage productive classroom engagement
Group discussion	Within a group, students need to brainstorm and generate as many ideas on a given topic as possible. Then, they can share their opinions together.	- to help enhance critical thinking disposition, which is conducive to the development of critical thinking skills - to help students become aware of different viewpoints of others
Peer critiques/ Peer evaluation	Students actively and collaboratively participate in assessing another student's work.	- to give students the chance to analyse and evaluate (which are critical thinking skills) - to increase the amount of feedback a student can receive - to promote collaboration and communication within the classroom environment - to promote the comprehension between the student conducting the feedback and the person receiving the critique
Jigsaw reading	Students of a group read the materials together and become specialists on the topic. Then, students team up with members from other groups who are given different materials and complete	- to reduce the students' anxiety and reluctance, as this will be less intimidating than, for example, requiring them to give an oral presentation in front of the whole class - to provide students with more chances to appreciate differences

	the jigsaw puzzle working cooperatively.	and share experiences through individual participation and instruction
Project-based learning	Students do research to solve a real-life problem and produce a tangible product (e.g. making a poster or solving a problem).	- to increase the quality of students learning in terms of enthusiasm, self-esteem, creativity, and teamwork skills
Think-Pair-Share	Students consider questions posed alone and then discuss with a partner before sharing their ideas and opinions with a bigger group or a whole class.	- to promote problem-solving skills and teamwork

2.3. Assessment

Although assessment is widely believed to be integral to the teaching and learning process, it did not receive sufficient attention until the 1970s (Luong, 2016). This might stem from the fact that previously, student assessment was generally regarded as synonymous with measurement (Serafini, 2000), or even equated with testing. A definition of assessment provided by Chapelle and Brindley (2002) states that it is "the act of collecting information and making judgments on a language learner's knowledge of a language and ability to use it" (p. 267). Assessment has also been defined as "a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about students' ability or the quality or success of a teaching course based on various sources of evidence. It may be done by test, interview, questionnaire, observation, etc." (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 35). As such, there is a close correlation between assessment and individual student learning. In a language classroom, assessment acts as an integral component to monitor student progress and inform instructional decisions (Genesse and Upshur 1996; Harlen and James 1997).

Assessment powerfully frames and exerts significant influence on how students learn and what students achieve (T. P. L. Nguyen, 2019). Boud constantly reiterated the importance of assessment, claiming that its effect on student learning is more significant than any other factor (Boud, 1981, 2007, 2010). In fact, the assessment method decides the way in which students approach their learning (Sande & Adarsh, 2014), and assessment is now seen more as a learning tool rather than an assessment tool (Arter, 1996; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Davison, 2019; Dochy & McDowell, 1997), as "What and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed" (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p. 191).

"Quality assessment includes both the cognitive and affective domains. It is informed, purposeful, authentic, valid, and reliable" (ACT Government Education, 2016, p. 5). Validity and reliability are the two key attributes of assessment. A valid assessment is able to provide evidence on the ability that needs to be assessed, and guarantees appropriacy in its use (Nunan, 2003b, p. 310). A reliable assessment tool is able to measure language ability consistently over the course of time (e.g. learners' scores across different occasions or different teachers should show little difference).

Nunan (2003b) summarised four main principles of classroom assessment. The first principle is that teachers should make sure that the kind of assessment used is appropriate for its intended learning. In this case, Broadfoot (1987), as cited in Nunan (2003b, p. 314), outlined three major purposes of assessment in language programs, which are: (1) to give learners feedback on their progress and motivate them to study; (2) to certify a person's ability or determine their suitability for selection; and (3) to demonstrate achievements to external parties such as parents, school boards, and government funding authorities.

According to Nunan's (2003b) second principle, teachers should make sure their assessment tasks are based on an explicit statement of the ability they are assessing, and are clearly related to learning outcomes. Here the starting point for planning classroom assessment is usually a statement that describes students' learning outcomes and specifies what the components of the language ability are.

Nunan's (2003b) third principle is that assessment should involve the learners. Since assessment is a component of the teaching and learning process, it should be conducted with the students rather than to them. Students should play an active role in assessment: they should know the reason they are being assessed, the meaning of assessment results, and the subsequent implication of their assessment results. The instructions and criteria of assessment tasks should also be transparent, as learners need to be informed about the meanings of different levels of achievement and the benchmarks for their performance.

Nunan's (2003b) fourth principle of classroom assessment is having a variety of assessment methods. He pointed out that for many years, teachers have assessed their students' performance via a final test. However, this raises the issue of subjectivity, as a test can only cover a limited amount of material and capture students' levels on particular occasions. However, by using diverse assessment methods in addition to tests, teachers can have a clearer and bigger picture of their students' abilities in different settings.

The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education also provides a list of principles for deciding an effective assessment. These include that assessment must be both relevant to, and reflect the state syllabus learning outcomes. As such, assessment needs to be integral to the teaching and learning cycle, comprehensive, balanced, varied and valid.

The NSW Department of Education also requires assessment to be equitable, which means that students will have an equal opportunity of success, regardless of their age, gender, physical or other disability, cultural knowledge, language proficiency and background, socio-economic status or geographic location. Assessment should involve learners, acknowledge individual achievement and progress, and involve a whole school approach. Assessment should also be manageable, convenient and time-efficient (NSW Department of Education, 2008).

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has also compiled a set of requirements for quality assessment. According to ACT policies, assessment should be achievable for all students, be integral to teaching and learning, and should be considered when designing teaching and learning tasks. Assessment must allow opportunities for students to show their learning. It must illustrate individual performance and progress as well as inform, monitor, and progress learning. It should also measure learning gain. Similar to NSW public schools, the ACT requires assessment to be designed revolving around students, curriculum outcomes, and pedagogies. Assessment should also have strong validity, reliability, and inter-rater reliability when evaluated. Quality assessment reveals the program and curriculum benefits through student progress (ACT Government Education, 2016).

According to Boud and Dochy (2010, pp. 2-3), assessment is most effective when certain conditions are met: (1) students' engagement in learning is productive; (2) feedback is used to actively improve student learning; (3) students and teachers are both responsible for learning and assessment; (4) students are inducted into assessment practices; (5) assessment for learning is positioned at the heart of the subject and program design; (6)

assessment for learning is a focus for staff and institutional development; (7) assessment provides an inclusive and trustworthy representation of student achievement.

2.4. Formative assessment

2.4.1 Formative assessment versus Summative assessment

Classroom assessment is used for various purposes: assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning. In many studies, assessment for learning is referred to as formative assessment, while assessment of learning is interchangeably used as summative assessment. The first official acknowledgement of formative and summative assessment emerged in a study by Scriven (1967).

As assessment is an important part of learning, changes in learning paradigms and language learning needs entail changes in the assessment processes. Formerly, as in other fields, assessment in ELT was dominated by standardised testing. The recent emergence of a social constructivist paradigm has led to an emphasis on communicative competence and collaborative learning, which are components that standardised testing cannot assess (Brindley, 2008; Stoynoff, 2012). To criticise and gradually replace the domination of testing culture, teacher-based assessment, also known as alternative assessment, classroom and/or school-based assessment, formative assessment, and more recently, assessment for learning, have appeared, all of which share some mutual features. To begin with, the emergence of such terms acts as an opposition to standardised tests, which depend on a single instrument to measure students' overall ability. Instead, a variety of assessment instruments such as portfolios, journals, observation, peer assessment, or self-assessment should be used to complement other forms of assessment such as examinations. Secondly, such types of assessment are considered a process that happens during the learning, with

teachers taking a central role in the assessment process. Additionally, assessment and learning materials should be authentic and contextual, relating to the use of language as a communication tool (Davison & Leung, 2009; Meskill, 2010).

The Ministry of Education in New Zealand provided an interesting analogy by comparing formative assessment and summative assessment in a 'garden' context, with the learners as 'plants'. Here summative assessment is the equivalent of merely measuring or comparing the plants to provide information on how much they have grown, and will not exert any impact, either positive or negative, on the growth of the plant. In contrast, formative assessment is regarded as the caring process – ascertaining and providing what the plants need to help them grow. This, as a result, will directly affect the development of the plants. This analogy succinctly summarises most of the differences between the two forms of assessment. However, the clearest distinction lies in the timing: whilst summative assessment (plant measurement) normally takes place at the conclusion of the learning process, formative assessment happens during the learning process. Furthermore, it is worth noting that formative assessment acts as a direct contributor to the learning and teaching process.

Regardless of the aforementioned differences, formative and summative assessment are interconnected and seldom stand alone in terms of construction or effect. Scriven (1967) pointed out that it is a mistake to categorise formative and summative as two types of assessment. Instead, formative and summative assessments represent the interpretation of information in two stages, either of which can lead to learning and teaching adjustments, or a learning statement towards the end of the program. Harlen (2006) espoused this idea by noting that "Using the terms 'formative' and 'summative' assessment can give the

impression that these are different kinds of assessment or are linked to different methods of gathering evidence. This is not the case; what matters is how the evidence is used" (p. 104).

According to the SBA Consultancy Team (2005), in the English Language Teaching context in Hong Kong secondary schools, summative assessment often "refers to more formal planned assessments at the end of a unit or term/year which are used primarily to evaluate student progress and/or grade students" (p. 23). On the other hand, formative assessment is considered "more formal and more frequent, involving the gathering of information about students and their language learning needs while they are still learning" (p. 23).
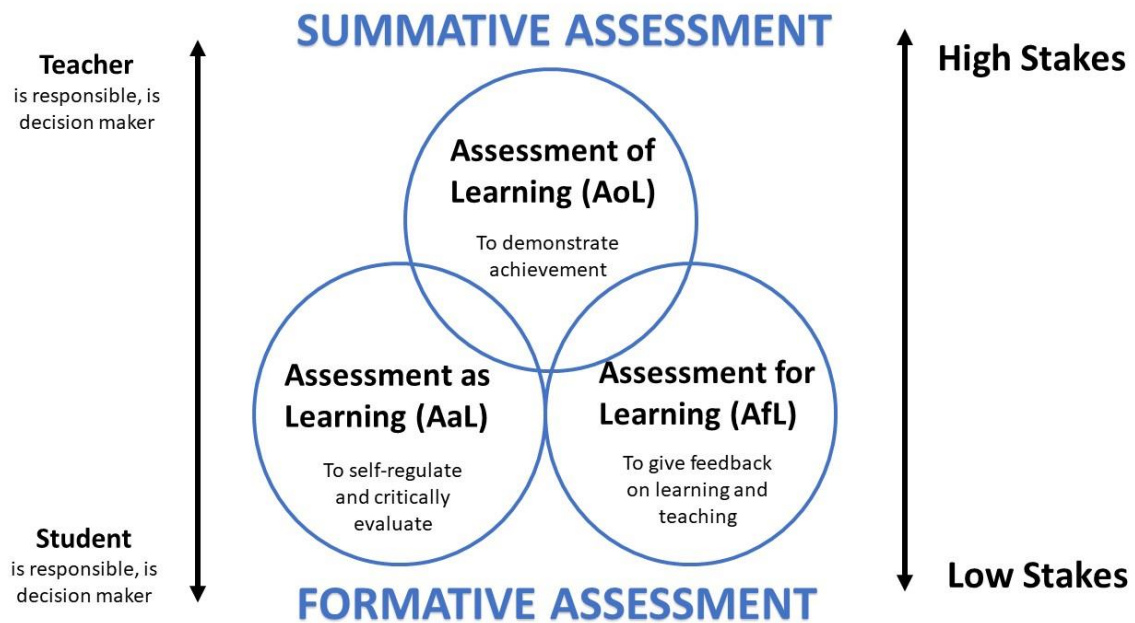
Figure 2.3 Assessment of, as, and for learning (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2017).

2.4.2. Formative assessment definitions and characteristics

There has not been a universally accepted definition for formative assessment, although it has been utilised widely by teachers in their day-to-day teaching. In fact, several terms are used interchangeably to refer to the concept of using assessment to promote learning, including terms such as classroom-based assessment, formative assessment, assessment for learning, and, more recently in English language education, dynamic assessment, and learning-oriented assessment. The common feature of these different pedagogically linked assessment approaches, according to Leung et al. (2018), is the embedding of assessment in the teaching-learning process in order to enhance student learning.

According to Black and Wiliam (1998a), formative assessment includes "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (pp. 7-8). However, this definition did not specify when assessment should be conducted along with the learning progress. Following studies maintained that although its purposes remain unchanged, formative assessment is required to be taken place "during the learning" or, in other words, "while the material is being taught" (Cowie & Bell, 1999; Kahl, 2005).

Subsequently, Wiliam and Leahy (2015) analysed and highlighted four key discrepancies in these formative assessment definitions as: the time period between evidence collection and action; whether assessed students are beneficiaries of the formative assessment process; the students' level of engagement in the process; and the impact of evidence collected on intended instruction. After taking these into consideration, they also chose the most "appropriate" and "inclusive" description for formative assessment as that proposed by Black and Wiliam (2009, p. 7): "Practice in a classroom is formative to the

35

extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited."

Several implications can be drawn from Black and Wiliam's (2009) definition. Firstly, the agent of formative assessment could be anyone – the teachers, the learners, or their peers. Secondly, this definition emphasises on the decisions taken, not on data, outcomes or intentions. Thirdly, formative assessment is probabilistic, since it is impossible to guarantee the success of consequent instructional steps. Finally, formative assessment does not necessarily redirect the instruction. In fact, the evidence that was elicited affirms that what the teacher had initially planned to do is appropriate and supports the decision better.

In order to distinguish assessment for learning (formative assessment) from other interpretations of classroom assessment, Broadfoot et al. (1999), also known as the Assessment Reform Group (ARG), identified a set of characteristics of assessment that promotes learning. These seven characteristics demonstrate how assessment underpins student learning at the classroom level.

(1) it is embedded in view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part;

(2) it involves sharing learning goals with students;

(3) it aims to help students to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for;

(4) it involves students in self-assessment;

(5) it provides feedback which leads to students recognising their next steps and how to take them;

(6) it is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve; and

(7) it involves both teacher and students reviewing and reflecting on assessment data (Broadfoot et al., 1999).

Formative assessment is an ongoing process that gauges teachers' teaching practices and promotes students' learning journey. It is scaffolded by three key questions (which are rephrased in each study) pertaining to learning goals (what is to be learned?), evidence collection (how is learning progressing?), and suggestions or adjustment for the improvement of learning progress (what will be learned next?) (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007). Based on these questions, a framework by Wiliam and Thompson (2007) was introduced to identify five key strategies of formative assessment with three agents (teachers, students and peers).

Table 2.5

Five key strategies of formative assessment (adapted from Wiliam & Thompson, 2007).

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is now	How to get there
Teacher	(1) Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions and success criteria	(2) Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning	(3) Providing feedback that moves learning forward
Peer		(4) Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner		(5) Activating students as owners of their own learning	

As shown in the above table, the first key strategy in formative assessment is conducted jointly by teachers, peers and learners, with all agents needing to analyse and fully comprehend what they should achieve using various criteria for success. Second, once the teacher is aware of what he/she wants their students to learn, he/she will know what information to collect and therefore be able to find out the learners' progress. Third, with the evidence accumulated, teachers should then give comments or suggestions to push their students forward and move them from their current level to the desired level. However, although effective feedback involves several factors (e.g. timing, format) (Sadler, 2010), there is a general consensus that formative assessment will be effective if feedback is carefully planned and produced by teachers, and fully comprehended and deliberately acted upon by students (Wiliam, 2011).

The last two strategies focus on the role of students in assessment. The fourth strategy emphasises the role of peers in supporting students' learning, and the fifth highlights that assisting students to become independent learners is the ultimate and desirable end of formative assessment.

2.4.3. Formative assessment types

In line with the above strategies, Richards (2015) identified three major types of formative assessment in the classroom, with each type being attached to the corresponding group in charge: self-assessment, peer-assessment, and alternative assessment.

2.4.3.1. Self-assessment

Self-assessment refers to activities in which the learners make judgments about their own performance (learning achievements and outcomes) shortly after the activity completion (Boud & Falchikov, 1989; Matsuno, 2009). In this type of assessment, learners are granted

the chance to discover what they know and what they feel in terms of what they are able to do (Boud, 1995), or as Dickinson (1987) suggested, it is like the students teaching themselves how to learn. For instance, in an EFL class, after listening to their own audio-recordings, students are asked to write down their own merits and shortcomings as well as comment on how to improve the quality of their recordings. This type of assessment helps learners to reflect on how well they have conducted the task and thus develop their own learning autonomy. However, as there are still some existing issues with regard to whether learners can evaluate their own performance precisely or how much training a learner needs to be capable of doing so, self-assessment is often undertaken in tandem with other measurements (Richards, 2015).

2.4.3.2. Peer-assessment

Peer-assessment, the second type, refers to activities in which learners evaluate or provide feedback on each other's work (Richards, 2015). Since this assessment type shows its efficiency and effectiveness in class, a growing number of teachers are now using this technique. For example, in a writing class, the teacher asks his/her students to read their peers' drafts and give comments or suggestions for improvement. In this way, each student becomes a 'teacher' or 'examiner'. Of course, in order optimise its usefulness in class, learners should be accompanied with a scoring rubric or checklist provided by their instructors. As Richards (2015) noted, self-assessment and peer-assessment should be employed at the same time in the form of complementation rather than replacement, and both types of assessment need to be carried out according to the teachers' detailed instruction.

2.4.3.3. Alternative assessment

The last major category mentioned by Richards (2015) is alternative assessment, which is often referred as performance assessment, authentic assessment, situational assessment, portfolio assessment, or additional assessment (Gill & Lucas, 2013). Whichever term is chosen, they share mutual features: they are ongoing processes conducted by both teachers and students to evaluate the students' progress in a way that cannot be achieved using any conventional or standardised testing technique. At the same time, they can also examine student performance in different real-world contexts. Alternative assessment may include checklists, self-assessment, portfolios, learner journals, diaries, student-teacher dialogues, interviews and observations (J. Brown & Hudson, 1998). In their study, J. Brown and Hudson collected numerous characteristics of alternative assessment from different studies and summarised them into the table below.

Table 2.6

Characteristics of alternative assessment (adapted from J. Brown & Hudson, 1998, p. 80).

No.	Characteristics
1.	Require students to perform, create, produce, or do something
2.	Use real-world contexts or simulations
3.	Are non-intrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities
4.	Allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day
5.	Use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities
6.	Focus on processes as well as products
7.	Tap into higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills
8.	Provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students
9.	Are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered
10.	Ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgement
11.	Encourage open disclosure of standards and rating criteria
12.	Call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles

2.4.4. The importance of formative assessment in teaching and learning

As suggested in some empirical studies, the use of formative assessment in teaching-learning processes brings about multifarious values. Etkina (2000) found that formative assessment, in the form of weekly reports – an alternative assessment type, "help[s] students to reflect on their knowledge, to learn how to ask questions, and to predict what questions their teacher is likely to ask" (p. 594). For teachers, these formative processes facilitate them to recognise the obstacles that their students encounter during the new material acquisition process, to modify their teaching to suit student demands, and to ensure that the levels of difficulty of learning correspond with testing. According to Ramsey and Duffy (2016), formative assessment can "provide teachers and students with continuous, real-time information that informs and supports instruction" (Ramsey & Duffy, 2016, p. 6). Also, formative assessment may result in frequent communication between teachers and students by providing comments and answers to students rather than only marking them. Kay et al. (2007) noted that formative assessment practices in the form of self-assessment positively affected students' performance and reinforced their meta-cognitive skills. What is more, Carrillo-de-la-Peña et al. (2009) revealed the impact of formative assessment on academic achievement, with those who participated in formative assessments achieving higher marks in their final assessment than students who did not. Sharing a similar trajectory, Andersson and Palm (2017), Black and Wiliam (1998a), and Hattie (2008), with two of the latter conducted a meta-analysis, concluded that students whose teachers used formative assessment strategies show considerable improvements in their performance. Many researchers such as Cauley and McMillan (2010), Faber et al. (2017), and Weurlander et al. (2011) asserted that formative assessment acted as a source of motivation,

informed students what they had attained and where they needed to revise, thus contributing to their learning process and outcomes.

According to Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and Wiliam (2003), five areas of formative assessment including questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment, formative use of summative tests, and observation have an important role to play in developing and transforming formative practices in the classroom.

2.4.4.1. Question

When it comes to employing formative assessment in the classroom context, questioning is considered to be a useful tool (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 2005; Broadfoot et al., 1999). Since both teachers and students have a crucial role to play in the in-class practice of formative assessment, questioning refers to questions initiated by both teachers and students during the lesson (in questions asked by students, the target can be either teachers or peers). Good questioning can serve the purpose of encouraging students' thinking and helping both teachers and students acquire information about students' learning progress. Five main aspects of effective questioning are summarised in Table 2.6 below.

Table 2.7

Five main aspects of effective questioning

No.	Aspect	Strategies
1	The quality of questions (question type)	• Asking open-ended questions or problem-based questions to probe students' in-depth understanding
2	Students' level of participation	• Providing sufficient wait time • Creating a friendly and constructive classroom environment • Distributing questions to both silent and active students
3	Language	• Asking questions and responding in the target language to maximise students' exposure to the target language and to engage them in meaningful communications • Taking advantage of students' native language to facilitate their understanding of the questions so that they can respond
4	Follow-up activities	• Making good use of students' responses to extend understanding of student learning
5	Student-initiated questions	• Encouraging students to ask questions when they are in need • Using student-initiated questions to diagnose students' learning needs and make adjustments

The first aspect of effective questioning practices carried out by teachers is the quality of the questions, or question types. Several studies on teachers' questions revealed that close-ended questions are predominant in classroom environments rather than open-ended questions (D. Ho, 2005; S. Walsh, 2006; Yu, 2010). However, while close-ended questions make a limited contribution to student learning (only looking for short and restricted answers) (Fisher, 2013), open-ended questions can actually promote student learning. By eliciting some important indicators of understanding from students, teachers can either correct or develop that understanding (Black, 2010). Rather than accepting a definite answer, teachers who use open-ended answers can place their focus on the content

of students' answers and initiate sustained, meaningful discussions (Heritage, 2013) through which they can explore their students' level of learning.

In addition to the task of choosing suitable questions, another aspect of questioning practice to encourage student learning is increasing students' level of engagement in responding to teachers' questions (Heritage, 2013). A study conducted by Rowe (1974) revealed that the average time that a teacher waited between asking a question and intervening again (if no answer from students was provided) was less than a second (0.9s). This short time interval was insufficient for students to think carefully before coming up with a decent answer. Therefore, most teachers resorted to answering the questions by themselves, compromising by asking much simpler, closed questions to help students recall their knowledge and seeking answers from 'higher-achievers'. In order to deal with such problems, Rowe suggested that teachers increase their 'wait-time', revise the way they formulate questions, and design meaningful follow-up activities in case the students answer incorrectly. This approach can create a more supportive classroom environment, engage more students in the lessons, and promote student thinking. Also, if the focus of the questions is shifted from seeking accuracy to seeking opinions, students can feel more comfortable with expressing their ideas. The teacher, moreover, should also distribute questions equally to both active and less active students so that every student can stand a chance of being involved in the learning.

In language classrooms, the language used in the questioning practice can also influence teaching and learning practice. Dickson (1996) and Littlewood (2010) found that students' high exposure to the target language helps facilitate their competence in communicating in that language. It is highly recommended that teachers ask questions and

communicate in the target language. However, in certain situations, the use of the target language as the medium of instruction can have a counterproductive impact on students' learning (e.g. students cannot understand what the teachers are asking or referring to). The teachers, therefore, need to be extremely discreet and take advantage of the students' mother tongue to facilitate their understanding of the questions.

Another essential technique for effective questioning is the use of follow-up activities. According to Black and Wiliam (2005), after asking questions and receiving responses from their students, teachers may either immediately correct the wrong answers or let the students sit down, both of which are examples of poor teaching practices. In fact, when students encounter incorrect answers, instead of correcting students' mistakes, teachers should skillfully exploit this chance to challenge their thinking and spark classroom discussion. Participation of all students leads to the development of students' cognitive skills and helps teachers re-evaluate their teaching.

Finally, students asking questions means that they want to seek help from their peers and teachers. This can also act as evidence for students' learning activeness and diagnostic information about their current learning. Therefore, teachers should encourage their students to ask questions and use all student-initiated questions to diagnose their learning needs and make adjustments accordingly.

2.4.4.2. Feedback

Feedback is an integral component of the incremental teaching and learning progress. Hattie and Timperley (2007) defined feedback as task-related information communicated to students concerning the quality of their performance as well as the level of their understanding. They also stressed that feedback should include both a review of prior

knowledge with instruction rather than primarily focusing on student accuracy levels. This idea of better learning being achieved by less teaching and more feedback has also been corroborated in several other studies (Bransford, A. Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Hattie, 2008; Marzano et al., 2001).

Feedback not only evaluates the level of learners, but also advises them on what should be done next for the sake of future improvements. An experimental study carried out by Butler (1988) investigated how three different ways of giving feedback (marks, comments, and a combination of both) affect learner acquisition. The findings indicated that the group receiving only comments gained the most, while the other two groups showed no difference. From this, it can be inferred that feedback is the major contributor to the development of learners, while numerical grades do not tell anything besides a mere number. This finding was substantiated by Hattie (1999), whose large-scale meta-analysis confirmed that feedback is the most powerful factor in successful classroom teaching. To resonate with this, the Ministry of Education and Training Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET] (2014) in Vietnam issued a circular on the assessment of primary students and amended it later (2016b), recognising the value of 'continuous assessment' in the learning process and emphasising: "students' most notable remarks, results achieved or yet to be achieved"; "specific measures to help students overcome difficulties in their performance"; and "special attentions to facilitate monitoring and educating students, student groups in learning and practice".

Although feedback holds considerable potential for student learning, providing effective feedback is not always a straightforward task. Therefore, a diverse set of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of feedback has been suggested.

First and foremost, feedback needs to be timely, allowing sufficient time for both students and teachers to follow up on feedback and take necessary action (e.g. adjust their own learning and teaching). Sometimes, feedback is not given until the completion of a course, which is 'too late' (E. Brown & Glover, 2006; Price et al., 2010; Rae & Cochrane, 2008). The feedback given on this occasion may be of no use to both agents because they cannot act upon it. For example, in the case of a writing assignment, it will be better for students if they can receive corrective feedback from their teacher, revise their draft, and then make improvements for their final writing version. If students only receive one-off feedback and a numeric score for their piece of writing after their submission, they might only take a quick glimpse at their results and have no opportunities to use such feedback. For the teachers, on-the-spot feedback is also important. Teachers can receive feedback by observing the manner in which students answer their questions and fulfil the assigned tasks. In other words, only timely feedback can guide teachers in what following steps they should take (e.g. reteach the knowledge or provide more practice) (Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2020a).

The second key feature of the giving feedback technique is the quality of comments. A good comment should be able to underline what has been achieved and what requires further work. It is pointless to write comments that are too general, such as 'Good job', 'Well done', or 'Subject?'. According to Black et al. (2003), teachers should also plan activities as a part of the students' overall learning process so that they can follow up after receiving the feedback. Students normally value any comments that are detailed, transparent, and tailor-made for their own products (Holmes & Papageorgiou, 2009; Lipnevich & Smith, 2009; Rae & Cochrane, 2008).

Another factor of effective feedback is the manner in which it is given. When it comes to providing feedback, teachers should take the role of a dialogue partner, rather than an authority figure in the class. Teachers should avoid using imperatives, speaking in an insensitive and commanding tone, or giving mainly evaluative comments (Hyatt, 2005; Ivanič et al., 2000; Mutch, 2003), and they should convey the message that their feedback is only their viewpoint and it could be open to opinions from students (Jonsson, 2012). Carless (2009) and Hargreaves (2011) also claimed that fostering a trusting relationship between the two agents (feedback givers and feedback receivers) is vital to the effectiveness of feedback.

Using the language properly to make students understand the feedback is another factor. Misunderstandings are often due to the teacher's inclination to use academic terminology or technical jargon when giving feedback. Many students struggle to fully grasp the meaning of such terms used by their teacher, or the criteria that their teacher refers to (Carless, 2006; Higgins et al., 2002; McCune & Hounsell, 2005; Zhao, 2010). Several measures to accustom students to academic jargon have been suggested for teachers, such as using feedback accompanied with model answers (Burke, 2007; Huxham, 2007); clarifying explicit assessment criteria via marking schemes/scoring rubrics (Case, 2007); and engaging in an individual dialogue with problematic students (Holmes & Papageorgiou, 2009; McCune & Hounsell, 2005).

Effective feedback informs the learners about their progress towards achievement of the success criteria and learning intentions. A useful model for feedback presented by Hattie and Timperley (2007), comprises the three key notions of feed up, feed back, and feed forward. "How effectively answers to these questions serve to reduce the gap is partly

dependent on the level at which the feedback operates. These include the level of task performance, the level of the process of understanding how to do a task, the regulatory or metacognitive process level, and/or the self or personal level (unrelated to the specifics of the task)." (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86)
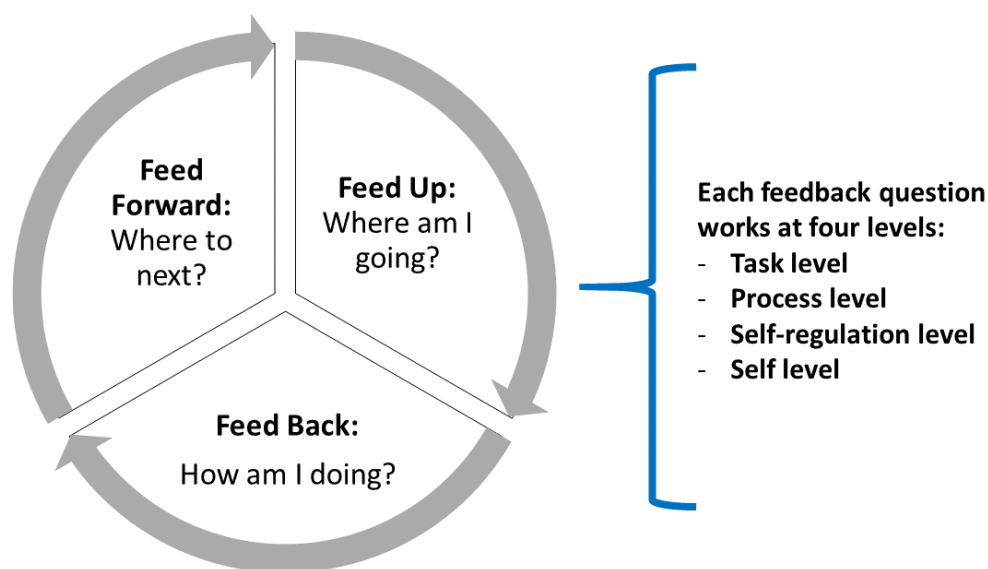
Figure 2.4 A model of feedback to enhance learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 87).

2.4.4.3. Peer and self-assessment

As explained previously, peer and self-assessment make seminal contribution to the growth of students' learning. Black et al. (2003) stated that in practice, peer assessment is the precursor of self-assessment.

Despite the positive impacts of peer and self-assessment on student learning, several issues should be anticipated before employing these strategies in practice. One of the most common problems is that students often belittle the comments made by their peers and neither take such comments seriously nor take any further action (Gennip et al. 2009; N.-F.

Liu & Carless, 2006). They might be skeptical about both the qualifications of their assessors and the quality of their comments. This scenario has been illustrated in a survey carried out by T. H. Pham (2014), which revealed that students did not make full use of their peers' comments to revise their writing drafts due to a lack of trust in their classmates' expertise. What is more, time constraints should also be taken into consideration. Peer assessment activities can be difficult to arrange in a large-sized class, since students need to spend a lot of time thinking, analyzing, expressing their ideas, discussing and reaching a final conclusion. With regard to self-assessment, students might show a sense of unease and confusion when evaluating their own work.

In order to overcome the aforementioned challenges, the transparency of assessment criteria is of paramount importance. For this reason, both teachers and students should reach a unanimous consensus about such criteria. Moreover, Dornyei (2007) recommended that EFL teachers be adept at managing class discussions and group work to create a supportive language classroom atmosphere that steers students' discussions towards the improvement of their language learning.

2.4.4.4. The formative use of summative test

Summative tests have occupied a dominant position in the way students are assessed. The grades for end-of-term tests usually account for the largest proportion of overall student assessment (50-70%, on average). In light of this, it is not straightforward to shift from summative to formative assessment all at once. Instead, educators such as King (1992), Foos et al. (1994), and Black et al. (2003) have suggested several effective formative strategies for approaching summative tests. First, students should have a chance to reflect on the work they have completed and thus plan their revision meticulously. The second

innovation is to prepare for examinations beforehand by equipping students with question sets and marking their answers (e.g. a mock test). Third, a wide range of self- and peer-assessment activities should be employed to help students comprehend how to improve their performance. For instance, teachers can exploit the aftermath of an examination by having students discuss and re-work their exam questions together.

2.4.4.5. Observation

According to the definition of G. Maxwell (2001), observation is a strategy in which teachers continuously monitor students' performance in the classroom. This strategy can allow teachers to acquire authentic, in-depth, individualised, and contextualised information about students' learning progress. However, S. Brown (1999) pointed out that many teachers underutilise this strategy, which stems from the belief that information gained from observation is subjective and potentially biased. Therefore, it is advised that observation should be planned carefully before the lesson with clear, selected criteria (S. Brown, 1999; T. T. O. Tran, 2004) and used with other assessment strategies to maximise its efficiency.

Observation often involves teachers in watching students' behaviour and performance in class (e.g. errors, level of peer interaction, level of concentration, or facial expression and product quality). Sometimes, teachers conduct the observation intentionally; for example, when a teacher calls out a pair of students to practice a dialogue and then gives them feedback. In this case, the teacher has predetermined which criteria will be examined (e.g. student's pronunciation, intonation or stress). There are also occasions in which the teacher observes the student by chance (e.g. when students make a lot of noise, or a student gets distracted).

There are some techniques that teachers can employ to take full advantage of observation. Firstly, teachers can jot down brief notes on students' attitudes and learning habits during the class. Teachers can also use a personal diary to recount major or outstanding daily events occurring during the lesson. These two forms of record can create initial impressions and help teachers to predict or explain students' behaviours and learning outcomes. However, as it is impossible to write everything down, teachers need to be very sensible and selective in judging these cases. Teachers should only focus on behaviours that can only be assessed through observation, and on students that may need extra assistance from them.

2.4.5. The enactment of formative assessment

2.4.5.1. The enactment of formative assessment in different contexts
Since there are several benefits accruing from the use of assessment for learning in classrooms, many countries have recognised that formative assessment should hold the dominant position, replacing the conventional summative one. Therefore, educators and policy-makers are now endeavouring to incorporate formative assessment in the teaching and learning process (OECD, 2005). This trend is easily witnessed in many Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries (Klenowski, 2009; Koh & Luke, 2009; Mok & Chan, 2002).

The first representative of CHC countries that deployed the use of formative assessment in classrooms is the People's Republic of China. In 2001, the Chinese government instituted the New National Curriculum Reform, which covers several aspects of the education system (educational philosophy, aims, content, method, and the evaluation system at every phase). In line with these aspects, the Basic Education Curriculum Reform

Outline identified six objectives, with the fifth one focused on assessment. According to the fifth objective, a fundamental shift should be made from a narrowly summative function (conducting examinations or tests for the purpose of students' placement or achievement recognition) to formative purposes. While the former evaluation system was the product of an examination-oriented culture that only valued numeric academic scores, the new system counts other factors of student development. This new assessment system is beneficial to all stakeholders: it helps students recognise potentials and enhance their growth prospects; it contributes to teachers' improvement in teaching practices; and it acts as a catalyst for instructional adjustment and curriculum improvement at school (OECD, 2016).

In Hong Kong, schools used to rely on written tests and examinations within the school as the major form of assessment. However, realising that these forms only evaluate learners' ability to recall or understand concepts on some occasions while neglecting other independent learning capabilities and experiences, in 2001, The Curriculum Development Council in Hong Kong introduced the term 'assessment for learning' in their agenda. Teachers have since been encouraged to utilise different modes of assessment (i.e. a hybrid of summative and formative) during their teaching progress. A school-based oral assessment component was introduced into the high stakes O-Level Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English Language in 2005 – 2007, then extended to the final three years of secondary school from 2007 to 2010 onwards (Davison and Hamp-Lyons, 2010). In place of traditional one-off annual oral exams, English language students' oral proficiency is assessed based on several speaking assessment tasks. For each task, teachers will give recurrent and formative feedback to students, which encourages the implementation of 'assessment for learning'. In the past, all oral language assessments used

to be externally set and evaluated by Hong Kong examination authority, but now teachers in Hong Kong have more autonomy in their teaching and assessing, from developing and adopting assessment tasks, engaging learners in the assessment process, to providing effective feedback and feed-forward to improve student learning (Chan and Davison, 2020).

Another exemplification of this trend is Singapore. In 2009, the Primary Education Review and Implementation (PERI) Committee presented a list of recommendations to raise the quality of primary school education, one of which was to exploit Holistic Assessment in class in order to support student learning and growth. To achieve this, schools were advised to eliminate the overly strong emphasis on examination in primary education, and take advantage of formative assessment strategies in the classroom (Lee, Sze, Ang, & Lee, 2014).

Many studies have found that high-stakes testing inhibits the implementation of formative assessment (Black, 2015; Box, Skoog, & Dabbs, 2015; Gu, 2014; Quyen & Khairani, 2016), with Black (2015) stating that high-stake tests 'overshadow' formative assessment. Specifically, in the ELT context, high-stakes testing is a barrier to formative assessment (Davison & Leung, 2009; Leung & Rea-Dickins, 2007; Rea-Dickins, 2006).

2.4.5.2. The enactment of formative assessment in Vietnamese contexts

2.4.5.2.1. Potential factors influencing the implementation of formative assessment in Vietnam

In line with the recent policy shifts in CHC countries, the Vietnamese government realised that the traditional summative assessment (scoring students based on a single product at the end of a course) should be replaced, and consideration needs to be given to formative

assessment (scoring students based on performance throughout the learning process) (Mai et al., 2011). However, since formative assessment policies are usually borrowed from a Western sociocultural context, several problems can be anticipated in the country wherein it is implemented.

Cultural factors

Chief among the local structural factors that possibly impede the employment of formative assessment in the Vietnamese context is cultural barriers. P. M. Nguyen (2008) referred to Vietnam as a country under the strong influence of Confucian Heritage Culture, which philosophy 'has been prevailing in Vietnam since the year 1000' (p. 46). Confucian culture highlights the importance of hierarchical relationships in teaching and learning, with children being taught to respect those who are older or have a higher social position (i.e. parents, elders and teachers) (Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001), and teachers' superior wisdom taken for granted. For a long time, teachers in Vietnam have been considered as the most credible and exclusive source of knowledge and morality. Such central role of teachers in the classroom has resulted in them being the only ones who can impart information in the classroom. In contrast, students are expected to play a passive role in their learning progress: they should respect, obey and listen to the teacher attentively without asking any questions. Pratt et al. (1999) described the roles of these two agents in the classroom as one being responsible for transferring knowledge (teacher), and one responsible for absorbing knowledge (student). As a result, Vietnamese students have accustomed themselves to passively receive knowledge from teachers, and have their work evaluated by teachers. The belief that knowledge mastery is the exclusive possession of teachers is regarded as the norm, with such hierarchical values being deeply ingrained in

the Vietnamese mentality. This embedded cultural factor can present challenges to the implementation of formative assessment activities such as self-assessment and peer assessment. For example, the majority of learners from CHC express a preference for teacher-initiated feedback, since they believe that teachers' feedback is more reliable and accurate than peer assessment (Chen et al., 2013; Ng, 2014; Tepsuriwong & Bunsom, 2013).

Local structural factors

The prioritisation of conventional summative assessment over formative assessment has also hindered formative assessment practices. According to a report conducted by Q. Lam (2006), since 1975 there had been an entirely summative-oriented assessment format across Vietnam. Consequently, although the principal goal of formative assessment is 'teaching students how to learn', CHC teachers have been expected to 'teach to test' so that their students can obtain the best possible scores in summative examinations (Black, 2015). This has led teachers to more likely favour teaching and evaluation methods aimed at boosting students' examination performance at the expense of students' improvement during their learning progress (T. Pham, 2016). Teachers tend to place greater emphasis on how to come up with correct answers (by providing exam tips and tricks) rather than instructing them in making progress.

The allocation of students' overall scores has also posed a challenge to the practices of formative assessment. According to Quy chế đánh giá, xếp loại học sinh trung học cơ sở và học sinh trung học phổ thông (Regulation on Assessment and Classification of Secondary Schools and High school students), there are three forms of in-class assessment (oral quiz, written test, and practice test), all of which are administered either regularly or

periodically (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2011). These regular tests include: oral quiz; written test or practice test lasting for less than one class period; period test including written test lasting for over one class period and end-of-semester test. By these test classifications, it can be inferred that such regular tests and the former type of periodic test to some extent serve as formative assessment (since teachers usually use what they learn from the students' periodic test results to modify a lesson plan to revisit a topic previously covered because they identify gaps in their students' understanding), while the end-of-semester test is the summative one. This document also provided the coefficients of points for each type of test including: (1) regular test; (2) written/practice test lasting for over one class period; and (3) end-of-semester test. From these point allotments, it can be concluded that summative assessment still receives higher weighting in general (coefficient of 3 in comparison with of 1 and 2).

2.4.5.2.2. Vietnamese policies on encouraging the employment of formative assessment

Despite possible barriers, the Vietnamese government has recently adopted several initiatives to keep up with global trends in formative assessment.

In 2006 and 2007, the MoET issued two decisions on training, teaching and assessment for full-time students in tertiary education, which are Decision 25/2006/QĐ-BGD&ĐT and Decision 43/2007/QĐ-BGD&ĐT. These documents specified that the assessment for each university subject should include both continuous (formative) assessment and summative assessment. The result of summative assessment (i.e. end-of-term test) must account for at least 50% of the overall assessment (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2006, 2007). In this, the lecturers are granted autonomy to determine the assessment methods during their teaching process. Lecturers then gradually move from

using 45-to-60-minute written tests to actively engaging students in the assessment process through self- or peer-assessment. In other words, the endorsement of these governmental documents has stimulated a shift from the conventional approach to formative assessment (Luong, 2016).

Other significant decisions and policies of the Vietnamese government were: (1) Instructions on foreign language teaching, 2008; (2) the Vietnam National Foreign Language Project 2020 (NFLP 2020) which commenced in 2008 and then adjusted and revised as; (3) the NFLP 2025 in 2016; and (4) Decision No.711 on Education Development Strategies for the period 2011-2020 in 2012. In these documents, it is stipulated that testing and assessment be reformed to meet current international standards. One of the tasks presented to achieve this goal is "Establishing and developing a database of regular and periodic testing and assessment activities in language teaching and learning in all secondary level education" (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2018; Prime Minister, 2017). Hence, it can be deduced that despite traditional cultural values, the introduction of various forms of formative assessment in schools is being strongly encouraged.

In 2008, the Vietnamese MoET issued instructions on foreign language teaching (No. 7984/BGDDT-GDTrH) for all secondary schools in Vietnam, which include two key missions. The first one is to renovate teaching methods to encourage positivity, initiative and creativity in language learning. The document indicated that teachers should focus on the four macro language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to improve students' communication skills, as well as adopt various teaching activities to maximise students' opportunities to use the target language. Assessment and evaluation should also be amended, with students now being assessed based on their language knowledge, cultural

awareness, and the four macro skills. Assessment should enhance teaching and learning quality as well as correspond with the learning outcomes of students. Secondly, the document also specifies that in order to assist the learning process, training organisations must be equipped with teaching facilities, including audio and visual equipment.

Later in 2008, with the purpose of further promoting the study of English and developing the foreign language abilities of Vietnamese students, the MoET issued the Vietnamese NFLP 2020 as a comprehensive solution for English Language Teaching and learning in Vietnam. Eight years later, the timeline of NFLP 2020 has been extended to 2025, with some new revisions. The general goal of the 2025 project is to "renovate foreign language teaching and learning in the national education system; continue to implement new foreign language curricula at every school level and training degree; improve foreign language proficiency to meet study and work requirements; increase the competitiveness of human resources in the time of integration in order to create contributions to the building and development of the country; and create a foundation for universalising foreign languages in general education by 2025" (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2016a). In this iteration, the most important goal has become to improve national foreign language testing and assessment capabilities.

In addition to these government directives, the three current English language curricula for schools in Vietnam are: (1) Chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm tiểu học (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam) (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2010); (2) Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học cơ sở (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam) (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012a); and (3) Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn

tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học phổ thông (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam) (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2012). All of these require that "assessment conform to the teaching and learning approaches used in the classroom, and throughout the school year assessment should be primarily formative, enabling both students and teachers to see progress towards achieving the curriculum objectives for the year. At designated points throughout the school year, such as at the end of each term and at the end of the year, summative assessment will also be required to gauge students' achievement of the objectives. To assess students' communicative competences, it is recommended that formats of assessment be diverse in nature and include assessment of speaking and listening as interactive skills, as well as reading and writing skills" (Hoang, 2018, p. 10).

Supported by the above governmental documents, teachers in Vietnam have been endeavouring to implement several learning activities and formative assessment in their classrooms. For example, Vietnamese teachers often clarify learning objectives and assessment criteria at the beginning of courses and lessons. Also, their most common teaching strategies include classroom observation, questioning, peer feedback and self-feedback (T. Ho, 2015). Some teachers also guarantee that the performance of their students will be evaluated not only at the end of the semester, but also throughout the semester. This innovation in assessment is well reflected in the Ten-year English textbook series for Vietnamese lower secondary and upper secondary schools under the National Foreign Language 2020 Project. Each unit in this textbook includes skills and language development components (e.g. Speaking, Writing, Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Grammar), and ends with a project that provides students with a chance to use the language

and skills they have accumulated to perform communicative tasks in real contexts. This project could be in the form of a survey, poster or presentation. Some teachers use the products of their students as a form of in-class assessment in addition to their paper tests. Nevertheless, it is important to note that assessing English language learning in schools in a particularly challenging area for language instructors (Mitchell & Davison, 2020).

2.5. Assessment literacy for teachers

Another critical concept in assessment is assessment literacy. The term 'assessment literacy' refers to the knowledge and skills that assessors need in order to involve in the assessment process, "the knowledge of means for assessing what students know and can do, how to interpret the results from these assessments, and how to apply these results to improve student learning and program effectiveness" (Webb 2002, p. 1).

In spite of the rise of formative assessment, concerns about the nature of teacher assessment literacy still remain (Davison 2013, 2017; Davison and Michell, 2014; Eyers, 2014; R. Lam, 2015; Malone, 2013; Tsagari and Vogt, 2017). Many in-service teachers claimed that they lack the confidence to assess students' learning (Koh, 2011; Mertler, 2004), while pre-service teachers reported that they do not feel sufficiently well-prepared to apply their assessment knowledge (Ogan-Bekiroglu and Suzuk, 2014) as well as to implement suitable assessment for learning strategies to support student learning (T. H. L. Nguyen, 2016; Siegel and Wissehr, 2011; Volante and Fazio, 2007).

Deriving from the 'assessment literacy' concept, 'language assessment literacy' "forms the knowledge base needed to conduct language assessment procedures, that is, to design, administer, interpret, utilise, and report language assessment data for different

purposes" (Inbar-Lourie, 2016, p. 1), is defined as "a repertoire of competences that enable an individual to understand, evaluate and, in some cases, create language tests and analyse test data" (Pill and Harding 2013, p. 382) and, most comprehensively, is conceptualised as "the knowledge, skills and abilities required to design, develop, maintain or evaluate, largescale standardised and/or classroom-based tests, familiarity with test processes, and awareness of principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, including ethics and codes of practice. The ability to place knowledge, skills, processes, principles and concepts within wider historical, social, political and philosophical frameworks in order to understand why practices have arisen as they have, and to evaluate the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals." (Fulcher, 2012, p. 125). Harding and Kremmel (2016) pointed out that Fulcher's highly detailed definition offers a summary of the language-specific aspects and expertise in language assessment principles and practices. The main differences between these two concepts (i.e. assessment literacy and language assessment literacy) lie in the ultimate expertise that might be required of an assessment or a language assessment specialist, including knowledge of practice, theoretical principles, and broader social and ethical frameworks used in the assessment processes (Davies, 2008; Harding and Kremmel, 2016).

In the area of language teaching and learning, Davision (2017) highlighted the role of language assessment literacy, which is building opportunities for self-reflection, discussion with peers, and experimentation and feedback as the essence of teachers' professional learning. Defining assessment literacy from the formative assessment perspective, Alonzo (2016) focuses on building communities of assessment for learning practice "Teacher assessment for learning literacy accounts for knowledge and skills in

making highly contextualised, fair, consistent and trustworthy assessment decisions to inform learning and teaching to effectively support both student and teacher learning. The aim of teachers is to build students' and other stakeholders' capabilities and confidence to take an active role in assessment, learning and teaching activities to enable and provide the needed support for more effective learning" (p. 58).

To sum up, this chapter set out to review the existing literature that is most relevant to the aims of this study – to investigate the teachers' perceptions and implementation of formative assessment in secondary classrooms in a Vietnamese context. From the literature review, it is noted that few studies have embraced the notion of formative assessment in language learning and its implementation in TEFL in particular (Britton, 2015; Defianty, 2018). Besides, most studies which examine assessment-related areas in Vietnam were conducted in tertiary education. Consequently, this study aimed to contribute to the understanding of ELT in Vietnam in general and in secondary education specifically.

The following chapter reports on the methodology and research paradigm that underpinned this study.

Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on justifying the rationale for the methodological choices in this study. The chapter is organised as follows: section 3.1 describes the design and methodological consideration of this study. Then, section 3.2 reports on the participants of the study. Following that, section 3.3 explains how the data sets were collected, and core section 3.4 discusses data analysis procedures. Finally, section 3.5 reports on the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1. Qualitative methodology and interpretivist paradigm

The study has employed a qualitative method to investigate Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions and associated in-class strategies of formative assessment in Vietnamese lower and upper secondary schools. This qualitative method can provide the researcher with a more detailed and holistic understanding of the current research problem within the particular context of secondary education in Vietnam.

Qualitative research is a broad term whose definition varies in different sources. One of the most inclusive definitions proposed by Lichtman (2013, p. 7) is that qualitative research "is a way of knowing in which a researcher gathers, organises, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters". The key feature of qualitative research approaches is to explore the phenomena (beliefs, opinions and relationships) by analysing textual data, or as Mayan (2009, p. 10) stated, qualitative research "want[s] to know the stories behind the numbers".

Hatch (2002) has synthesised the following list of nine qualitative work characteristics.

Table 3.1

Qualitative work characteristics

Characteristic of qualitative work	Description
1. Participant Perspectives	Participants' views or perceptions ought to be crucial in any qualitative work (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Jacob, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The most frequent questions qualitative researchers should ask are "What is happening here, specifically? What do these happenings mean to the people engaged in them?" (Erickson, 1986, p. 124)
2. Researcher as Data Gathering Instrument	In comparison with quantitative methods employing surveys, checklists, scales and other measuring devices as research instruments, qualitative methods include data collected directly by the researchers such as observation notes, interview transcriptions, artefacts and records. Here the researcher is of paramount importance in data processing and mechanical or electronic equipment only play a supporting role. Specifically: "human capacities necessary to participate in social life are the same capacities

	that enable qualitative researchers to make sense of the actions, intentions, and understandings of those being studied." (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1979)
3. Extended Firsthand Engagement	Qualitative researchers should spend a reasonable amount of time being intensely engaged in the research settings so that they are able to capture what the participants claim. (Erickson, 1986; Spindler, 1982; D. Walsh et al., 1993; Wolcott, 1992)
4. Centrality of Meaning	All qualitative studies concern understandings of the meanings that each individual constructs in order to participate in their social lives. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Erickson, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979)
5. Wholeness and Complexity	The social contexts should be systematically studied as a whole, without breaking them down into separate, incomplete and disconnected aspects. Moreover, qualitative work often includes actual, complex, detailed data that is interpreted by the researcher in a way that allows the readers to immerse themselves inside the social settings

	under examination (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Erickson, 1986; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Peshkin, 1988)
6. Subjectivity	Since qualitative studies highlight description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994), subjective judgment is essential, especially in the from-description-to-interpretation process. Rather than pretending to be objective, qualitative researchers place greater emphasis on reflexively applying their own subjectivities in ways that help them grasp the implicit assumptions of their participants (Hamilton, 1994; Jacob, 1987; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
7. Emergent Design	As it is impracticable to design a study that can anticipate everything before the researcher has entered the social context to be studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), research questions, methods and other elements are modified as the study evolves (Jacob, 1988).
8. Inductive Data Analysis	The overall pattern of data analysis in qualitative work is inductive, moving from detailed specifics to analytic generalisations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, "You are not putting

	together a puzzle, whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts." (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 29)
9. Reflexivity	Reflexivity, "the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal deep connections between the writer and his or her subject" (Goodall, 2000, p. 137), is a vital attribute of qualitative research.

Owing to its nature, qualitative research offers several advantages. Its first strength is that it can provide a textual description of the research issue, rather than numerical data. For example, as data collected using qualitative methods can allow the researcher to explore the research problem more thoroughly and in greater detail, it can be appropriate for studies that examine new research fields or ascertain and theorise about prominent issues (Creswell, 2007a; Strauss, 2008). Qualitative methods in research can also allow greater spontaneity and flexibility. For example, as participant responses are unanticipated before conducting research interviews, the researcher can use "probes" to encourage and seek for participant elaboration on their answer (e.g. by asking why or how).

The reason why a qualitative approach is more suitable than a quantitative one for the design of this study lies in the research objective. The aim of this study is to holistically look at formative assessment in a particular setting and interpret the descriptive data through analysis. In the education setting, Solutes (1990) claimed that a qualitative research

approach can be used to cover interpersonal, social, and cultural settings more comprehensively than a quantitative one. In this way researchers are better able to provide a thorough and wider-ranging description. By engaging in the study, the researcher might play the role of an active participant in the study, and her subjective views, experiences, and disciplinary knowledge might interfere with the data collection and interpretation. Subjectivity, nevertheless, should not be treated as a weakness of the research; conversely, according to Braun and Clarke (2013), subjectivity is positively valued in qualitative research, since it is not treated "as a bias to be eliminated from research, but tends to involve contextualised analysis, which takes into this account" (p. 21). Notwithstanding, in order to effectively employ subjectivity as a research tool, critical reflection on "the knowledge we produce, and our role in producing that knowledge" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 36) is required. In addition, the qualitative approach can provide the human psychological dimensions that numerical data is often unable to present.

Besides the research method, the paradigm in which the study is located is also vital (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Makombe, 2017). As Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 116) asserted, "Paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer, we maintain, ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach." With a suitable paradigm, vital elements of the study including transparency, evaluation, rigour and trustworthiness can be ensured.

In this study, the qualitative paradigm of interpretivism, in which a single phenomenon may have several different interpretations rather than one, will be applied. Creswell (2007b) explained that in adopting this perspective, researchers achieve a more thorough and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon and its complexity, rather

69

than a mere generalisation. Hammersley (2013) reinforced this statement by highlighting that interpretivist research provides "diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures" and avoids any bias of their interpretations. Thus, interpretivist researchers are able to describe a phenomenon in detail, and fully comprehend it through analysing and interpreting data within the social and cultural context, which corresponds with the aims of this study.

In summary, in order to examine teachers' perceptions and practices of formative assessment in the Vietnamese educational context, this research focuses on participants' viewpoints and in-class activities by employing qualitative research and using an interpretivist paradigm. In this way the study "draws strongly on direct experience and meanings", and "provides an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, […] phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviours" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017, pp. 287-288).

3.2. Participants

This qualitative study involves seven EFL in-service teachers from different lower secondary and upper secondary schools in Vietnam. All participants are EFL teachers with the following characteristics:

1) Vietnamese with Vietnamese as the first language;

2) a university graduate;

3) likely to have a post-graduate degree in teaching;

4) at least five years of experience of ELT;

5) likely to have other teaching experience, not necessarily in secondary school;

6) experience in employing formative assessment in class; and

7) teaches in a class with between 20 and 50 students.

More detailed information on these participants at the beginning of data collection (June 2020) is presented in Table 3.2. All participants have been assigned pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

Table 3.2

Demographic information of participating teachers

Pseudonym	Experience of teaching (in years)	School type	Class size	Age group	Gender
Lily	6	Public	50	21 – 30	F
Victor	6	Public	45	21 – 30	M
Thomas	5	Public	30 – 40	21 – 30	M
Helen	20	Private	15 – 22	41 – 50	F
Rosie	14	Public	45 – 47	31 – 40	F
Emma	8	Public	25 – 40	21 – 30	F
Alice	21	Public	40 – 42	41 – 50	F

3.3. Data collection methods

The researcher used a combination of data collection instruments, also known as the triangulation method. Triangulation is "a process whereby two or more methods of data

collection or sources of data are used to examine the same phenomenon, with the aim of getting as close to the 'truth' of the object of the study as possible" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 285). This method is a good strategy for capturing different perspectives and contributing to the richness of data.

Data were collected with the use of research instruments including semi-structured interviews via Zoom, classroom audio-recordings, and teacher reflective notes, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.
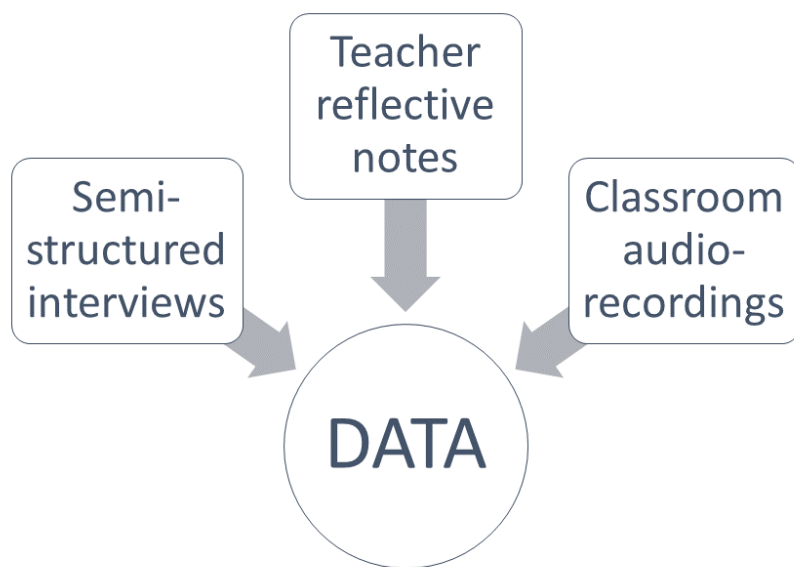
Figure 3.1 Instruments of data collection in this study

It is important to note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic all data of this study were collected online. Phase 1, recruiting process, took place in two months (June-August 2020). In this phase, an invitation to participate in research and details about the study were provided to potential participants and their school principals via email. Firstly, the researcher sought approval to undertake research from the school (see Appendix A); then a

copy of the proposed interview schedule was sent to those who agreed to engage in the study. Consenting participants were then asked to complete an Informed Consent document, as required by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC). The 'Information to participants' document (Appendix B) and Consent form (Appendix C) clearly explain the aim of the project, the reasons they were invited to engage in the study, the risks and benefits of their engagement, and the research procedure. In this the researcher explicitly states that participation in this project is entirely voluntary, and personal information will be kept anonymous.

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher encountered some challenges in the recruitment phase. The period of from June to August is the summer break in Vietnam, so it took more time to collect approvals from schools and related consent documents from the participants via online communication platforms. Another unexpected challenge was that some teachers initially agreed to participate in the study but then declined due to their increased workload to teach online. This has resulted in some delays in recruiting eligible participants to the study.

3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

This study uses semi-structured interviews, which provide a flexible and adjustable approach to data collection (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1988). These are regarded as a tool to capture interviewees' underlying descriptions, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards different real-life issues or phenomena (Merriam, 1988). Underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, this study acknowledges the bias inherent in participants' perspectives. As such, semi-structured interviews are suitable to adequately understand the phenomenon as perceived by participants and based on the teachers' perceptions of formative assessment,

which are articulated and further probed throughout the process. This choice of research instrument is analogous with previous studies that have explored teachers' perceptions of formative assessment and assessment for learning (AfL). Table 3.3 compiles some studies whose data were collected through the use of teacher interviews for purposes that are akin to those of this study.

Table 3.3

Previous research with the use of interviews

Study	Focus of the research	Focus of teacher interviews
Rea-Dickins (2001)	Formative assessment in an EAL school context	To investigate classroom assessment practices, with a focus on formative assessment
Büyükkarcı (2014)	Assessment beliefs and practices in the primary school context	To better understand formative assessment and actual formative practices in class
T. N. Pham et al. (2019)	Classroom Assessment Practice at Implementation of the Pilot Primary Curriculum	To explore the reasoning underlying teachers' assessment practices
Widiastuti et al. (2020)	Dissonances between teachers' beliefs and practices of formative assessment in EFL classes in the upper secondary school context	To provide detailed information on beliefs about formative assessment across different CPD involvement levels
Chen et al. (2013)	Practices of formative assessment in English language classrooms in the Chinese tertiary education context	To discover teachers' views and their responses to the formative assessment policy initiative
Britton (2015)	Assessment for Learning (AfL) for young language learners	To discover teachers' own understandings of AfL

In Phase 2 of the study, after successfully obtaining approval from schools and informed consent from participants, a set of possible themes for discussion in both English and Vietnamese was sent to all participants. Before the scheduled interview, participants were asked to raise any questions regarding these themes. The researcher then arranged an interview schedule and set up the online meetings via Zoom, with all meetings being secured with a password for safety reasons (under COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, all interviews were conducted online). With the consent of all participants, all interviews were audio-recorded. As requested by the participants, all interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, which made them feel more comfortable. During the interviews, participating teachers explained their beliefs and concerns about formative assessment, as well as reflected on their approaches to this assessment form. Later, for the sake of analysis, the interview transcripts were translated into English by the researcher and then notarised by a certified translator.

Although uninterrupted conversations during the Zoom interview process provided optimal results, the researcher experienced some technical issues of occasional audio distortion and Internet connectivity interruptions. Another unexpected setback was that there were several delays in scheduling and conducting the interviews, which resulted in it taking a longer time to conduct all interviews than anticipated.

A set of open-ended questions was prepared prior to the interview to explore how participants viewed formative assessment, as well as how they implemented formative assessment in their EFL classes (Appendix D). This is in agreement with M. Patton (2002), who asserted that open-ended questions enable the researchers to comprehend and capture the interviewees' accounts of their experience "without predetermining those points of view

through prior selection of questionnaire categories". In this way interviewees were also able to explain their professional beliefs and perspectives. Follow-up questions were used during the interview process to encourage participants to discuss and elucidate on their attitudes and in-class implementation of formative assessment so that the researcher could understand their position and reasoning for it.

The average duration of each interview was 45 minutes, with 30 minutes being the shortest and 60 minutes the longest. Participants had the opportunity to leave out any questions or stop the interview any time if they felt uncomfortable. All participants requested to respond in Vietnamese because they wanted to express their answers more precisely and easily. With consent from participants, each interview was audio-recorded, with transcripts produced afterwards. Verbatim transcription was necessary because despite being time-consuming, this method is still the best way to provide a database for analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 132). Once transcripts were produced, they were forwarded to participants so that they could amend or add any further information. The data were only analysed after all participants confirmed that the information had been recorded and transcribed correctly. This 'verification step' built the credibility of the research by "ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on" (J. Maxwell, 2013, p. 126).

3.3.2. Teacher reflective notes

Another research instrument exploited in this paper is teacher reflective notes. At this stage participants were asked to recall and recount any occasion when teacher feedback enhanced their students' learning, or any other variations of that (e.g. students still considered summative assessment as being more important). This reflection could be in the form of

either written (a one-page summary of a personal account or anecdote) or audio-recorded. In this way interview data, which usually requires spontaneous responses from participants in a short amount of time, can be enhanced by brief written notes of a more considered nature. These teacher reflective notes were conducive in collecting additional data, as participants had more time to contemplate on the beginning, the progress, and ending of their classroom situations.

After the interview, in Phase 3 of the study participants were requested to recall and recount an occasion when their feedback had exerted an influence on their students' active learning. To assist participants in this step, guidance for the teacher reflective note was provided (see Appendix G). This guidance form, which was also translated into Vietnamese, included four main bullet points that the researcher expected to collect from the note. The participants could either write a roughly-one-page note or audio-record their experience. Participants then sent their notes or audio-recording files to the researcher via email.

3.3.3. Classroom observation

Another research instrument employed in this study is classroom observation.

Observation is the process of collecting open-ended and authentic information by examining subjects in naturally occurring contexts (Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; M. Patton, 2002). Several strengths of observation in qualitative research have been identified by M. Patton (2002) and Hatch (2002), some of which are: (1) better understanding of the settings in which the phenomena occur; (2) discovery of participants' understanding about the contexts; (3) discovery of sensitive information (which participants may hesitate to disclose during interviews); and (4) contribution of the researcher's

experience to analysis of the phenomena. Two other advantages in utilising this instrument include acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the research site; and discovering consistencies and discrepancies between teachers' perceptions and actual practices in class (M. Patton, 2002; Simons, 2009), or in other words, cross-checking data collected from other instruments including interviews. In this case, observation can reveal how formative assessment has actually been placed in teachers' classroom practices, and in which activities teachers have implemented formative assessment.

Table 3.4 summarises five studies that have deployed audio-recordings for classroom observation to collect evidence on how formative assessment is situated in the classroom. These studies have similar research foci to this paper.

Table 3.4

Previous research with the use of class observation/ recording

Study	Focus of the research	Focus of classroom observation/ audio-recordings
T. D. Tran (2015)	How assessment within the Vietnamese sociocultural context can be supportive to EFL learning at the tertiary level	to explore 'how assessment is enacted inside the classroom and how such practices support students in their learning cognitively, affectively, and emotionally' (p. 70)
Britton (2015)	Assessment for Learning (AfL) for young language learners	To gain better understanding of how

		teachers have realised their understandings of AfL
Duong (2020)	How formative assessment affects the process of engaging and motivating student learning	To investigate the actual practice of formative assessment and triangulate with data obtained from other sources
L. Pham (2012)	Formative assessment practices for young English language learners	To conduct 'a detailed analysis of what was happening in the classroom' (L. Pham, 2012, p. 7)
Ngo (2019)	The practices of observation as formative assessment	To explore the frequency and purposes of observation as formative assessment in class

In this research, non-participant observation was employed. Although the researcher's original intention was to immerse in the classroom context and directly observe the EFL classes, the impact of COVID-19 meant that this plan could not be executed. As a result, in Phase 4 of the study, the researcher resorted to asking for the audio-recordings of two EFL classes from each participant. Two observational recordings from each participant were expected to provide consistent information about participants' classroom practices (each EFL class in secondary school lasting 45 minutes). The researcher only narrowed the focus on events when there was a presence of formative assessment (especially teacher in-class feedback); therefore, only these segments were highlighted and transcribed.

It is worth noting that since class audio-recordings involved the participation of children, the researcher also prepared 'Information to parents/guardians' document (Appendix E) and 'Consent form for parents/guardians' (Appendix F). Before the audio-recording procedure, participants helped the researcher in obtaining the signatures of guardians who were in charge of students involved in the research (in this case, the guardian was the form teacher of each class).

Classroom observation can be considered as a good supplement to interviews. By making a detailed record of what EFL teachers say and do during class, the researcher can ascertain how formative assessment is situated in their classroom practices. Therefore, data obtained from the three aforementioned instruments (semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teacher reflective notes) can establish a reciprocal relationship in examining the perceptions and implementation of formative assessment in Vietnamese secondary schools.

3.4. Data analysis

The main dataset consists of three subsets, namely seven hours of semi-structured interview transcripts, 14 hours of class audio-recordings, and five pages of teacher reflective notes. All qualitative data collected in Vietnamese were later translated into English by the researcher for the analysis procedure. Table 3.5 summarises all the data sets.

Table 3.5

Data sets in the study

Research question	Method	Data set obtained
1. What are Vietnamese EFL teacher perceptions of formative assessment?	Semi-structured interview	Seven interview transcripts (seven hours)
2. What are in-class practices of formative assessment in an EFL class in the Vietnamese context?	Lesson observation Teacher reflective note	14 audio-recordings (14 hours) Five teacher reflective notes (five pages)

Thematic analysis was undertaken to analyse the qualitative data. In a 2006 study, thematic analysis is defined as a research method "for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data", and this method "minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Applying thematic analysis in this study involves transcribing, coding, and generating themes from spoken discourse and written notes. In analysing the collected qualitative data, the researcher followed the phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and described in the following sections.

3.4.1. Transcribing and translating (Familiarising)

Initially, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded data from the interviews verbatim and then started actively immersing herself in the data by re-listening audio-recordings and

re-reading notes to gain a general picture of the data. As advised by Braun and Clarke (2006), this is a crucial step for the researcher in becoming familiar with verbal data to search for the meaning and patterns that form a basis for further analysis. Following that, in order to subsequently conduct a thematic analysis, all data from the three instruments were transcribed into written form. All transcripts were then translated into English by the researcher, and then notarised by a certified translator.

Noble and Smith (2015) proposed several strategies to enhance the 'trustworthiness' of a study during the research design and implementation phase. These methodological strategies have been incorporated to ensure the credibility of the transcription phase as follows:

1) Respondent validation: Participating teachers were invited to verify the interview transcripts i.e. they were entitled to add, remove, or amend any information.

2) Meticulous record keeping: All data (audio-recording files and teacher reflective notes) were digitally organised and stored. Repetitive revisiting of the data was permitted for semi-structured audio-recorded interviews.

3) Data triangulation: the research issues of how formative assessment is perceived and implemented in classroom were reinforced via multiple sources.

The procedure of resulting coding transcripts is reported in the next section.

3.4.2. Coding and generating themes

a. Interview transcripts

After the familiarising stage, a general idea and some interesting points were initially generated. When the coding process was manually completed, the researcher first found some key phrases from the text, identified as many potential codes as possible from the data extracts, and highlighted some interesting aspects in the data items. Examples of data coding in the interview transcripts are given in the figure below.
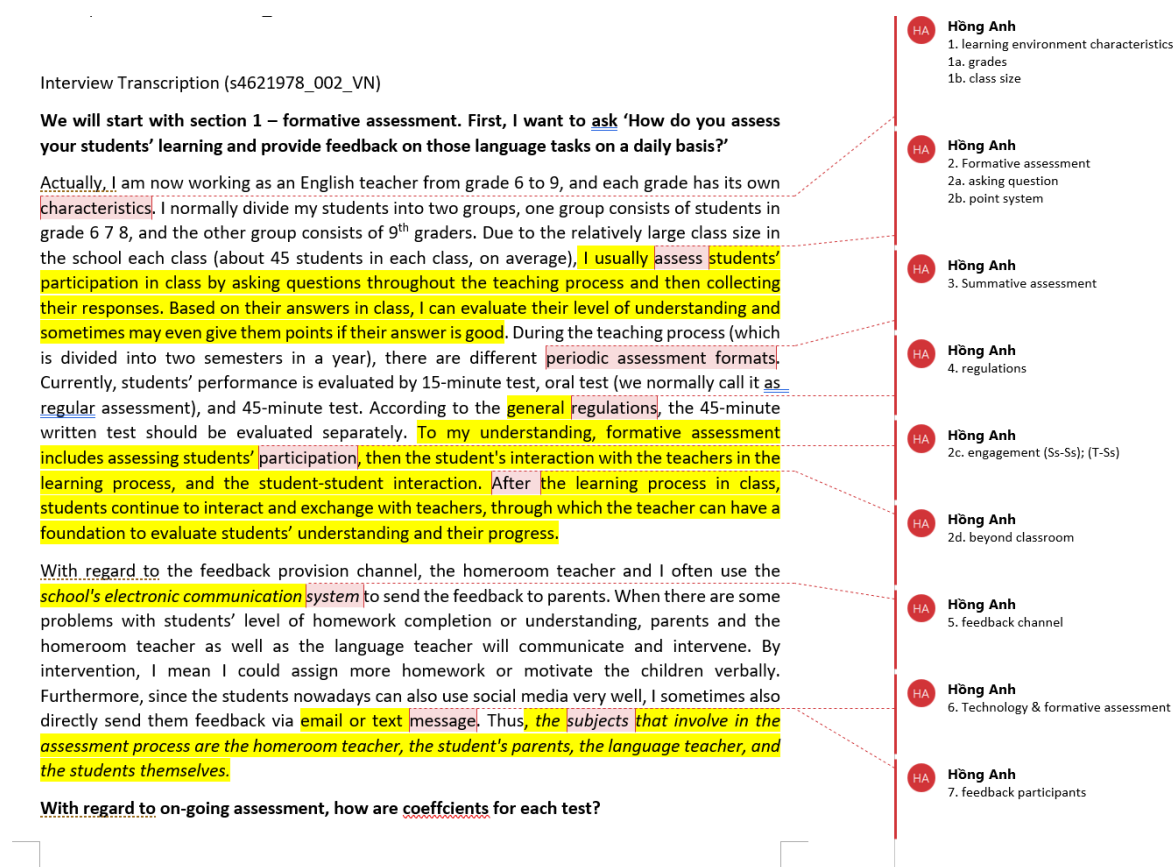
Figure 3.2 Example of data coding in the interview with Victor

After all data was initially coded and collated, a list of different codes recognised from the data sets was obtained. At this stage the researcher started the analysis of all codes and combined them to identify the emerging themes. After the process of reviewing all

themes and discarding unnecessary ones, a table of identified emerging themes was
compiled.

Table 3.6

Emergent themes in coding the interview transcripts

Emergent theme	Codes
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through planning and refining objectives and learning outcomes	- assessment planning - aim of learning
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through selecting and setting tasks to collect evidence of learning	- level of students' language preparedness - class size - regulations - knowing your learners - access to teaching aids/ technological devices - lesson focus
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through sharing understanding of learning tasks and learning intentions	- teacher-students clarity of assessment criteria - teacher-students clarity of objectives
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through implementing diverse teaching strategies	- engagement - observation - questioning - on-the-spot intervention - textbook content – teacher flexibility - lesson design & formative feedback - pair work - beyond classroom activities

	- group work/ project
	- discussion
	- classroom management techniques
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through giving feedback on students' learning	- mechanics of feedback
	- feedback content
	- peer assessment
	- explicit/implicit feedback
	- frequency of feedback
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through communicating feedback and assessment results	- feedback channel
	- feedback participants
	- feedback record
	- students' reaction to feedback
Teachers' perception of formative assessment through reflecting on teaching and learning	- adjusting assessment criteria/ procedure/ content/ scale
	- self-reflecting on teaching
	- students reflecting on teaching
	- self-reflecting on learning

b. Audio-recording transcripts

This section describes the coding process of data from the audio-recorded lesson sources. The researcher identified the formative assessment techniques from classroom audio-recordings and teacher reflective notes. The analysis continued with annotating each technique with language skills and their timing within a lesson.

c. Teacher reflective notes

While semi-structured interviews grasp teachers' perceptions and classroom audio-recordings capture teachers' applications of formative assessment in their classrooms, teacher reflective notes act as a source for the teachers to reflect on their practices.

Although thematic analysis might seem to be relatively straightforward to conduct, the researcher encountered some pitfalls due to lack of experience. At the beginning of the analysis phase, the researcher failed to grasp the sense of data, which resulted in a failure to analyse the data (i.e. not doing justice to the data). The researcher then fell to the second pitfall of thematic analysis – using the interview questions to form main themes. These two pitfalls were summarised in Braun and Clarke's work (2006), accompanied with three other pitfalls, namely having internally incoherent and inconsistent themes which lead to a weak or unconvincing analysis, a mismatch between the data and analytic claims, and a mismatch between research questions and the form of thematic analysis used.

To tackle these problems, the researcher consulted and discussed the initial themes with her supervisors before deciding on the final themes. The researcher also used the "15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis" suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 96) as a source of reference.

3.5. Ethical considerations

This research was evaluated and categorised by VUHREC as high-risk, and granted ethics approval on 3rd June 2020 (Application ID: HRE20-070) (see Appendix H). The data collection procedure was undertaken immediately after this date. However, as June is the last month of the academic year in Vietnam, the researcher conducted the interviews with

participants and collected the teacher reflective notes first (from June to August 2020). The classroom audio-recordings were collected after September, when the new academic year started in Vietnam. With the direct involvement of under-eighteen-year-old students in audio-recordings, the researcher also prepared the 'Information to parents/guardians' document and 'Consent form' for their legal guardians.

Since this research involved people, several ethical issues were taken into consideration. The following table describes how measures were taken to address the ethical issues in accordance with the four values of ethical conduct (research merit and integrity, justice, respect, and beneficence) (The National Health and Medical Research Council & The Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, 2007).

Table 3.7

Ethical values and adopted measures (based on the document of The National Health and Medical Research Council & The Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, 2007)

Ethical value	Brief description of the ethical value	Adopted measure(s)
Research merit and integrity	• The significance of the study • The development of appropriate methods to collect data • The reliability of data	This research aims to explore how lower secondary and upper secondary school EFL teachers perceive formative assessment, and how they implement it in their classes. Therefore, the findings of the project could help the policymakers, educators and parents to become aware of the existing situation and suggest changes to the policy. The data were collected from three sources (interviews, classroom recordings, and teacher reflective notes). In terms of the recording, in order to ensure reliability and consistency, two EFL classes of each participant were collected.
Justice	• The fair process of recruiting •The benefit of distribution among participants • The accessibility of outcomes to research participants	The participation of EFL teachers was purely voluntary, and they were informed of their entitlements before the collection process. Participants also had the rights to amend, add, or verify the accuracy of data. The data were only analysed when participants confirmed that the provided information was recorded and transcribed correctly. Upon completion of the

		study, findings will be sent to all participants for their further professional development.
Respect	• The autonomy of research participants • The respect of participants' privacy, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivities	Prior to the commencement of the study, all stakeholders (school principals, teachers, and guardians) were well-informed of details related to this research. They all received 'Information to participants', 'Information to parents/guardians', and 'Consent form' from the researcher. All agents were aware of the aims of the study that they had been asked to take part in; what they would be asked to provide; what they would gain from their participation; potential risks associated in the study; and how findings would be disseminated. All these documents clarified that their engagement in this project was completely voluntary, and they were entitled to continue, stop, or withdraw from the study at their pleasure. Their withdrawal would not jeopardise them in any way. They also had the right to choose the language in which the data collection process would be conducted. All related documents were also translated and distributed in Vietnamese. The research was guaranteed to be confidential as the researcher did not use the participants' names or include any personal information that would identify them in any reports. Participating teachers were allocated pseudonyms to protect their identity. Only the researcher and her two supervisors had access to the data (interviews, recordings, and reflective notes). Digital data are stored on a password protected hardware.

		All the data are kept securely and destroyed according to the Victoria University Research Data and Materials Procedure.
Beneficence	• Risk management	There were minimal risks associated with this research. Psychological risks: a degree of discomfort was expected as the participants were requested to reveal their attitudes and professional practices. The researcher was especially sensitive to their feelings and reactions, so the researcher formed no judgments about participants' values, beliefs or practices. Instead, the researcher solely focused on the methodological objective of the study, which was participants' perceptions and implementation of formative assessment in EFL settings. Social risks: some teachers had unfavourable working environments, but the researcher committed to maintaining a professional approach and focus on the research questions. Whenever the interview seemed to shift to other factors such as workplace complaints, the researcher was very sensible and careful to keep everything on track. Inconvenience: participants needed to devote their time and energy to engage in the study. To minimise this issue, the researcher scheduled the interviews based on participants' timetables and tried not to interfere with their personal lives.

To sum up, this chapter has provided a comprehensive description of the methodological approach used in this study. The chapter started with an overview of the deployment of qualitative methodology and an interpretivist paradigm. Following that, a detailed account of participants and data collection instruments was reported. Then, after the discussion of analysis procedures, this chapter has concluded with the inherent ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: FINDINGS

In line with the research aims of understanding teachers' perceptions and practices regarding formative assessment in secondary classrooms in a Vietnamese setting, this chapter presents important findings generated from the analysed datasets. These findings are divided into two categories, namely teachers' perception of formative assessment and their professional practices of formative assessment in a classroom context. Each part of this chapter corresponds to one research question.

The qualitative data has presented a vivid picture of how participants perceive and implement formative assessment in their classroom. Interestingly, in spite of their different experiences, participants' perceptions of formative assessment were similar to each other, and to a varying extent, the reviewed literature. They highly acknowledged the importance of formative assessment in their classroom and were generally willing to consider a change of focus from summative to formative assessment.

Part One of this chapter addresses research question 1 *(*What are Vietnamese EFL teacher perceptions of formative assessment?). The findings reveal how teachers understand formative assessment, how formative assessment is used in their classroom settings, and what impacts formative assessments have on the effectiveness of their classroom practice. Data related to this research question, which was collected from interview transcripts, were analysed and classified into seven categories in the form of a cyclic process.

Teachers' perception of formative assessment through:
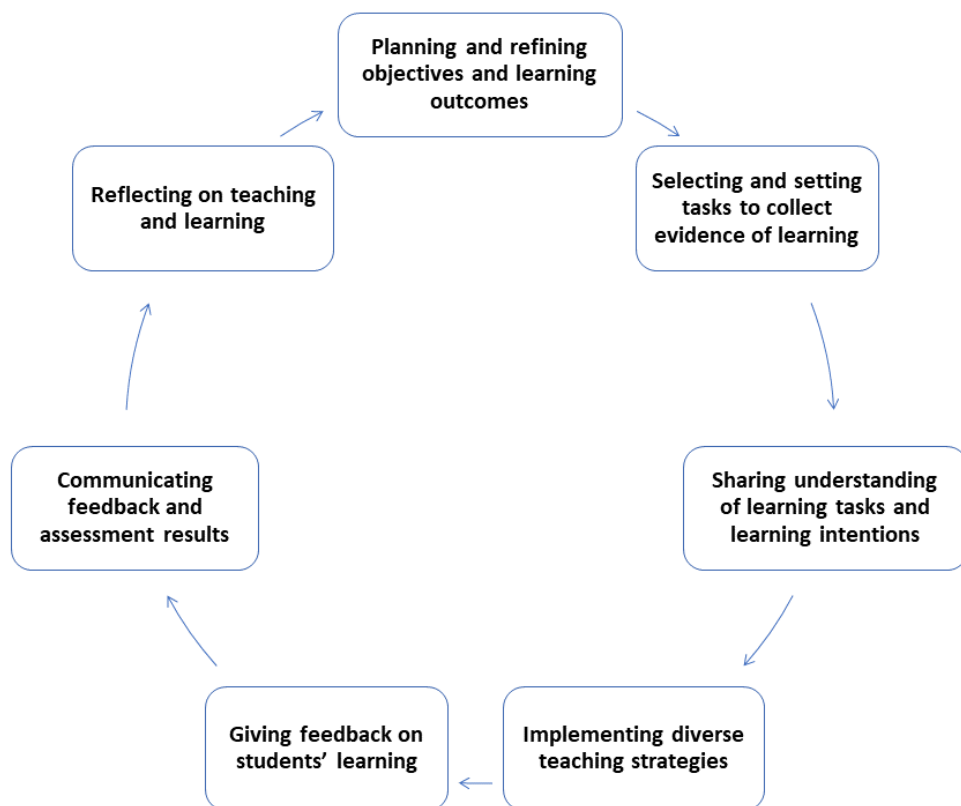
Figure 4.1 Thematic structure of the data analysis

Part Two of this chapter revolves around research question 2 (What are in-class practices of formative assessment in an EFL class in the Vietnamese context?). The findings, which were obtained from the analysis of classroom audio-recordings and reflective notes, were grouped into an in-class inventory of formative assessment.

4.1. Part One: Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment in the classroom context (RQ1)

This part discusses the findings for RQ1: What are Vietnamese EFL teacher perceptions of formative assessment?

RQ1 aimed to examine how Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive formative assessment. The data that yielded insights into this area were generated from seven semi-structured teacher interviews. The development of themes was integral to shed light on teachers' perception. Each theme is reported in a separate subsection.

4.1.1. Teachers' perception of formative assessment through planning learning outcomes and setting objectives

When being asked about the qualities of a good assessment task, Lily, a teacher with six years of TEFL experience in large classes in a public school, reiterated the importance of identifying clear learning outcomes and setting objectives before each class. Lily believed that good initial planning of success criteria can guide the teaching and learning process.

> *The teacher should set objectives and expected learning outcomes, plan assessment tasks, and set assessment criteria that are suitable for the lesson content beforehand. Having a lesson plan with clear outcomes and objectives can help me teach more easily.* (Lily, Interview)

4.1.2. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through selecting and setting tasks to collect evidence of learning

After taking learning outcomes and objectives into consideration, teachers need to select appropriate learning tasks that best serves the purpose in the particular context. Some activities are deemed to be suitable in one class, yet unsuitable in other classes. In order to choose an appropriate task, participating teachers believe that a number of factors, such as 'regulations', 'class size', 'students' level of language preparedness', 'access to technological devices' and 'students' needs', should be taken into consideration. Table 4.1 summarises the number of teachers who mentioned these factors during interview.

Table 4.1

Teachers' perceptions of selecting and setting formative assessment tasks to collect evidence of learning

Factor	The number of teachers mentioning (n = 7)
Class size	5
Regulations	3
Students' level of language preparedness	6
Access to teaching aids (e.g. technological devices)	2
Students' needs	2

4.1.2.1. Class size

The number of students enrolling in a class is an important factor that affects the implementation of formative assessment tasks in the class. Most participating teachers (six out of seven) are reported to teach a large class, with the average number of students ranging from 30 to 50 students. These teachers admitted that to some extent such large class size can be a barrier in implementing formative assessment.

> *My class often has 49-50 students. It is nearly impossible to cover everything in a 45-minute lesson. While I am delivering the lesson, if one student talks, I have to stop and turn to remind that student to be quiet. I feel like I waste too much time on managing disruptive students.* (Lily, Interview)

With large class sizes that stretch up to 50 students, it was challenging for teachers to manage and follow all students' involvement in lessons. As a result, more time needed to be devoted to controlling the class, rather than to delivering the lesson and organising learning activities.

Therefore, to tackle the large class size problem, teachers need to be more creative in coming up with formative assessment tasks that are appropriate for their class. Chosen activities should ensure that all students, regardless of their level, can raise their voice and obtain new knowledge from the task.

> *[With the big class size,] I have to organise activities that all students in the class can participate in, not just the better students perform while ones with lower levels of language proficiency don't do anything. For example, with the jigsaw activity, maybe the better students will volunteer to present, but if I randomly call some students with lower levels of language proficiency, they might still have a little something to share with the class.* (Rosie, a teacher with 14 years of TEFL experience in large classes in a public school, Interview)

4.1.2.2. Regulations

According to the teachers, another underlying factor for their choice of formative assessment tasks is regulations of the ministry and the school. Lily mentioned that her incorporation of different formative assessment tasks results from changes in the regulations*: "Regulations and documents now begin to encourage the implementation of formative assessment, so I always try to balance assessment formats in my class."* Rather than administering summative tests, teachers were advised to diversify the assessment tools

(i.e. include formative assessment) in the class to guide both teachers and students achieve curriculum objectives for the year.

In addition, Alice, a teacher with 21 years of TEFL experience with large classes in a public school, noted that her school now requires each student should have four ongoing scores for a subject, and the subject teacher was the one solely in charge of that. In other words, the subject teacher can decide whatever assessment tool they use to assess their students' performance during the learning progress, as long as he/she can *'follow the demands of the school'*.

4.1.2.3. Students' level of language preparedness

The students' level of English language proficiency is another major determinant of the teachers' formative task selection. It is a common belief that a low language level of learners can necessitate a more child-centered approach, which limits the uses of formative tasks in classroom. However, throughout the interview data, teachers' responses differed in terms of the correlation between the choice of formative assessment activities and the students' level.

Six out of seven participants indicated how their awareness of students' level informed their choices of selection. The prevailing opinion was that the higher the students' English language level was, the more complicated and varied the learning activities were. In contrast, teachers had fewer options to take within classes that have limited language knowledge. Rosie stated in her interview that *"There are classes where we have to do more complicated activities because of their good command of English, while there are classes that I only organise activities that are as simple as possible so that students can at least have learned something after the lesson."* Victor, a teacher with six years of TEFL

experience in large classes in a public school, confirmed this notion by providing an example of his grade 8 students and the number of group activities in his class. Due to the fact that his students '*have limited ability and knowledge',* Victor cannot implement as many group activities as he would like. Also, in classes with lower achievers, Victor had to customise his teaching by adding more written exercises and calling students up to the board to do exercises. In a similar vein, Helen, a teacher with 20 years of TEFL experience in average class size in a private school, shared her story about an activity that she experimented with in both lower-grade and higher-grade classes, letting students design a mock test. Although students in both classes enjoyed this activity, the rates of task fulfillment varied. Students in the lower grades, who had limited English language knowledge, were reported to *'make a lot of mistake, in terms of grammar, spelling, or word choices.* In contrast, students from higher grades with intermediate English language levels, *'have good command of grammar and rich vocabulary'.* Therefore, Helen concluded that more complex activities are more suitable for older students with greater language proficiency. Emma, a teacher with eight years of TEFL experience in large classes in a public school, too, highlighted the importance of the congruence between assessment design and students' language level by a metaphor *'You can't judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree.'*

From a different viewpoint, Thomas, a teacher with five years of TEFL experience in large classes in a public school, believed that teachers need to use more formative assessment tasks to promote the involvement of students with lower English language proficiency in the lesson. After teaching both selected classes and regular classes, he realised that students in selected classes had greater concentration, and even if he did not

use any assessment for learning tasks, *'students still fully focus on their own learning'*. As for regular classes, there was a radical difference in the level of student participation between when he used other forms of assessment and when he did not. Thomas recalled in his interview *"When I do not use other forms of assessment (i.e. students only have to listen, read the question and answer), students often show boredom and become less enthusiastic about contributing to lessons. Their ability to absorb knowledge is average, so just asking questions and making them do exercises will be fairly tedious. However, when I organise different activities in class for assessment, students become more excited, helping them to understand to content of the lesson"*. He also admitted that he had to devote more time and effort to organising assessment activities when teaching regular classes.

4.1.2.4. Access to teaching aids

How access to teaching aids (e.g. technological equipment) affects the selection of formative tasks was mentioned by two teachers. In his interview, Thomas claimed teaching equipment *'plays a very important role in my teaching'*. He found it easier to deliver the lesson content and implement learning tasks *'if a classroom is well-equipped with modern equipment'*. Therefore, he usually selected and carried out many technology-assisted activities in his lessons. Emma, too, shared that the availability of technological devices provided her with a wide variety of formative tasks to select from. For example, one of her most frequently used activities to check students' vocabulary was taking live quizzes on Quizlet. This kind of assessment task can be executed in her lesson because the class had a projector and most of her students already have smartphones.

4.1.2.5. Students' needs

Two participants believed that teachers should also take account of learners' needs when selecting and setting formative assessment tasks. They both agreed that different learning needs result in different selections of tasks. For instance, Victor mentioned that his grade 9 students had to study for the upper-secondary entrance exams, so their sole focus was practising their exam techniques rather than developing language competence. Therefore, with a shift in the students' needs, he accordingly changed the way he ran the class i.e. he would drop the number of formative tasks. Similarly, Alice commented *"From grade 8 onwards, fewer project activities will be organised. While younger students are more enthusiastic about formative activities, students in grade 8 onwards just want to focus and prepare for the exams."*

4.1.3. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through sharing understanding of learning tasks and learning intentions

Formative assessment requires that teachers and students should share a mutual understanding of what is being learned and what achieving the learning goals successfully looks like. When students are aware of task description and success criteria, they are more informed about how they will be evaluated. As a result, students are capable of assessing their own and others' work to identify successes and areas for improvement. By keeping both teachers and students focused on the criteria that the performance will be assessed against, more accurate feedback will be provided.

In terms of this step, New South Wales Department of Education suggests some main practices to achieve the best results:

(1) Learning intentions and learning tasks should be discussed, co-constructed and agreed between teachers and students prior to the learning experiences. For example, teachers can develop an assessment tool such as a checklist or rubric;

(2) Learning intentions and learning tasks should be articulated in student-friendly language to ensure transparency.

This teacher-student clarity of assessment tasks and learning objectives was reflected in the responses of two teachers. In the interview, Victor recalled the procedure of a class *"After the [warm-up] activity, I identify the lesson objectives, introduce the lesson topic and tasks such as today when we had to do these things, complete these skills components, these grammar or vocabulary contents, etc. By doing so, my students could clearly see what they needed to do and needed to achieve in the lesson, and then we could work together on that outline."*

Lily, too, drew on her experience and stressed the importance of having a mutual agreement with students in terms of the assessment criteria: *"If I do something without a plan from the beginning, even myself cannot do it well, let alone the students. If I am clear with students from the beginning that I will evaluate their performance on these forms, and via these criteria, students can become well-aware of their own learning and try harder to achieve better results."* She also shared one of her tips to attract students' attention and check their understanding of task instructions: *"I often let students clap their hands in a rhythm. When it is all at the same beat, I will stop and give instructions to students before implementing activities. My instructions include tasks, duration and, number of students in a group. After that, I might call 1 or 2 student(s) to repeat my instructions."*

4.1.4. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through implementing diverse teaching and assessment strategies

4.1.4.1. Implementing diverse teaching and assessment strategies

Evidence about student learning can provide information on students' current learning levels. During their teaching, it is advisable that teachers should collect evidence for formative purposes through using several teaching and assessment strategies, rather than focusing on one single way. The interview data indicated that all participating teachers endeavored to diversify their teaching and assessment strategies so that they could gather information from different sources. Table 4.2 below presents the frequency of most frequently used tasks being mentioned during interviews.

Table 4.2

Teachers' perception of implementing diverse teaching and assessment strategies

Teaching and assessment strategy/ task	Description	Frequency (n=7)
Engagement (e.g. warm-up activities)	Teachers engaging students in the lesson	5
Projects/ Presentation	Opportunities for students to show connections in their learning through investigation and production of reports or artifacts or oral presentation	4

Pair/group work & Discussion (e.g. jigsaw reading)	Opportunities for students to work collaboratively with their peers on an assigned task	4
Observation	Teachers' systematic observations of students as they process ideas and participate in in-class activities	3
Questioning	Teachers asking focused questions in class to elicit understanding	4
Test/ quiz/ oral test with formative purposes	Opportunities for students to show their ongoing learning effort	2
Peer assessment		1

a. Engagement (e.g. warm-up activities)

Engaging students through warm-up activities was the most frequently mentioned teaching and assessment strategy. Warm-ups are a rich source of formative assessment data. Rather than spending the first few minutes taking the register, participating teachers used warm-up questions and activities to elicit information about the extent to which students' understood knowledge from the previous lesson. To illustrate, Helen recounted her use of warm-ups for different student age groups "*I use a game to warm up when teaching younger learners, while it would be a quick mind-map for more mature students. For example, during a reading session, I review vocabulary from the previous lesson by distributing each student a small note card and ask them to write down all the words they remember from the previous lesson in 5 minutes. Then I ask all students to stick their notes on the board. By*

doing so, I can also check how many words the students have memorised. I pick 5 most

well-written notes and ask other lower achievers to stand up and review these words with

me. Then I call the students who wrote the note to make sentences with their words."

Emma, too, used a song as a warm-up activity to activate students' prior knowledge *"I*

often warm up the class by singing a song. For example, during the previous lesson,

students learned about present simple, and I taught them the tense through a song. Then in

the following lesson, I ask them to sing that song again to warm up and review the previous

lesson."

Participating teachers also mentioned other different benefits of warm-up activities.

In the interview, Thomas reflected using warm-ups to provide students with general ideas

about the topic of the new lesson: *"In my class, I usually organise warm-up activities for*

students, and these activities are related to new lessons. These activities can be physical

games, pictures or technology-assisted games revolving around new words for that day.

Next, I will start a new lesson by introducing the context and the topic of the lesson.

Through that introduction, students will have a better understanding of what they are about

to learn." Alice, on the other hand, often conducted a team game at the beginning of each

lesson to 'wake' them up (Vietnamese students have their first class quite early in the

morning) and lift up their learning sprits. In other words, Alice's purpose was to set the

learning atmosphere and make sure that her students were ready to study.

To conclude, the researcher cites Victor's comment, which summarised all the

aforementioned purposes of warm-ups "*warm-up activities play an important role for the*

whole class because they will 'warm the students up', remind students of the content that

has been previously learned, engage students in the lesson, and create a sense of excitement among students."

b. Projects

The majority of teachers (four out of seven) talked about their implementation of projects in their class. During the projects, students work together in small groups or work individually to associate what they have learned and create a final product.

Before each project, teachers spend some minutes explaining the scoring criteria that students should meet. The format of the final products varied, ranging from a report, to a video clip, and a poster. In her interview, Emma reflected her experience of carrying out a project in her classroom: *"I spent a whole period for group product exhibition. For individual projects, to save in-class time, I asked my students to record a video and send it to me or upload it to the class group. Class members then pre-watched it at home and voted for the best video clip."*

Most participating teachers acknowledged the positive impacts of projects on students' active learning. Helen professed that projects *'promote students' initiative'* and *'sharpen their teamwork skills'*. Emma and Alice, too, added that doing projects can also develop students' computer literacy, *'from making video clips to searching information on the Internet.'*

c. Pair/group work & Discussion

Pair/group work offers students opportunities to collaborate with their peers on an assigned task. Most teachers agreed that due to the large class sizes, splitting students into pairs and groups is convenient and suitable for many types of lessons. Rosie stated that '*when*

students discuss in groups, they can learn from each other'. She thought that during their preparation stage, those who did well were able prepare a lot of ideas, while students with slower rates of learning might only come up with one or two ideas. Therefore, by working in groups, higher achievers can share with students with lower levels of language profiecncy, so those with lower levels of language proficiency can learn a few more ideas from their peers.

d. Observation

During the interview, three teachers mentioned observation with regard to formative assessment. The uses of observation in their classes were similar to some extent, as these teachers often based their opinions on students' behaviours and performance in class. All of them observed students' learning attitudes and facial expressions to determine their students' level of concentration in class. In addition to that, Helen noted that she also focused on students' level of homework completion and how detailed and meticulous their notes were.

e. Questioning

Questioning is another formative assessment strategy in Lily's, Victor's, Thomas's, and Rosie's classes. It is noted that these teachers did not specify what types of questions were used in their language classroom and admitted to relying primarily on textbooks for phrasing in-class questions. In each stage of the lesson, these teachers ask question with different purposes. At the beginning of the lesson, they asked questions to '*elicit students' background knowledge related to the new lesson content*' (Rosie, Interview). During the course of the lesson, the teacher asked questions to check students' level of understanding

(this purpose was reflected in all four participants' answers). By the end of the lesson, teachers ask question to summarise and consolidate the lesson content.

4.1.4.2. Teacher flexibility

Throughout the interview data, the notion of 'teacher flexibility' was also discussed with regard to the implementation of different teaching and assessment methods. To begin with, teachers share a mutual consensus that some lessons in the English textbook offer too much content and too many activities, which made it impossible for the teacher to cover everything in a 45-minute class. Therefore, teachers needed to tailor the lesson so that the content covered can fit into the timeframe. In other words, they only focused on the core contents of a lesson rather than being ambitious and teaching everything as suggested. Victor admitted that in some occasions, he had to *'place more emphasis on complicated parts and spend less time on straightforward ones'.* Rosie charted a similar trajectory, asserting "*Whether the teacher can cover all contents given or not, the textbook is not the key of a lesson. It is whether students can learn and remember something after that lesson. Instead of being ambitious, sometimes I just cover the focus of a lesson.*"

The flexibility of teachers was shown not only in the selection of content to cover, but also in the task design and adjustment. *"For classes that have more high achievers, they usually get bored with the activities in the textbook; therefore, I design more after-lesson activities so that the children can make the most of their abilities. With lower achievers, I will closely follow the activities in the textbook to ensure the core content is covered. The teacher is responsible for designing activities, as long as they can ensure that their students will fulfil the lesson objective.",* said Victor. In other words, teachers can customise their lessons (the number, the order, and the speed of each activity) based on

students' levels of understanding and the lesson objectives, as long as the core content of the lesson is achieved.

4.1.4.3. Students' reaction to the diversity in teaching and assessment strategies

In the past, detailed information about what each student had learned came mostly from a summative test. However, this trend has changed, as Vietnamese EFL teachers have gradually incorporated different assessment approaches to their teaching. From the interview data, there is multilateral agreement that using a variety of teaching and assessment tasks has a positive impact on students' learning attitudes in many ways.

According to Lily, her students were more eager about engaging in different assessment tasks rather than sitting for a test. She ascribed this to the fact that her students had too many subjects to worry about, so having fewer tests reduced the pressure. Emma, too¸ believed that the diversity in assessment tasks was synonymous with students' willingness to participate in the lessons. As Alice suggested, this positive reaction of students stems from the fact that there is a diverse range of students with mixed abilities in class. For example, in one class, some children possessed good verbal skills, while there were others who were reluctant to express themselves in front of the class. Therefore, Alice concluded: *"Applying a variety of assessment forms not only helps me satisfy the interests and strong points of students, but also to understand them personally."*

4.1.5. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through giving feedback on students' learning

Throughout the interview, a number of factors contributed to the effectiveness of feedback, some of which have been reviewed in the literature review chapter, were mentioned by participating teachers. An interesting comparison was made by Victor, as he compared his

teaching job with an actor: *"When teaching and giving feedback, teachers need to concentrate on many things, including the way they impart knowledge, the way they raise or lower their voice, the way they use their gestures and facial expressions, and the way they choose their stance."*

It is worth mentioning that one teacher (Lily) admitted that she gives feedback to students based on her instinct, as she has not received any proper guidance on how to give effective feedback.

Table 4.3 illustrates the frequency of factors mentioned during the interview.

Table 4.3

Teachers' perception of factors contributing to effective feedback

Factor of effective feedback	Frequency (n=7)	Gist from teachers' responses
Feedback content	6	- Indication of what has been achieved (positive elements and verbal encouragement) - Comparison with their performance at a prior time - Suggestion on how to improve in the future
Mechanics of feedback (Manner)	5	- Giving direct (on-the-spot) feedback and indirect feedback/ correction - Timing of feedback (after the task; during the task)
Language of feedback	2	- Positive and encouraging language

4.1.5.1. Feedback content

Teachers usually give feedback to students at the end of a lesson or task. This feedback is generally based on the entire students' performance during the lesson or task being assessed, e.g. on a project, an oral presentation, or a whole piece of writing. Most teachers acknowledged that they always valued their students' efforts and provided positive and constructive feedback to promote student learning. In her interview, Rosie elaborated on her process of giving feedback to students "*Firstly, I comment on what students have achieved in a test. The second criterion is the student's improvement in their performance, compared to that in previous tests. The third criterion is what students need to improve in order to achieve better results next time.*" She then noted that she can only randomly give feedback to some students due to time constraints. Similarly, Emma's comments to students were based on their progress in each lesson. Two other teachers, Emma and Thomas, acknowledged that they always included students' strengths and improvement in their feedback, and guided students in what they still lacked and how they could overcome their weakness. Victor added *"My criteria for feedback is based on a standard or reference point, since I am well aware of each student's ability. For those students who are stable in their study (i.e. they maintain their learning habits very well in class), I give feedback when their performance does not meet their usual standard."*

4.1.5.2. Mechanics of feedback

The majority of teachers unanimously classified their manner of giving feedback into direct and indirect. On the one hand, direct feedback refers to when teachers gave their on-the-spot comments to students individually. From Victor's perspective, he thought that direct feedback is more effective when teaching language skills because *'students will be directly*

involved and show their strengths as well as weaknesses very clearly during skills development lessons'. Three other teachers (Rosie, Alice, and Helen) also gave their students on-the-spot verbal comments most of the time for the sake of convenience. On the other hand, indirect feedback concerns teachers giving implicit comments or correction on student learning. The reason for the need of such feedback stemmed from the fact that some common mistakes were committed by a group of students, so it was impossible for teachers to give individual feedback. In her class, Alice corrected her students' mistakes by writing mispronounced words on the board and drilling students by reading aloud. Similarly, rather than going around and giving feedback to each student, Victor corrected typical mistakes in front of the class:

Victor highlighted the importance of teachers' observation as a determinant in giving effective indirect feedback: *"While students do group work or individual exercises, the teacher should move around discreetly to see how students communicate with others and complete their work. It is not always effective if the teacher calls a student to come up and then gives comments based on their performance; sometimes, we need to observe how they do their work. All observations have value for the teacher."*

During the interview with Victor, the issue of 'timing of feedback' was also raised. Victor proved his point by presenting two occasions when he gave feedback: after the activity and during the activity. He stated that in some cases, teachers should avoid stopping students midway and correcting them, since that can make the students feel like they are being blocked - like there was a barrier suppressing their eagerness. For example, when students engaged in a speaking task, he believed that teachers should avoid correcting all their mistakes. That would make them feel that what they were saying was all wrong.

With strong egos in their puberty stage, they would feel hurt and therefore became less excited to perform in front of the class, thus creating a negative classroom atmosphere. However, there were other cases when he needed to intervene while students were working to correct their behaviours:

> *During group/pair work activities, there will usually be some students who are too eager (which is good), but their strong ego can rob their friends of a chance to contribute within their group/pair. In such situations, the teacher should come and give immediate feedback. The teacher should tell students that if they work collaboratively, they will have better results. If only one of them participates and does most of the work, of course the final results will be much lower.* (Victor, Interview)

4.1.5.3. Language of feedback

Participating teachers were reported as not having any difficulties in making students understand their feedback. Nevertheless, two of them carefully considered the notion of *'positive language of feedback'*. For Alice, she realised that teachers must be very skillful and discreet when giving feedback to students who are at the puberty stage. Sentences such as *'You are wrong, and you must fix this and this'* resulted in lowering students' confidence and self-esteem and should be avoided as much as possible. Victor, too, asserted that he *'enchants'* the feedback language expressions to guarantee positivity, such as *'Oh you are doing very well in this part, but that part still has room for improvement.'* By doing so, students felt more at ease when receiving feedback.

4.1.6. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through communicating feedback and assessment results

Table 4.4

Summary of teachers' perception with regard to feedback and assessment results communication

	Summary
Feedback participants	- Teachers - Students - Parents - Homeroom teacher
Feedback record	In a file (Word document or Excel)
	In a notebook/ diary
	Technology-assisted record (in a folder on Google classroom)
	School communication electronic system
	No record

Undoubtedly, EFL teachers and students are the two key agents involved in the communication procedure of feedback and assessment results. In addition, EFL teachers also mentioned the engagement of other participants, namely parents and homeroom teachers. Teachers' answers with regard to their perception of communicating feedback and assessment results to different participants are summarised in the figure below.
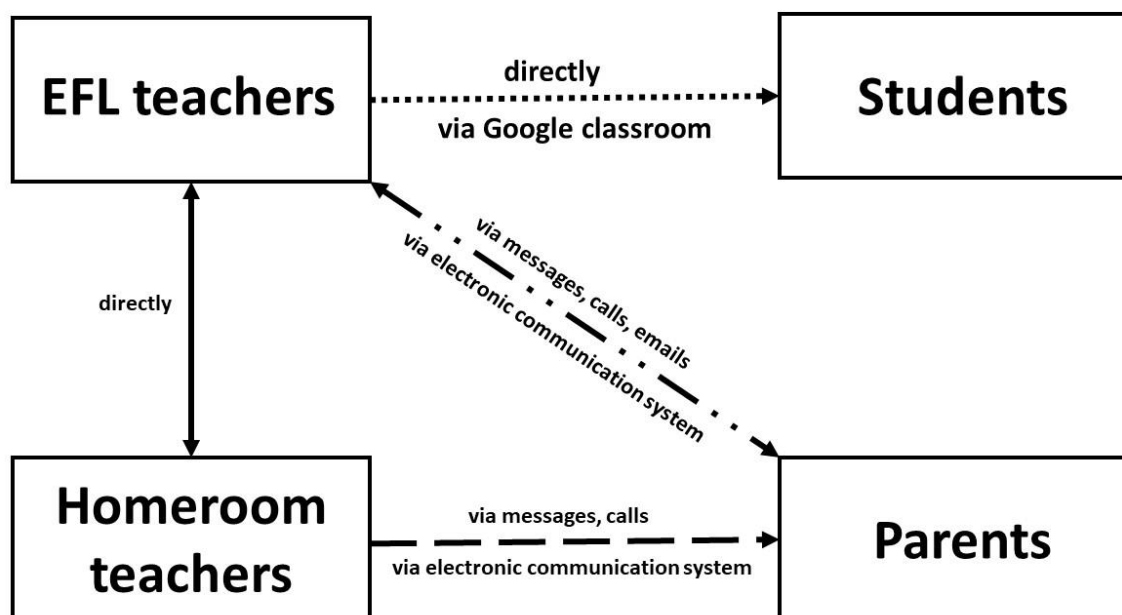
Figure 4.2 The teachers' perceptions of relationships among four feedback participants

To begin with, EFL teachers communicated their feedback directly to their students (with different factors of effective feedback provision reported in the previous section). EFL teachers could then also keep the homeroom teachers as well as parents updated about their students' or children's progress in the EFL class.

The school's electronic communication system was the most popular method for exchanging information on student learning between EFL teachers, homeroom teachers and parents. This was certified by three out of the seven teachers as follows:

The electronic communication system reports to parents on a daily basis. The main purpose of this system is to remind students of their homework. Also, when students have any problems, parents are also notified. Some teachers and I use this system to

save time reminding students in the class, and we rarely send positive feedback via

this system. (Lily, Interview)

I find the electronic communication system very helpful because directly calling all

parents can be time-consuming. (Alice, Interview)

With regard to the feedback provision channel, the homeroom teacher and I often

use the school's electronic communication system to send the feedback to parents.

When there are any problems with students' level of homework completion or

understanding, parents and the homeroom teacher as well as the language teacher

can communicate and intervene. By intervention, I mean I could assign more

homework or motivate the children verbally. (Victor, Interview)

In contrast, another participating teacher, Helen, communicated with students via a

folder in Google classroom and did not involve any other participants in the procedure. She

stated in her interview: *"In my school, students must play an active role in connecting with*

teachers via emails or Google classroom, instead of teachers delivering feedback to the

homeroom teachers and then the homeroom teachers communicating with parents."

The interviews revealed that there are several ways for teachers to store their

feedback. To be more precise, two teachers (Thomas and Rosie) did not even feel the need

to save their comments on any source. Another point was made by Victor, who reflected

that he used to '*note down what happens to students and how to deal with that*' in a

diary/notebook during his first few years of teaching, but does not do it anymore. He

justified his action by claiming that as he became more experienced, he was able to easily

and accurately identify each student's characteristics and understand them very well, and

thus, the feedback archiving process gradually became unnecessary. Four other teachers had different methods to store their feedback including files, folders, student records and notebooks. In other words, teachers chose the form most suited to them to formalise their feedback to students without being regulated by their school administrator.

4.1.7. Teachers' perceptions of formative assessment through reflecting on teaching and learning

The following step in an effective teaching process is reflection-on-action. From the interviews, both teachers and students were the primary agents in this stage: teachers reflect on their own teaching and make adjustments accordingly, while students reflect on their own learning and comment on teachers' content delivery. Understanding about the students' progress and level of achievement permits teachers to make decisions about and plan ahead the following steps in their teaching, and students are enabled to reflect on their learning strategies to confirm or modify them to improve their learning.
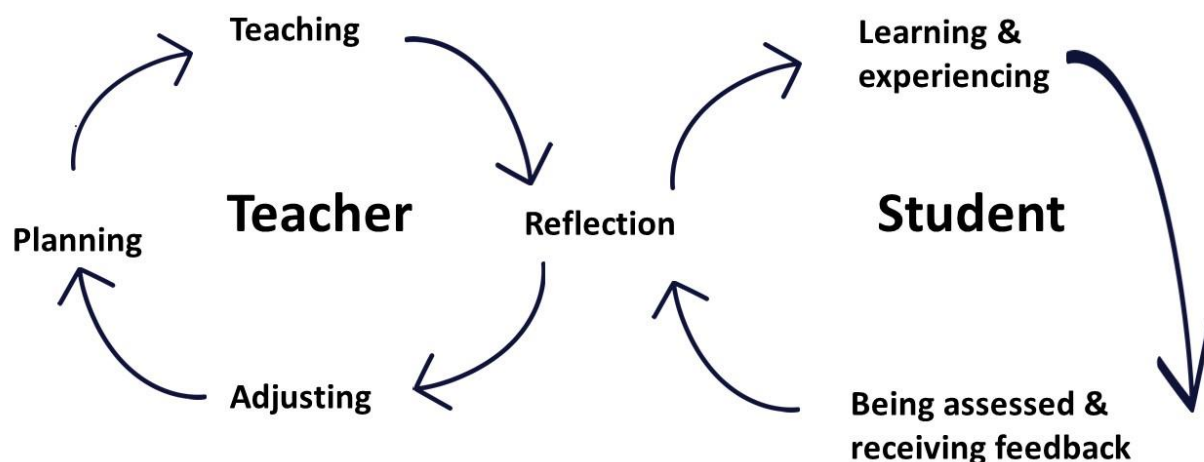
Figure 4.3 The teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning cycle, with the reflection as

an interconnection between teachers and students (adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart,

1998, p. 278 combined with the findings)

Most participating teachers welcomingly collected feedback from their students in

various forms and occasions. One of the most common formats was written comments at

the end of a lesson or semester. At the end of the last semester, Lily asked her students to

write down three things they were happy about and two things they wanted her to improve.

In a similar vein, Victor gave his students a small note and asked them to write down what

they wanted him to do in the class by the end of a semester (he also ensured the anonymity

of these notes). His students generally told a story about him, about a lesson they enjoyed

most, or a lesson they enjoyed least. Emma, too, spent some minutes at the end of each

lesson to ask her students to write a quick reflection by filling in what they had learned and

what they were unsure about. This process allowed her students to summarise what they

had achieved and compare it with the learning objectives stated at the beginning. By gathering her students' reflections, she was able to reinforce the parts that still confused her students. Thus, in the next lesson, she would *'emphasise the key parts, answer their questions, correct their misunderstanding, or re-teach the confusing parts'*.

Reflection through students' verbal expressions was another format mentioned during the interviews. Victor organises private meetings with the more disruptive students in his class. In such meetings, his students can also give him feedback on his in-class teaching, such as evaluating the speed of the class or the teacher's attitude. He found such feedback beneficial to adjusting his own professional practices and creating more effective assessment tasks in the future. Emma, too, looked at the questions that her students asked after the lesson. She added that teachers should be open so that students can feel safe to confidently and proactively ask questions when they have not fully understood something.

The results of students' performances (e.g. via tests or quizzes) are another way to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. Based on the results of a test, teachers can evaluate what students have retained after lessons and which parts need more refinement and practice. Victor considered the test results as a quantitative criterion in the assessment of teaching quality. He stated: *"Tests are a good tool to assess whether the students are doing well and fully grasping the knowledge. The test results also show the effectiveness of my feedback to students. If students' performance does not meet a certain standard, I will review the way I teach or provide comments to them and make amendments if necessary."* Sharing the same opinion, Rosie occasionally used a quick test to see how her students were performing. If the majority of students failed to meet the standard score, it meant there were problems with her lesson e.g. the teacher was giving out information and knowledge

that were beyond the students' capabilities. Therefore, Rosie would re-deliver the content and adjust her teaching in the following periods.

Rosie also recounted her experience with reflection-on-action, by giving an example of how she changed the way students were to carry out presentation tasks after running a few trials. At first, she used to let her students present in front of the class, then other groups would comment and ask questions. After doing that for a while, due to the distribution of the curriculum being fixed she realised that in-class presentations were too time-consuming. Lessons of 45 minutes allowed barely enough time for two group presentations. She also recognised another downside of in-class presentations in which some of her students did not speak – they just wrote down transcripts on a piece of paper and read it aloud, which created a negative learning setting. Moreover, some students only prepared them at school instead of home, which interfered with their concentration during other periods of that day. In some cases, there were too many speakers who spoke softly, so other students turned to chit chatting with their friends and not keeping up with the speaker. Rosie believed that preparing props for the presentation could also distract students from studying, and some might get so caught up with preparing their own performance that they could not pay attention to others. After realising all these drawbacks of in-class presentation, Rosie had come up with an idea, which was asking her students to make video clips and post them on their Facebook for views and likes. By doing so, both she and her students could review the final products again and again. In this way the assessment would be more accurate and objective than that of in-class performance.

4.2. Part Two: Teachers' practices of formative assessment in the classroom context (RQ2)

Drawing on the discussion of what teachers perceived as formative assessment in an EFL context, this section illustrates the findings of RQ2: What are in-class practices of formative assessment in an EFL class in the Vietnamese context?

Data sets included audio-recordings from 14 lessons, with findings presented in three sub-sections. Sub-section 4.2.1. presents the formative assessment strategies and techniques which teachers implemented in their classes, sub-section 4.2.2. reports when these techniques were taken place, and sub-section 4.2.3 examines for what purposes these techniques were used.

4.2.1. Formative assessment techniques

As discussed in Part One, participating teachers asserted that they tried to implement a wide range of formative assessment techniques in their classes. The portfolio of formative assessment techniques was based on data analysed from audio-recording lessons and teacher reflective notes. Eleven techniques were identified from both sources, and these techniques are ordered based on their frequency (most frequently-used strategies are listed first). While scrutinising the data, the researcher also identified the language tasks and skills in which formative assessments were implemented (Table 4.5, column 4) and the timing of implementation (Table 4.5, column 5).

The table below provides the description of all formative assessment techniques used by the teachers in detail.

Table 4.5

An inventory of formative assessment techniques

No.	Name of formative assessment techniques	Brief description (based on description given by Britton (2015); Lambert (2012))	Type of tasks and skills the technique was used with	When it was used in a lesson (Timing)	Who used it
1	Think – Pair – Share/ Learning partners (TPS/ LP)	Teacher gives direction to students. Students formulate individual responses, and then turn to a partner or work in group to share their answers. Teacher then calls on several random pairs/groups to share their answers with the class.	Speaking; Vocabulary learning	Throughout lessons and tasks; often in preparation for learners to work independently; and checking answers	Lily Victor Helen Rosie Alice
2	Oral open-ended questioning (OQ)	Teachers ask open-ended questions.	Checking students' understanding	Before, during, and after a task	Lily Victor Helen Rosie Alice
3	Observation (OB)	Teachers walk around the classroom and observe students as they work to check for learning.	Speaking	During a task	Lily Victor Helen Rosie Alice
4	Success criteria (SC)	Teachers present success criteria for a task or a lesson. These can either be presented orally or in the form of a rubric of a short list indicating what was required from each student in order for their performance to be judged as successful. During the task, students could refer to this list to remind them that they should monitor their own performance.	Classroom instructions	Before and during a task	Lily Helen

		After the task, success criteria are often referred to when providing feedback on performance.			
5	Debriefing (DB)	A form of reflection immediately following an activity.	Reflection	Immediately following an activity or at the end of a lesson	Lily Victor
6	Self-assessment (SA)	A process in which students collect information about their own learning, and analyse and reflect on their performance.	Speaking; Presentation; Project	After a task	Helen
7	Peer assessment (PA)	Other students reflect and give feedback on the performance of their classmate(s).	Speaking; Presentation; Project	After a task	Helen
8	Feedback sandwich (FS)	Teacher gives or elicits feedback from students. A feedback sandwich consists of positive comments, followed by constructive feedback, and followed by more positive comments on the students' performances.	Project; Presentation	After the performance of a student	Helen
9	Bouncing (BC)	Teachers bounce answers around the classroom to build on understanding and have students develop stronger reasoning out of misconceptions. E.g. "John, what do you think of Chloe's answer?" "Jean, how could you develop Tim's answer to include more details?"	Giving feedback; Checking with other students	After the performance of a student	Rosie
10	Mind map (MM)	Students work individually or collaborate to produce a mind map at the beginning of a project or unit of work and then can refer to it at the end.	Brainstorming	At the beginning of a project; Referred to at the end of a lesson	Alice
11	Hand signal (HS)	Teachers ask students to display a designated signal with their hand to show their understanding of a specific concept or process.	Checking students' understanding	During and after a task	Lily

In Table 4.5 above, Think – Pair – Share/ Learning partners was the most popular technique used by participating teachers, followed by oral open-ended questioning and observation. These results also indicated that most participating teachers use formative assessment techniques for speaking skills and presentation/project tasks.

It is intriguing to notice that participating teachers share several similarities in their responses to assessment, regardless of their teaching experience, school sector, and class size. However, in their practices, Helen, a more experienced teacher in a private school, was using more ways of assessing students, especially in the areas such as self-assessment or peer-assessment.

4.2.2. The timing of formative assessment

This section reports data pertaining to the timing of formative assessment within a lesson.
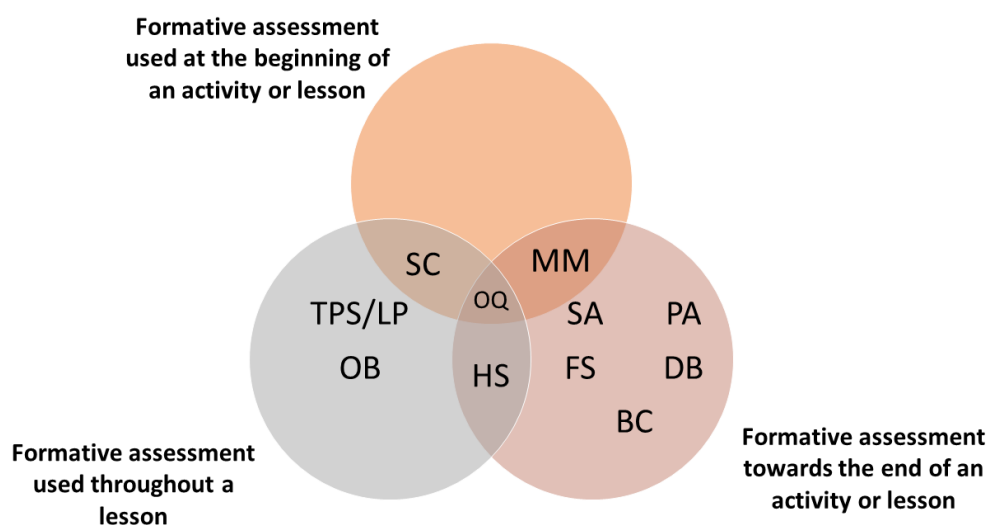
SC (success criteria)	TSP/LP (think-pair-share/	SA (self-assessment)
OQ (oral open-ended questioning)	learning partners)	PA (peer-assessment)
	OB (observation)	FS (feedback sandwich)
	HS (hand signal)	DB (debriefing)
		BC (bouncing)
		MM (mind map)

Figure 4.4 Time of use of formative assessment techniques in the classroom

The analysis of audio-recordings reveals that there were three major occasions when a formative assessment technique was used: at the beginning of a lesson or of a task, throughout the lesson or during the task, and towards the end of a task or lesson. Figure 4.4 visually presents which formative assessment techniques were observed to be employed within each of the 'timing' category.

Overall, it is noticeable that a greater range of formative assessment techniques were used towards the end of the task or lesson. Participating teachers only opted for a smaller number of techniques for setting up their tasks (only success criteria and oral open-ended questioning were used at the beginning),

while they were more likely to adopt a wider variety of formative assessment techniques towards the end of a task, especially to aid feedback provision procedure (self-assessment, peer-assessment, feedback sandwich, or bouncing) and to check students' understandings (bouncing and hand signal). As students tended to gradually lose their interest, teachers needed to employ a diversity of formative assessment techniques as the lesson proceeded. Therefore, the number of formative assessment techniques implemented towards the end of a lesson outweighed that of the other two 'timing' categories.

4.2.3. The purposes of using formative assessment

In addressing the purposes that formative assessment techniques serve in EFL classes in Vietnam, participating teachers were found to incorporate different techniques to serve three main purposes (sharing learning objectives and expectations; contributing to learning performance; and monitoring learning achievement in progress). These findings are summarised in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6

Purposes for using formative assessment techniques based on data from lesson audio-recordings

Formative assessment technique(s)	Purposes for using formative assessment techniques observed in lessons	Description of the purpose	The relationship between the timing and the purpose for using formative assessment
Success criteria	Sharing learning objectives and expectations	When teachers used formative assessment techniques to share understanding of learning tasks and learning intentions, they clarified expectations of outcomes and gave instructions to students.	The formative assessment technique was employed predominantly at the beginning of a task or lesson to make sure that students and teachers had mutual understandings of expected outcomes and task instructions.
Think – Pair – Share/ Learning partners Observation Oral open-ended questioning Hand signal Debriefing Bouncing	Contributing to learning performance	Teachers used an eclectic mix of formative assessment techniques to control the class, to organise learning activities, to check students' attention, and to provide ongoing feedback on short fragments of the learners' performance.	These techniques were used throughout the lessons to keep the class on the right track.
Self-assessment Peer-assessment Feedback sandwich	Monitoring learning achievement in progress	Self-reflection and peer and/or teacher feedback were employed to provide feedback.	These techniques were used towards the end of a lesson or task to check if students were aware of what they had learnt, and which areas they needed to improve.

The data obtained from audio-recordings of participating EFL teachers' lessons helps complement their perceptions of formative assessment, especially in the three stages of cyclic process (sharing understanding of learning tasks and learning intentions; implementing diverse teaching strategies; and giving feedback on students' learning). Data also confirmed the three key questions scaffolding formative assessment, concerning learning goals ("What is to be learned?"); learning progress being made towards the goals ("How is learning progressing?"); and recommendation for better progress ("What will be learned next?") (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007).

In practice, different formative techniques were adopted to assist teachers in monitoring students' performance as well as promote their self-monitoring. Accordingly, there were two types of feedback in the classroom. The first type, ongoing feedback, tended to be based on short fragments of students' performance during the task or lesson (e.g. one student's utterance or one sentence from a longer essay). By contrast, the comments made at the end of a lesson or activity referred to the entire performance that was being assessed (e.g. students' oral presentations, or complete pieces of writing).

These two feedback types, despite being provided at different stages of a lesson, both identified positive aspects that students were able to show (feed back) and what could be done to help improve (feed forward). However, there was a distinct discrepancy between these types in terms of their purposes. Ongoing feedback emphasised on boosting students' performance during given tasks (which is the reason why it is often provided throughout the task) whereas 'feed

forward' acts as a catalyst for students' improvement in future activities or lessons. Therefore, such feedback is usually given by the end of a lesson or a task, acting as consolidation and reflection for students in their learning progress.

As shown in Table 4.6, a significant correlation between the purposes and timing of formative assessment in EFL classes was observed. The results of analysis confirm that some techniques were more suitable and effective when being used at certain stages of the lesson. For example, briefing students on their success criteria is better suited to the initial stages of the lesson or task. Similarly, other formative assessment techniques such as self- or peer-assessment were more suitable towards the end of the activity, when feedback was solicited. This suggests that how formative assessment is used in the classroom is linked with the teaching methodology.

4.2.4. The preliminary findings to the impacts of formative assessment on student active learning

In looking into relationships between the use of formative assessment and its impact on student learning based on teachers' reflections on their actions through reflective notes, this section only serves as a preliminary finding due to the small volume of data (five pages of teacher reflective notes).

Overall, the five participating teachers who forwarded their reflective notes agreed that formative assessment promotes students' involvement in learning and facilitates their learning autonomy to a varying extent. The most unanimously agreed upon impact is that formative assessment helps engage students in the lesson, with some other positive influences including *'developing*

teamwork skills and computer literacy', *'working proactively and independently'*, *'showing strengths and creativity'*, and *'responding to teachers' comments'*.

Lily, Helen, and Rosie recounted the following experiences of formative assessment in relation to project presentation. All teachers let their students do all the tasks within a group without interfering too much in their progress. In her case, Lily asked her students to self-reflect and give feedback on the performance of all group members. Then, the teacher gave comments on their teamwork and gave scores based on the final product, group report, and group members' notes. She reported that after this activity, students could learn from their own experience and improve their teamwork skills, as they had to ensure that all teammates were working together for the sake of the final group result.

Similarly, in her notes, Rosie elaborated on how her presentation task benefited her students. She also found that formative assessment tasks such as presentations help students know how to collaborate, which is *'a very difficult yet important soft skill for Vietnamese students, as there might be many students who are good when working individually but uncooperative when working in groups'*. Rosie believed that by working together, students become aware that if they do their task slowly and ineffectively, their performance will affect the results of the whole group, and consequently take more responsibility in their assigned task. Also, in her case, instead of asking students to present in class, Rosie asked them to upload their final products on social networking sites such as Facebook. This also helped students develop their technology literacy, which is a necessary skill in tertiary education.

Helen stated that her students are *'more engaged in doing projects than in studying and taking tests'*. When doing activities such as projects, students with poor academic performance do not feel left out, and are provided with opportunities to promote their own strengths. She noted that although some students might not have the ability to search for information, they are well proficient in making video clips. Thus, they can exploit what they are already good at and contribute to the group accordingly.

Through organising weekly formative assessment speaking tasks via Flipgrid platform, Victor noted other traits that his students had, which could not be exhibited in class through summative assessment due to time constraints. During the assessment process, he found that each of his students were capable of *'working proactively and independently'*, with some even showing their creativity when submitting projects.

In brief, this chapter has presented the findings attained from seven participants for the two research questions, with the summary of findings for each of which having been presented in the respective parts of the chapter.

With regard to the first question, participating teachers are currently shifting their focus from summative to formative assessment. In general, findings from the study showed that participants share some similarities in their perceptions of formative assessment, which were reported into a cyclic process.

In terms of formative assessment practices, participating teachers have presented a repertoire of 'what, when, how and why' formative assessment is

situated in the classroom. Overall, the data from the study revealed that participating teachers have implemented several formative assessment strategies in different stages of their teaching to fulfil three major purposes.

These key findings are synthesised in the next chapter and discussed in the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter aims to interpret the findings reported in the Findings chapter and discuss how these findings relate to the current literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The following sections discuss: the relationships between active learning and assessment (Section 5.1); Vietnamese official documents on English Language Teaching (Section 5.2); and active learning and formative assessment in the secondary school setting (Section 5.3). The chapter then offers a brief summary of the major findings for each research question (Section 5.4). In the same section, limitations of this research and implications for practical use are acknowledged, with the chapter concluding with recommendations for future studies.

5.1. Active learning and formative assessment

The analysis of data reveals that teachers in this study have recognised and appreciated the use of formative assessment as a tool to promote students' active learning. Rather than learning through their teachers, students now have an active role to play in their own learning i.e. doing activities (information and ideas), learning through doing (experience), and thinking about their learning (reflection).

In his seminal work, Freire (1970) argued that students were tormented by an education that was designed to merely imprint the patterns of the dominant culture upon them rather than enabling them to take charge of their own lives: "Education suffers from narration sickness" (p. 71). From Freire's perspective, teachers were attempting to narrate life to their students and not allowing them to explore and learn from experience on their own. Here knowledge is deposited

from teachers to students, which means students are placed in the position of passive reception rather than active engagement. This is not a process of knowledge acquisition, as "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72). The banking model, stemming from this narration, emphasises on mechanical rote memorisation (behavioural paradigm) and is devoid of students' experience. According to Freire and Macedo (1987), the banking model neither creates true knowledge nor achieves its primary goal of passing on teachers' knowledge to students, since "Only by learning the significance could they [students] know how to memorise it [content], to fix it" (p. 33).

In rejecting the 'banking model', Freire advocated problem-posing education, in which true knowledge is created and acquired by means of communication and collaboration between both students and teachers. Students need to be continually challenged by problems posed by teachers, become critical co-investigators, and become actively engaged with the teacher in resolving real problems. Problem-posing education shifts the learning from behaviourism to constructivism and transforms students from passive listeners to independent learners. In other words, students learn autonomously through their knowledge base, first-hand experience, personal inquiry, and thorough reflection.

By drawing from relevant models in the literature - Freire's banking concept and problem-posing education; Black's and Dylan's formative assessment; Hattie's and Timperley's feedback model; Kolb's experiential

learning cycle, these research findings have been able to present a visual picture

of the role of formative assessment in promoting active student learning in EFL

classes in Vietnam, linking student language and activities.
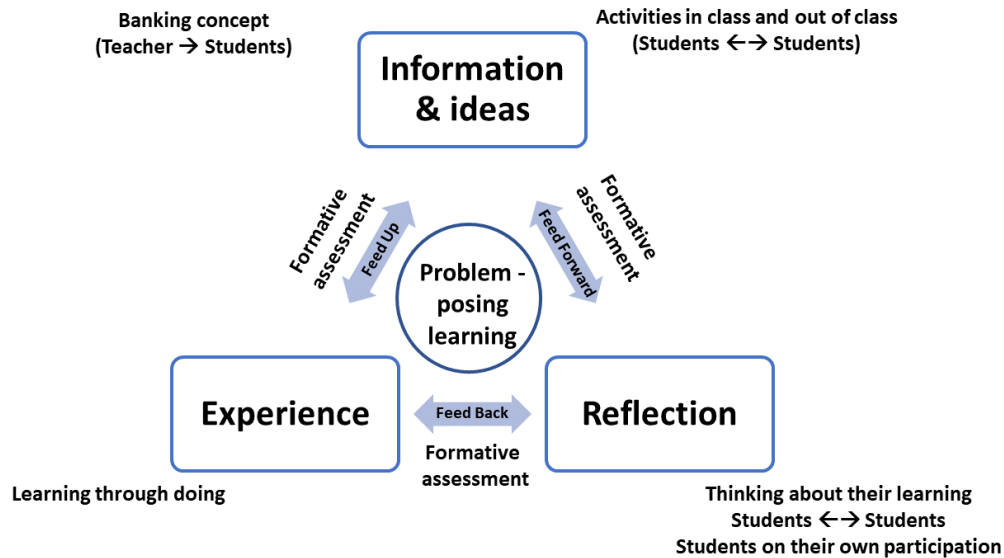
Figure 5.1 The role of formative assessment in promoting active student learning

in EFL classes (adapted from the figure of "A holistic view of active learning"

(Fink, 2003, p. 17)).

The above diagram clearly shows how active learning takes place in class,

with three major concepts (1) information and ideas; (2) experience; and (3)

reflection. Rather than students having a passive role, active learning

encompasses all aspects related to students' learning in a course, and how

students involve in dynamic and proactive activities where they complete their

tasks and reflect upon such tasks (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Felder & Brent, 2009,

2016). This model does not negate the importance of the banking model in

students' learning; rather, it acts as a predecessor to other learning processes in

which information and ideas are provided to students through teachers' narration. Linking to language teaching in Vietnam, there are some periods in which EFL teachers introduce grammar rules or new vocabulary for students. Besides being passively received, new knowledge can also be acquired through secondary sources such as the Internet, and this autonomy in searching for information is considered a form of active learning. Without having learning content, students will be unable to actively work with ideas at a later time.

As active learning is impossible when students are merely absorbing information, either passively or actively, they need to move forward by means of problem-posing e.g. experience and reflection. This process can be executed in the form of different formative assessment tasks such as Think – Pair – Share, where students do or observe activities to gain rich learning experiences by brainstorming and discussing together. Most importantly, students need to reflect on what they have completed to consolidate their ideas and make sense of their experiences. Examples of this step are self-assessment or peer assessment after each activity. It is worth mentioning that according to Boud (2000), "many forms of peer assessment are ineffective. These are processes in which peers are used as surrogate assessors to generate grades. That is, the focus is really on summative assessment" (p. 157). In other words, peer assessment is not inherently formative, especially if students are not able to provide meaningful feedback to each other and just merely assign marks to others (Ashenafi, 2017; Boud, 2000; N.-F. Liu and Carless, 2006; C. Patton, 2012; Zhou et al., 2020). However, in this study, participating teachers, when they were responding to the questions, explicitly

identified peer assessment as formative assessment. This is because peer assessment has become a developing trend in Vietnam, and teachers tend to put a growing emphasis on using peer assessment to reinforce their feedback without distinguishing peer assessment from formative one. Hence, the researcher respected that notion and still included peer assessment as a merging type of feedback in Chapter Four.

Formative assessment tasks can also be conducive to engaging students in learning. From the findings, formative assessment tasks have a positive influence on students' willingness to participate and give them more opportunities to demonstrate their individual strengths. Furthermore, the research findings provide support for the correlation between the adoption of formative assessment in classrooms and students' language learning experience and engagement, which confirms the international consensus that formative assessment improves students' learning experience (Barana et al., 2019).

In their study, Hattie and Timperley (2007) conceptualised feedback as any information delivered by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) concerning aspects of a person's performance or understanding. The findings of this study have built on the existing knowledge of Hattie and Timperley's model of feedback and shed some light on the notion of feeding up, feeding back, and feeding forward. The following sections interpret the results to discuss these notions in greater detail.

5.1.1. Feeding Up (Where am I going?)

The first dimension of feedback, feeding up, reminds students about their goals and making judgments about the attainment of such goals. In fact, the clarification of expectations and success criteria for students is an important element of giving effective feedback (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Davison (2013) emphasises the significance of including students in decisions about the rationale for assessment, how and on what basis they will be assessed, as well as ensuring that they are aware of the intended learning outcomes and success criteria prior to assessment. In the social-constructivist perspective, learners should be independently and actively involved in the knowledge construction (Jonassen & Land, 2012), in contrast to being passive in their own learning (Boud & Molloy, 2012). For the context of ELT, teachers should inform both students and parents such information and corporate activities that develop self- and peer-assessment (Davison, 2019).

As Hattie and Timperley (2007) noted, when teachers and learners share mutual understandings of success criteria at the beginning or during the learning cycle, the learning process can be directed towards purposeful actions that later fulfil or even exceed the learning goals. In the long run, teaching practices that focus on feeding up principles can promote students' self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006), as well as encourage students to receive and use feedback.

In terms of sharing feed up between a teacher and students, some factors should be taken into consideration. When providing feed up, teachers should be very clear and specific to avoid any misinterpretation by students (Hounsell et al., 2008). Also, feed up should be directed toward and related to the achievement of success criteria. With regard to timing, feed up should not occur at the end of the learning cycle because learners would be left with no time to act upon the feedback (Wiliam, 2011).

Looking at the findings in this study, feed up has not received well enough attention from participants and has not been exploited to the fullest. Only two participating teachers talked about it, and two employed it in their classroom by explicitly stating the learning intentions and success criteria at the beginning of a learning period. A possible reason for this situation might be that Vietnamese EFL teachers have to manage larger class sizes (ranging from 30 to 50 young students per class). Therefore, they had to trade the feeding up opportunities to class management and other teaching activities.

5.1.2. Feeding Back (How am I going?)

The feeding back dimension involves an agent (teacher, peer, or self) providing information pertaining to "a task or performance goal, often in relation to some expected standard, to prior performance, and/or to success or failure on a specific part of the task" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89). Among agents, teachers are considered the most reliable and crucial external source when it comes to giving feedback to students (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Language learners need

ongoing, targeted and specific feedback to be aware of 'how they are going' and to compare their performance with assessment standards (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Formative assessment practices can be reflected in the provision of ongoing, regular, purposeful and specific feedback (Brooks, Carroll, Gillies, & Hattie, 2019). Many scholars agree that a powerful and effective feedback should be given and received during rather than after the learning period (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell et al., 2008; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research (Brooks et al., 2019) showing that feed back is the most common feedback type used in the classroom. The feeding back dimension identified was predominantly verbal comments directed to students by teachers, with feedback from peers in some cases. Peer feedback benefits not only the students receiving the information, but also the students giving it, since higher-order thinking skills are required (Brookhart, 2012; Hadzhikoleva et al., 2019; Hattie, 2012; Sadler, 2010).

5.1.3. Feeding Forward (Where to next?)

Feeding forward, also known as future-oriented and specific directions that should be implemented in future tasks, closes up the feedback loop (Boud & Molloy, 2012; Hounsell et al., 2008; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sadler, 2010). Feed forward specifically offers greater possibilities for learning, including "enhanced challenges, more self-regulation over the learning process, greater fluency and

140

automaticity, more strategies and processes to work on the tasks, deeper understanding, and more information about what is and what is not understood" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89). Shepard (2000) highlighted the need for a balance between 'measurement' and feed-forward functions. In the case of an individual student or teacher, contextualised and individualised data would be necessary with the aim to improve the language and literacy of a language learner (Davison, 2019). Since feed forward provides students with guidance on potential improvement, it is often highly appreciated by students.

In this study, feeding forward was the least used feedback type recorded in the classroom, which is similar to the findings of Brooks et al. (2019); Gamlem and Smith (2013); and Peterson and Irving (2008).

5.2. Vietnamese policies on English Language Teaching

In the context of integration and globalisation and with English positioned as the most common foreign language since the Sixth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1986, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) was introduced nationally as a compulsory school subject at all educational levels – from primary to tertiary education levels. It was a revolutionary decision for the educational sector; however, it was not very well implemented. According to the Vietnamese government, the major challenges were the outdated curricula, teaching methods, and testing and assessment procedures. Curricula were noted to be too content-heavy, overly academic, and lacking in professional development (Decision No.711/QD-TTg, 2012). Teaching and learning methods were reported as inappropriate, with the teacher-centered approach being criticised for

restricting students' active learning, engagement and creativity in learning activities. The government then outlined eight solutions, one of which is to renovate the teaching contents and methods, exams, tests, and education quality assessment.

In this solution, there should be some changes to and renovation of the teaching methods and assessment of learning towards the promotion of learners' activeness, self-discipline, initiative, creativity and self-learning capacity. Descriptive evidence and data regarding student capability should be compiled from both students' exam results and ongoing portfolio processes (i.e. formative assessment). In order to achieve this goal, the educators and policymakers have been planning and implementing a number of decisions in the teaching and learning of English, from primary to tertiary education levels. As reviewed in Chapter Two, their most significant decisions and policies were: (1) Instructions on foreign language teaching, 2008; (2) the Vietnam National Foreign Language Project 2020 (NFLP 2020), which commenced in 2008 and then adjusted and revised as; (3) the NFLP 2025 in 2016; and (4) Decision No.711 on Education Development Strategies for the period 2011-2020 in 2012.

Recognising the contemporary language research and pedagogy (Alamri, 2018; Criado & Sanchez, 2009; Holiday, 1994; Lie, 2007; Richards, 2006), the Vietnamese MoET has encouraged teachers to use communicative approaches in teaching English and student engagement which have officially become the goals of teaching and learning English in Vietnam (V. Le & Barnard, 2009; Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012; T. H. Nguyen, 2015).

In 2008, the Vietnamese MoET issued instructions on foreign language teaching (No. 7984/BGDDT-GDTrH) for all secondary schools in Vietnam, with two key missions included being (1) renovation to teaching methods to encourage positivity, initiative and creativity in language learning and (2) better investment in teaching facilities. To improve students' communication skills, language teachers should focus on the four macro language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and adopt diverse teaching activities to maximise students' chances to use the target language. Assessment and evaluation should also be reconsidered, and students should be now assessed based on their language knowledge, cultural awareness, and the four macro skills. Assessment should improve teaching and learning quality as well as correspond with the students' learning outcomes.

To further promote the study of English language and developing the foreign language proficiency of students, the MoET also issued the Vietnamese NFLP 2020 as a comprehensive solution for English Language Teaching and learning in Vietnam and revised the project in 2016, with the timeline of being extended to 2025. The general goal of the 2025 project is to "renovate foreign language teaching and learning in the national education system; continue to implement new foreign language curricula at every school level and training degree; improve foreign language proficiency to meet study and work requirements; increase the competitiveness of human resources in the time of integration in order to create contributions to the building and development of the country; and create a foundation for universalising foreign languages in general

143

education by 2025" (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MoET], 2016a). In this iteration the improvement of national foreign language testing and assessment capabilities has become the most important goal.

In secondary education, this task can be achieved by improving the implementation process of regular and periodic testing and assessment (i.e. summative and formative assessment) in foreign language teaching and learning (Mai et al., 2011; D. M. Nguyen, 2014).

To sum up, from the aforementioned official documents in Vietnam, it can be concluded that the Vietnamese government is keeping up with the progressive trend in ELT, which is promoting communicative approaches in foreign language classes. In order to achieve this goal, the renovation of assessment procedures and the encouragement of active learning are two significant tasks.

5.3. Active learning and formative assessment in secondary schools

The general picture emerging from the data analysis in this study is that participating Vietnamese EFL teachers are shifting their focus from summative to formative assessment, in terms of both their perceptions and in-class practices. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that formative assessment can be adopted to activate students' ownership of learning (Brookhart et al., 2009; Victoria Department of Education and Training, 2020b). Also, teachers are considered 'key players' in the assessment act (Michell & Davison, 2020).

In the context of secondary education, one positive factor for promoting active learning in class is teachers' attempts to create a more engaging class while adhering to MoET's policies. Teachers are willing to differentiate their teaching and use a variety of formative assessment tasks to engage students.

Another positive aspect found in this study is the transparency in assessment criteria between teachers and students. Social-cultural theorists state that a mutual understanding of goals, criteria, and methods in their practices among participants is of importance to the effectiveness of learning (Rogoff, 2003, 2008). Assessment no longer remains a 'black box' (Black & Wiliam, 1998b) that causes confusion and difficulties for both students and teachers. Teachers now are willing to articulate and explain the assessment process to students, including the success criteria and how teachers will mark their students' work (feeding up).

However, despite the endeavours of government, school administration, teachers and other stakeholders, there are still a number of challenges in teaching and learning English in Vietnam within the secondary school setting. To begin with, poor teaching conditions are a factor hindering the effectiveness of English Language Teaching in Vietnam. The majority of EFL classes at secondary schools in Vietnam have enrolments of 40 to 50 students, which makes it more difficult for assessments and microteaching. A recent study suggested that a language class should have a maximum of 20 students to allow room for innovation (Trinh & Mai, 2018). Supporting this finding, Broadbent et al. (2018) also acknowledged that lower class size is contributory to the improvement of pedagogical quality

and provision of better and timely feedback from lecturers to students. There are also teaching aid constraints, as most schools can only afford tape recorders and projectors. Language labs, interactive whiteboards and other digital tools, for example, only exist in schools in big cities or private institutions. To make the matter worse, the number of class contact hours is limited to only two or three hours per week (which is equivalent to three or four EFL classes per week in public schools), which might be insufficient exposure to a foreign language (Benigno et al., 2017; Knight, 2018).

What is more, there is a mismatch between testing and teaching in English Language Teaching in Vietnam. Teaching is encouraged to follow the communicative approach, whereas standardised tests seem to focus on measuring students' lexicogrammatical knowledge (Hoang, 2010). Although the rhetoric of Vietnamese MoET emphasises on the development of practical communication skills, this is only occasionally reflected at the classroom level. From the findings of this study, although participating teachers attempt to merge formative and summative purposes of assessment in their EFL classes, both teachers and students still place their focus on the development of reading comprehension, vocabulary and structural grammatical patterns for the purpose of passing the summative standardised end-of-year exams and university entrance examinations. As a result, EFL teachers in secondary schools have to juggle between engaging students in the language class and preparing them for various high-stake tests.

The findings of this study do not exist in isolation, but instead serve to amplify a growing body of research demonstrating the promotion of active

learning through the use of formative assessment. This study responds to calls for extended research into formative assessment in different country contexts (Bennett, 2011; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Rea-Dickins, 2001), with its focus being placed on the context of ELT in Vietnamese secondary schools.

5.4. Summary of findings, implications, limitations and future research

5.4.1. Summary of findings

This study has examined how formative assessment is understood and implemented by Vietnamese EFL teachers in secondary schools. The findings indicate that most Vietnamese EFL teachers participating in this study are currently shifting their focus from summative to formative assessment, which they perceive as class-based assessment incorporated into both teaching and learning processes. Formative assessment is reported to be integrated into the classroom via a cyclic process including planning and refining objectives and outcomes, selecting and setting tasks to collect evidence of learning, sharing understandings of learning tasks and success criteria, implementing diverse teaching strategies, giving feedback on students' learning, communicating feedback and assessment results, and reflecting on teaching and learning. The findings also show that there is a link between the adoption of formative assessment in the classroom and students' language learning experience and engagement.

The findings also provide insights into the teachers' perceptions of how they implement formative assessment in their EFL classes. Results confirmed that

they did not implement formative assessment in an ad-hoc manner – rather, they designed it and spontaneously implemented it in accordance with several factors taken into consideration (i.e. class size, regulations, students' level of language preparedness, access to teaching aids, and students' needs). The majority of participating teachers opted for a wide range of formative assessment types to differentiate their teaching, with some of the most frequently-mentioned tasks being projects/presentations, pair/group work, discussions and classroom engagement. These resulted in positive impacts on students' willingness to participate, and provided students with more chances to show their strengths.

Formative feedback received the largest amount of attention from participants. During interviews, three major factors of properly-delivered feedback were identified as being feedback content, mechanics of feedback, and language of feedback. According to participants, reflection on action plays an essential role in their professional practices, with the main purposes of in-class reflection being to measure what teachers and students have achieved and make adjustments if necessary. Also, participating teachers believed that feedback and assessment results should be circulated among teachers, students, homeroom teachers, and parents. This procedure could be completed either directly or indirectly via technology-assisted channels.

The findings reveal how formative assessment is situated in the EFL classes in Vietnam by seeking answers to the 'what, when, how, and why' of formative assessment is incorporated in EFL classes. From the data, an inventory of various formative assessment techniques was provided, with the Think – Pair –

Share/ learning partners being the most popular technique used in classrooms. Additionally, formative assessment techniques were adopted predominately for teaching productive skills and undertaking projects. This result is consistent with the previous conclusion drawn by Britton (2015).

Another important empirical finding is that the majority of participants used formative assessment techniques on three different occasions during their lessons: while introducing learning objectives of the lesson and task instructions; and/or throughout the lesson; and/or towards the end of an activity or lesson.

From the data obtained from audio-recordings of lessons, three major purposes for using formative assessment in the classroom were also identified as:

(1) sharing learning objectives and expectations;

(2) contributing to learning performances; and

(3) monitoring learning achievements in progress.

5.4.2. Limitations

This study has contributed to an under-researched area of formative assessment in Vietnam. Few previous studies have investigated the teachers' perceptions and practices of formative assessment in teaching English as a Foreign Language in particular. However, although the researcher gathered comprehensive data sets, a few unavoidable limitations arose during the data collection process.

First of all, it is important to note that this study was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation has dramatically affected the research

timeline and the way the study was conducted. The interview had to be carried out online using a video-conferencing platform, namely Zoom. Even though the researcher endeavoured to ensure a setting without unwarranted interferences, there were still some technical issues during the interview procedures. In addition, the researcher did not conduct classroom observations as per the original intention, which could have provided her with more detailed insights into the classroom practices (Waxman, 2013). The possibility of observing classrooms was unworkable due to the unforeseen circumstances of the period. Limited Internet access at the schools also hindered the researcher from observing the lessons remotely. If face-to-face interviews and in-class observations had been operated, more useful information such as participants' facial expressions, their body language and students' reactions could have been collected.

Secondly, this study only included seven teacher semi-structured interviews, fourteen audio-recording lessons and five teacher reflective notes, which has inevitably limited the scope. Thus, it is beyond the scope of this study to generalise the findings to other populations of language teaching. The present study, however, still adds interesting remarks on formative assessment in EFL classroom, and significantly extends the body of literature reviewed in Chapter 2 by investigating the teachers' perceptions of formative assessment in an EFL context and identifying their in-class practices of formative assessment.

5.4.3. Implications of the research for classroom practices and teacher education

The findings of this study have drawn out several far-reaching implications for future practices. To begin with, this study has presented that participants have

shared some similarities in their understandings of formative assessment to varying degrees. As Black (2015) pointed out, "Academics in education have to find ways to build fruitful interactions between their world and the world of practising teachers if they are ambitious to explore, and to learn how to implement, the potential benefits of their work." (p. 176). Therefore, teachers, policymakers and other stakeholders may consider establishing regular communication in order to introduce and discuss learning innovations (e.g. formative assessment and active learning) successfully.

Secondly, it has become obvious that there is a paradox in the Vietnamese assessment system: teachers are urged to utilise formative assessment whereas high-stake summative testing is administered simultaneously, which is similar to that of some neighbouring countries such as Indonesia (Defianty, 2018). However, this study strengthens the idea that tests can be used for formative purposes (Black et al., 2003; Carless, 2011; R. Lam, 2013). It proves that teachers can make good use of the tests to identify individuals' learning strengths and difficulties and follow up particular students with remedial instruction.

The data also highlights an important issue for curriculum and assessment developers, which is ensuring the alignment among the curricula, pedagogies, assessments, outcomes, and standards in ELT. According to several researchers (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Kennedy, 2006; T. P. L. Nguyen, 2019), rather than using a single form, multiple assessment methods including alternative ones should be used to satisfy all learning outcomes.

Thirdly, there should be an improvement in the development of and using teaching and learning resources. For example, Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) could be a great professional assistance for teachers' assessment procedures. Teachers could also provide students with guidance in utilising digital possibilities (such as Facebook, Google classrooms, Youtube etc) in their self-learning outside schools (Alsulami, 2016; Hayta & Yaprak, 2013; Wang & Chen, 2019).

One more area for improvement is the learning environment. The government and schools may reconsider what the appropriate class sizes for ELT should be and increase hours for teaching English.

In terms of broader implications, the results of this study could be expanded to the topic of teacher education. Greater investments in the English Language Teaching Education professional development at all levels should be considered. This has been effectively implemented in most ESL countries, since English teachers' professional development has a vital role to play in teaching and learning (J. Zhang, 2015). In fact, "effective professional development programs draw teachers into an analysis of their current practice in relation to professional standards for good practice" (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010, p. 8). Nevertheless, since current professional development programs in Vietnam mainly focus on pedagogy development (V. T. Nguyen & Mai, 2015), more programs should be organised to address curriculum, teachers' ability to reflect on and evaluate one's own practice, and students' goals (T. P. L. Nguyen, 2019).

From the data, it would appear that more professional development programs in assessment are specifically needed, since some teachers admitted not being well trained in assessment. This also resonates with some previous studies. There is a lack of necessary assessment components in the teacher education curricula to fully equip student teachers with formative assessment (Brookhart, 2011; James and Pedder, 2006; Siegel and Wissehr, 2011; Xu and G. Brown, 2016), and student teachers tend to gain more thorough understanding of summative rather than formative assessment (Dayal and Lingam, 2015; DeLuCa and Klinger, 2010). Specifically, in the context of Vietnam, a study carried out by T. P. L. Nguyen (2019) found that students majoring in English Language Teacher Education do not receive sufficient knowledge and skills in testing and assessment (throughout a four-year course, they are only provided with a two-credit-hour course in this area), while Luong (2015) indicated that there is little professional development focusing on student assessment. Therefore, institutions could consider increasing course work in assessment to assist pre-service students. Ongoing workshops can be provided to continuously upgrade teachers' professional assessment practices, enabling them to collaborate with their colleagues about teaching and assessment, as "educators at all levels value opportunities to work together, reflect on their practices, exchange ideas, and share strategies" (Guskey, 2003, p. 749). In other words, more scaffolding and practice are required in teacher education and professional training so that both pre- and in-service teachers can acquire comprehensive knowledge and practical

skills in formative assessment (Dayal and Lingam, 2015; Grainger and Adie, 2014).

Another important implication for teacher education is assisting teachers to integrate theory and practice with the application of TELL. With the aid of TELL in language classes, teachers can develop creative teaching methods, source additional appropriate teaching materials, and promote students' technological literacy. This is especially proven vital under the circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic, when students all over the world have to get used to learning remotely.

5.4.4. Suggestions for future research

This study qualitatively examined EFL teachers' perceptions and in-class practices of formative assessment in Vietnamese secondary schools. Analysis of the resulting data has provided a deeper insight into formative assessment in the field of English Language Teaching in Vietnam. However, there are some areas in which further studies are needed.

Further research that may be beneficial in exploring the way formative assessment is understood from different perspectives could include the input from MoET representatives, school principals, educational experts, teachers from different disciplines and EFL students. Research on students' perceptions may provide a particularly useful perspective on assessment. Future researchers may consider utilising the teaching and learning cycle, with the reflection as an interconnection between teachers and students and drawing upon the work of Kemmis and McTaggart (1998). By using their action research spiral, the impacts

of formative assessment on student learning, which is still an unanswered

question in this study, can be investigated in greater detail.

REFERENCES

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2005). *Nghị quyết về đổi mới cơ bản và toàn diện giáo dục đại học Việt Nam giai đoạn 2005 - 2020 (Resolution of Higher Education Reform Agenda)* (14/2005/NQ-CP). Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2006). *Quyết định v/v Quy chế về đào tạo Đại học cao đẳng hệ chính quy [Decision No. 25/2006/QĐ-BGD&ĐT, dated 26/06/2006, Regulation on training Full-time students at Universities and Colleges].* (25/2006/QĐ-BGD&ĐT). Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2007). *Quyết định Quy chế về đào tạo Đại học cao đẳng hệ chính quy theo quy chế tín chỉ (Decision on Regulation on training Full-time students at Universities and Colleges following the Credit-based system).* (43/2007/QĐ-BGD&ĐT). Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2010). *Chương trình tiếng Anh thí điểm tiểu học (Pilot English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools in Vietnam). (Ban hành theo Quyết định Số: 3321/QĐ-BGDĐT ngày 12 tháng 8 năm 2010 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2011). *Quy chế Đánh giá, xếp loại học sinh trung học cơ sở và học sinh trung học phổ thông (Ban hành kèm theo Thông tư số: 58/2011/TT-BGDĐT ngày 12 tháng 12 năm 2011 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo) (Regulation on Assessment and Classification of Secondary Schools and High school Students - Issued together with Circular No.: 58/2011/TT-BGDĐT dated December 12, 2011 of the Minister of Education and Training).* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2012a). *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học cơ sở (Pilot English Curriculum for Lower Secondary Schools in Vietnam). (Ban hành theo Quyết định Số: 01/QĐ-BGDĐT ngày 03 tháng 01 năm 2012 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2012). *Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông môn tiếng Anh thí điểm cấp trung học phổ thông (Pilot English Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Vietnam). (Ban hành theo Quyết định Số: 5290/QĐ-BGDĐT ngày 23 tháng 11 năm 2012 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo).* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2012b). *Luật số 08/2012/QH13 Luật Giáo dục đại học [Law No.08/2012/QH13 on Higher Education].* The Government of Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2012c). *Quyết định 711/QĐ-TTg Phê duyệt "Chiến lược phát triển giáo dục 2011-2020" [Decision 711/QĐ-TTg Approving the 2011-2020 Education Development Strategy].* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2014). *Thông tư ban hình quy định đánh giá học sinh tiểu học. (Circular on the Promulgating Regulations on Assessment of Primary Students). Thông tư số 30/2014/TT-BGDĐT* Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2016a). Quyết định số 2080/QĐ-TTg Phê duyệt điều chỉnh, bổ sung Đề án Dạy và học Ngoại ngữ trong hệ thống giáo dục quốc dân giai đoạn 2017-2025 [Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg on the Approval of Adjustment and Supplement the Project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2017-2025"].

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2016b). *Thông tư sửa đổi, bổ sung một số điều của quy định đánh giá học sinh tiểu học theo thông tư số 30/2014/TT-BGDĐT. (The Amended Circular on the Circular 30/2014/TT-BGDĐT).* (20/2016/TT-BGDĐT). Vietnam.

[MoET], B. G. d. v. Đ. t. (2018). *Hoàn thiện Kế hoạch giai đoạn 2017 - 2025 và hướng dẫn nhiệm vụ trọng tâm năm 2018 và năm 2019 của Đề án NNQG (Circular 3258/BGDĐT-ĐANN on Plan completion for period 2017-2025 and Guidance on primary missions in 2018 and 2019 of National Foreign Language Project)* (3258/BGDĐT-ĐANN). Vietnam.

ACT Government Education. (2016). *Teachers' guide to assessment*. ACT Government. https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/297182/TeachersGuide-To-Assessment.pdf

Adkins, J. K. (2018). Active learning and formative assessment in a user-centered design course. *Information Systems Education Journal (ISEDJ), 16*(4), 34-40.

Agrawal, M. (2004). Curricular reform in schools: the importance of evaluation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 36*(3), 361-379. https://doi.org/10.1080/0022027032000152987

Alamri, W. A. (2018). Communicative language teaching: Possible alternative approaches to CLT and teaching contexts. *English Language Teaching, 11*(10), 132-138. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n10p132

Aljohani, M. (2017). Principles of "Constructivism" in foreign language teaching. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies, 7*(1), 97-107.

Alonzo, D. (2016). Development and application of a teacher assessment for learning (AfL) literacy tool. [Doctoral dissertation, University of New South Wales]. http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:38345/SOURCE02?view=true

Alsulami, S. (2016). The effects of technology on learning English as a Foreign Language among female EFL students at Effatt College: An exploratory study. *Studies in Literature and Language*, *12*(4).

Andersson, C., & Palm, T. (2017). The impact of formative assessment on student achievement: a study of the effects of changes to classroom practice after a comprehensive professional development programme. *Learning and Instruction*, *49*, 92-102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.12.006

Arter, J. (1996). Using assessment as a tool for learning. In R. Blum & J. Arter (Eds.), *Student performance assessment in an era of restructuring* (pp. 1-6). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Ashenafi, M. M. (2017). Peer-assessment in higher education – Twenty-first century practices, challenges and the way forward. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 42*(2), 226–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1100711

Astawa, N., Artini, L., & Kerti Nitiasih, P. (2017). Project-based learning activities and EFL students' productive skills in English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 8*(6), 1147-1155.

Australian Council for Educational Research. (2010). *ACER 2009-2010 Annual Report.* https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=ar

Ausubel, D. P. (1968). *Educational psychology: A cognitive view*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Baldauf Jr., R. B., Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N., & Bryant , P. (2011). Success or failure of primary second/foreign language programmes in Asia: what do the data tell us? *Current Issues in Language Planning, 12*(2), 309-323. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2011.609715

Barana, A., Conte, A., Fissore, C., Marchisio, M., & Rabellino, S. (2019). Learning analytics to improve formative assessment strategies. *Journal of ELearning and Knowledge Society, 15*(3), 75-88. https://doi.org/10.20368/1971-8829/1135057

Baturay, M. H., & Daloğlu, A. (2010). E-portfolio assessment in an online English course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning,, 23*(5), 413-428. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2010.520671

Bell, D., & Kahrhoff, J. (2006). *Active learning handbook*. Webster University.

Benigno, V., De Jong, J., & Van Moere, A. (2017). *How long does it take to learn a language?.* Global Scale of English. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318233428_How_long_does_it_take_to_learn_a_language_Insights_from_research_on_language_learning

Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: a critical review. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 18*(1), 5-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2010.513678

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). Open University Press/Mc Graw-Hill Education.

Birenbaum, M. (2016). Assessment culture versus testing culture: The impact on assessment for learning. In D. Laveault & L. Allal (Eds.), *Assessment for learning: meeting the challenge of implementation* (pp. 275-292). Springer International Publishing.

Black, P. (2010). Formative Assessment. In M. B., E. Baker, & P. Peterson (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (pp. 359-364). Elsvier Science.

Black, P. (2015). Formative assessment – an optimistic but incomplete vision. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22*(1), 161-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2014.999643

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Open University Press.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998a). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 5*(1), 7-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998b). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(2), 139-148.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2005). Lessons from around the world: How policies, politics and cultures constrain and afford assessment practices. *Curriculum Journal, 16*(2), 249-261.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2009). Developing the theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*(1), 5-31. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9068-5

Bloxham, S., & Boyd, P. (2007). *Developing effective assessment in higher education: A practical guide*. Open University Press.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Allyn & Bacon.

Bolton, K., & Bacon-Shone, J. (2020). The statistics of English across Asia. In K. Bolton, W. Botha, & A. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *The Handbook of Asian Englishes.* John Wiley & Sons.

Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). *Active learning: creating excitement in the classroom*. The George Washington University.

Boud, D. (1981). *Developing student autonomy in learning*. Kogan Page.

Boud, D. (1995). *Enhancing learning through self-assessment*. Kogan Page.

Boud, D. (2000). Sustainable assessment: Rethinking assessment for the learning society. *Studies in Continuing Education, 22*(2), 151-167. https://doi.org/10.1080/713695728

Boud, D. (2007). *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (N. Falchikov Ed.). Routledge/ Taylor and Francis Group.

Boud, D. (2010). Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education. Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

Boud, D., & Dochy, F. (2010). Assessment 2020. Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education. https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/Assessment-2020_propositions_final.pdf

Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (1989). Quantitative studies of self-assessment in higher education: A critical analysis of findings. *Higher Education, 18*, 529-549. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138746

Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2012). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: The challenge of design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 38*(6), 698-712.

Box, C., Skoog, G., & Dabbs, J. M. (2015). A case study of teacher personal practice assessment theories and complexities of implementing formative assessment. *American Educational Research Journal, 52*(5), 956-983.

Brame, C. (2016). Active learning. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/active-learning/

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. National Academy Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications.

Brindley, G. (2008). Educational reform and language testing. In *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 365-378). Springer.

Britton, A. M. (2015). *Assessment for learning in teaching English to young learners: Teachers' understanding, classroom practice and impact on interactions.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Reading]. http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/41939/1/21803102_Britton_thesis.pdf

Broadbent, J., Panadero, E., & Boud, D. (2018). Implementing summative assessment with a formative flavour: a case study in a large class. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 43*(2), 307-322. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1343455

Broadfoot, P., Daugherty, R., Gardner, J., Gipps, C., Harlen, W., James, M., & Stobart, G. (1999). Assessment for learning: Beyond the black box. University of Cambridge School of Education. https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.2840.1444

Brookhart, S. M. (2011). Educational assessment knowledge and skills for teachers. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 30*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2010.00195.x

Brookhart, S. M. (2012). Teacher feedback in formative classroom assessment. In C. Webber & J. Lupart (Eds.), *Leading student assessment* (pp. 225-239). Springer.

Brookhart, S. M., Moss, C. M., & Long, B. A. (2009). Promoting student ownership of learning through high-impact formative assessment practices. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation, 6*(12), 52-67.

Brooks, C., Carroll, A., Gillies, R. M., & Hattie, J. (2019). A matrix of feedback for learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(4), 14-32.

Brown, E., & Glover, C. (2006). Evaluating written feedback. In B. C. a. C. K (Ed.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp. 81-91). Routledge.

Brown, H. D. (1972). Cognitive pruning and second language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal, 56*(4), 218-222.

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.

Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Pearson Education.

Brown, J. D., & Hudson, T. (1998). The alternatives in language assessment: Advantages and disadvantages. *University of Hawai'i Working Papers in ESL, 16*(2), 79-103. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587999

Brown, S. (1999). Assessing practice. In S. B. A. Glasner (Ed.), *Assessment matters in higher education: Choosing and using deverse approaches* (pp. 95-105). Open University Press.

Browne, N. M., & Keeley, S. M. (2001). *Striving for excellence in college: Tips for active learning*. Prentice Hall.

Buck, G. A., & Trauth-Nare, A. E. (2009). Preparing teachers to make the formative assessment process integral to science teaching and learning. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 20*(5), 475-494. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10972-009-9142-y

Burke, D. (2007). Engaging students in personal development planning: Profiles, skills development and acting on feedback. *Discourse, 6*(2), 107-142.

Butler, R. (1988). Enhancing and undermining intrinsic motivation: the effects oftask-involving and ego-involving evaluation on interest and performance. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 58*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8279.1988.tb00874.x

Büyükkarcı, K. (2014). Assessment beliefs and practices of language teachers in primary education. *International Journal of Instruction, 7*(1).

Carless, D. (2006). Differing perceptions in the feedback process. *Studies in Higher Education, 31*(2), 219-233.

Carless, D. (2009). Trust, distrust and their impact on assessment reform. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 34*(1), 79-89.

Carless, D. (2011). *From testing to productive student learning: Implementing formative assessment in Confucian-heritage settings*. Taylor & Francis.

Carrillo-de-la-Peña, M. T., Bailles, E., Caseras, X., Martinez, A., Ortet, G., & Pérez, J. (2009). Formative assessment and academic achievement in pre-graduate students of health sciences. *Advances in Health Sciences Education, 14*(1), 61-67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-007-9086-y

Case, S. (2007). Reconfiguring and realigning the assessment feedback processes for an undergraduate criminology degree. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 32*(3), 285-299.

Cauley, K. M., & McMillan, J. H. (2010). Formative assessment techniques to support student motivation and achievement. *The clearing house: A journal of educational strategies, issues and ideas, 83*(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650903267784

Chan, C., & Davison, C. (2020). Learning from each other: School-university collaborative action research as praxis. In M. Poehner & O. Inbar-Lourie (Eds.), *Toward a Reconceptualization of Second Language Classroom Assessment* (pp. 129-149). Springer.

Chapelle, C. A., & Brindley, G. (2002). An introduction to applied linguistics. In N.Schmitt (Ed.), *Assessment* (pp. 267-288). Oxford University Press.

Chen, Q. J., May, L., Klenowski, V., & Kettle, M. (2013). The enactment of formative assessment in English language classrooms in two Chinese universities: Teacher and student responses. *Assessment in Education Principles Policy and Practice, 21*(3), 271-285. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2013.790308

Cheshire, J. I. E. a. (1996). Introduction: Sociolinguistics and English around the World In J. Cheshire (Ed.), *English around the world: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 1-12). Cambridge University Press.

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven Principles For Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. *AAHE Bulletin*.

Chiya, S. (2003). *The importance of learning styles and learning strategies in EFL teaching in Japan*. Susaki, Japan: Susaki Technical High School, Kochi Prefecture.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research methods in education.* Routledge.

Council, C. D. (2001). *Learning to learn: The way forward in curriculum*. Education Bureau The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/cs-curriculum-doc-report/wf-in-cur/index.html

Cowie, B., & Bell, B. (1999). A model of formative assessment in science education. *Assessment in Education, 6*(1), 101-116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09695949993026

Creswell, J. W. (2007a). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (International Student ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007b). *Research design. Qualitative and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Criado, R., & Sanchez, A. (2009). English language teaching in Spain: Do textbooks comply with the official methodological regulations? A sample analysis. *International Journal of English Studies, 9*(1), 1-28.

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a global language* (Second Edition (Canto classics) ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Davies, A. (2008). Textbook trends in teaching language testing. *Language Testing, 25*(3), 327–347.

Davison, C. (2013). Innovation in assessment: Common misconceptions and problems. In K. Hyland & L. L. Wong (Eds.), *Innovation and change in English language education* (pp. 263-275). Routledge.

Davison, C. (2017). *Enhancing teacher assessment literacy in English language education: Problems and pitfalls*. Applied linguistics conference (ALANZ/ALAA/ALTAANZ), Auckland, New Zealand.

Davison, C. (2019). Using assessment to enhance learning in English language education. In X. Gao (Ed), *Second handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 433-454). Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02899-2

Davison, C., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2010). The Hong Kong certificate of education: School-based assessment reform in Hong Kong English language education. In L. Y. Cheng & A. Curtis (Eds.), English language assessment and the Chinese learner. Routledge.

Davison, C., & Leung, C. (2009). Current issues in english language teacher-based assessment. Tesol Quarterly, 43(3), 393-415.

Davison, C., & Michell, M. (2014). EAL assessment: what do Australian teachers want?. *TESOL in Context, 24*(2), 51-72.

Dayal, H. C., & Lingam, G. I. (2015). Fijian teachers' conceptions of assessment. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(8). https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.3

Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction – a growing global phenomenon*. British Council. https://www.britishcouncil.es/sites/default/files/british_council_english_as_a_medium_of_instruction.pdf

Defianty, M. (2018). *The practice of formative assessment by EFL teachers in secondary high schools in Indonesia* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Canberra]. https://doi.org/10.26191/6cp9-s546

DeLuca C., & Klinger, D. A. (2010). Assessment literacy development: identifying gaps in teacher candidates' learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 17*(4), 419–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2010.516643

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. SAGE Publications.

Deslauriers, L., Schelew, E., & Wieman, C. (2011). Improved learning in a large-enrollment physics class. *Science, 332*(6031), 862-864.

Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Dickson, P. (1996). *Using the target language: A view from the classroom*. National Foundation for Educational Research.

Dochy, F. J. R. C., & McDowell, L. (1997). Assessment as a tool for learning. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 23*(4), 279-298. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-491X(97)86211-6

Dornyei, Z. (2007). Creating a motivating classroom environment. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (Vol. 2, pp. 719-731). Springer.

Dunn, K. E., & Mulvenon, S. W. (2009). A critical review of research on formative assessment: The limited scientific evidence of the impact of

formative assessment in education. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 14*(7), 1-11.

Duong, A. (2020). *Learning strategies to improve formative assessment practices in teacher education: A comparative study of Australia and Vietnam* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sydney]. https://hdl.handle.net/2123/23102

Efstathiou, N., & Bailey, C. (2012). Promoting active learning using audience response system in large bioscience classes. *Nurse Education Today, 32*(1), 91-95.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). Macmillan.

Etkina, E. (2000). Weekly reports: A two-way feedback tool. *Science Education, 84*(5), 594-605. https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-237X(200009)84:5%3C594::AID-SCE3%3E3.0.CO;2-U

Eyers, G. (2014). Preservice teachers' assessment learning: change, development and growth [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Auckland]. http://hdl.handle.net/2292/23757

Faber, J. M., Luyten, H., & Visscher, A. J. (2016). The effects of a digital formative assessment tool on mathematics achievement and student motivation: Results of a randomized experiment. *Computers and Education*, *106*, 83-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.12.001

Felder, R. M., & Brent, R. (2009). Active learning: An introduction. *ASQ Higher Education Brief*, *2*(4), 1-5.

Felder, R. M., & Brent, R. (2016). *Teaching and learning STEM: A practical guide*. Jossey-Bass.

Fink, L. D. (2003). A self-directed guide to designing courses for significant learning. In *Creating significant learning experiences in college classrooms.* University of Oklahoma.

Fisher, R. (2013). *Creative dialogue: Talk for thinking in the classroom*. Taylor and Francis.

Foos, P. W., Mora, J. J., & Tkacz, S. (1994). Student study techniques and the generation effect. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86*(4), 567-576. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.86.4.567

Freeman, S., Eddy, S. L., McDonough, M., Smith, M. K., Okoroafor, N., Jordt, H., & Wenderoth, M. P. (2014). Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111*(23), 8410-8415.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Bergin & Garvey.

Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 9*(2), 113–132.

Gamlem, S. M., & Smith, K. (2013). Student perceptions of classroom feedback. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 20*(2), 150-169. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2012.749212

Genesse, F., & Upshur, J. A. (1996). *Classroom-based evaluation in second language education*. Cambridge University Press.

Gennip, N. A. E. v., Segers, M. S. R., & Tillema, H. H. (2009). Peer assessment for learning from a social perspective: the influence of interpersonal variables and structural features. *Educational Research Review, 4*, 41-54.

Geressu, T. (2008). *Perceptions and practices of active learning in EFL classes of Dilla University* [Master's thesis, Addis Ababa University].

Gholami, V., Attaran, A., & Moghaddam, M. M. (2014). Towards an interactive EFL class: Using active learning strategies. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 4*(19), 190-194.

Gill, D., & Lucas, D. (2013). Using alternative assessments in business and foreign language classes. *Journal of International Education Research, 9*(4), 359-370.

Goodall, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. AltaMira Press.

Grainger, P. R., & Adie, L. (2014). How do preservice teacher education students move from novice to expert assessors?. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(7). https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2014v39n7.9

Gu, P. Y. (2014). The unbearable lightness of the curriculum: What drives the assessment practices of a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in a Chinese secondary school? *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 21*(3), 286-305.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). SAGE Publications.

Guskey, T. R. (2003). What makes professional development effective? *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(10), 748-750.

Hadzhikoleva, S., Hadzhikolev, E., & Kasakliev, N. (2019). Using peer assessment to enhance higher order thinking skills. *Tem Journal, 8*(1), 242-247.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2017). Written language, standard language, global language. In J. Webster (Ed.), *Halliday in the 21st Century* (pp. 87-103). Bloomsbury.

Hamilton, D. (1994). Traditions, preferences, and postures in applied qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 60-69). SAGE Publications.

Hammersley, M. (2013). *What is qualitative research?*. Bloomsburry.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles and practices*. Tavistock.

Hannam, P. (2017). Teachers as gardeners: thinking, attentiveness and the child in the community of philosophical inquiry. *Childhood & Philosophy, 13*(28), 605-614.

Harding, L., & Kremmel, B. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy and professional development. In D. Tsagari & J. Banerjee (Eds.), *Handbook of second language assessment* (pp. 413–427). Mouton De Gruyter.

Hargreaves, E. (2011). Teachers' feedback to pupils: "like so many bottles thrown out to sea"? In R. B. B. Adamson (Ed.), *Assessment reform in education: policy and practice* (pp. 121-134). Springer.

Harlen, W. (2006). On the relationship between assessment for formative and summative purposes. In *Assessment and learninig* (pp. 104). SAGE Publications.

Harlen, W., & James, M. (1997). Assessment and learning: Differences and relationships between formative and summative assessment. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy, & Practice, 4*(3), 365-379.

Hatch, A. J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. State University of New York Press.

Hattie, J. (1999). *Influences on student learning*. Inaugural lecture given on August 2, 1999.

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/about/research/documents/influences-on-student-learning.pdf

Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning.* Routledge. https://hozir.org/pars_docs/refs/26/25322/25322.pdf

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(1), 81-112. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F003465430298487

Hayta, F., & Yaprak, Z. (2013). Learner autonomy and computer technology as a facilitator of autonomous language learning. *Journal of Educational & Instructional Studies in the World, 3*(2), 57-63.

Heritage, M. (2013). Gathering evidence of student understanding. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment*: SAGE Publications.

Higgins, R., Hartley, P., & Skelton, A. (2002). The conscientious consumer: reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning. *Studies in Higher Education, 27*(1), 53-64.

Hill, M. F. (2011). 'Getting traction': enablers and barriers to implementing Assessment for learning in secondary schools. *Assessment in Education : Principles , Policy & Practice, 18*(4), 347-364. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2011.600247

Ho, D. G. E. (2005). Why do teachers ask the questions they ask? *RELC Journal (Journal of Language Teaching and Research), 36*(3), 297-310. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0033688205060052

Ho, T. N. (2015). *An exploratory investigation of the practice of assessment for learning in Vietnamese higher education: Three case studies of lecturers' practice* [Doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology]. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/91545/1/Thi%20Nhat_Ho_Thesis.pdf

Hoang, V. V. (2010). The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam. *Ritsumeikan University's Institute for Teaching and Learning Journal, 22*(1), 7-18.

Hoang, V. V. (2018). MOET's three pilot English language communicational curricula for schools in Vietnam: Rationale, design and implementation. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 34*(2), 1-25. doi:10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4258

Hoang, V. V. (2020). The roles and status of English in present-day Vietnam: A social-cultural analysis. *VNU University of Languages and International Studies, 36*(1), 1-21.

Holliday, A. (1994). The house of TESEP and the communicative approach: the special needs of state English language education. *ELT Journal, 48*(1), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/48.1.3

Holmes, K., & Papageorgiou, G. (2009). Good, bad and insufficient: Students' expectations, perceptions and uses of feedback. *Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport & Tourism Education, 8*(1), 85-96.

Hondrich, A. L., Hertel, S., Adl-Amini, K., & Klieme, E. (2015). Implementing curriculum-embedded formative assessment in primary school science classrooms. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2015.1049113

Honna, N., & Takeshita, Y. (2005). English Language Teaching in Japan policy plans and their implementations. *RELC Journal (Journal of Language Teaching and Research), 36*(3), 363-383.

Hounsell, D., McCune, V., Hounsell, J., & Litjens, J. (2008). The quality of guidance and feedback to students. *Higher Education Research & Development, 27*(1), 55-67.

Huxham, M. (2007). Fast and effective feedback: Are model answers the answer?. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 32*(6), 601-611.

Hyatt, D. F. (2005). Yes, a very good point!": A critical genre analysis of a corpus of feedback commentaries on master of education assignments. *Teaching in Higher Education, 10*(3), 339-353.

Inbar-Lourie O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. *Language Testing, 25*(3), 385–402.

Ivanič, R., Clark, R., & Rimmershaw, R. (2000). What am I supposed to make of this? The messages conveyed to students by tutors' written comments. In M. Lea & B. Stierer (Eds.), *Student writing in higher education* (pp. 47-65). Open University Press.

Jacob, E. (1987). Qualitative research traditions: A review. *Review of Educational Research, 57*, 1-50. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F00346543057001001

Jacob, E. (1988). Clarifying qualitative research: A focus on traditions. *Educational Researcher, 17*, 16-24. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X017001016

James, M., & Pedder, D. (2006). Beyond method: assessment and learning practices and values. *Curriculum Jounral, 17*(2), 109–138.

Jonassen, D., & Land, S. (2012). *Theoretical foundations of learning environments*. Routledge.

Jonsson, A. (2012). Facilitating productive use of feedback in higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 14*(1), 63-76.

Kahl, S. (2005). Where in the world are formative tests? Right under your nose! . *Education Week, 25*(9), 38.

Kam, H. W. (2002). English Language Teaching in East Asia today: An overview. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 22*(2), 1-22.

Kay, J., Li, L., & Fekete, A. (2007, January). *Learner reflection in student self-assessment.* ACE 2007, 9th Australasian Computing Education Conference, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1998). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Deakin University.

Kennedy, D. (2006). *Writing and using learning outcomes: a practical guide*. University College Cork.

King, A. (1992). Facilitating elaborative learning through guided student-generated questioning. *Educational Psychologist, 27*(1), 111-126. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2701_8

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education, 6*(5), 26-41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26

Klenowski, V. (2009). Assessment for learning revisited: An Asia-Pacific perspective. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 16*(3), 263-268. https://doi.org/10.1080/09695940903319646

Knight, B. (2018). *How long does it take to learn a foreign language?*. Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/How-long-does-it-take-to-learn-a-foreign-language.pdf

Koh, K. (2011). Improving teachers' assessment literacy through professional development. *Teaching Education, 22*(3), 255–276. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2011.593164

Koh, K., & Luke, A. (2009). Authentic and conventional assessment in Singapore schools: An empirical study of teacher assignments and student work. *Assessment in Education Principles Policy and Practice, 16*(3), 291-318. https://doi.org/10.1080/09695940903319703

Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2009). Experiential learning theory: A dynamic, holistic approach to management learning, education and development. In S. J. Armstrong & C. V. Fukami (Eds.), *The SAGES handbook of management learning, education and development* (pp. 42-68). SAGE Publications.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.

Lam, R. (2013). Formative use of summative tests: Using test preparation to promote performance and self-regulation. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 22*(1), 69-78.

Lam, R. (2015). Language assessment training in Hong Kong: implications for language assessment literacy. *Language Testing, 32*(2), 169–197.

Lam, Q. T. (2006). Đo lường và đánh giá kết quả học tập trong nhà trường (The measurement and evaluation of learning outcomes in educational settings).

Lambert, K. (2012). *Formative assessment strategies*. University of Twente. https://www.utwente.nl/en/examination/faq-testing-assessment/60formativeassessment.pdf

Le, H. D. (2015). Challenges in development of English language proficiency: A perspective from Vietnam. In T. W. Bigalke & S. Sharbawi (Eds.), *English for ASEAN integration: Policies and practices in the region*. Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors: A Vietnamese case study. *Prospect, 24*(2), 20-33.

Le, V. C., & Nguyen, T. N. (2017). Đề án Ngoại ngữ Quốc gia có thể học gì từ kinh nghiệm Châu Á? [What the National Foreign Language Project 2020 can learn from Asean experience?]. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 33*(4), 10-23.

Lee, C., Sze, O. P., Ang, A., & Lee, G. (2014, May). *Holistic assessment implementation in Singapore primary schools – Part I: Using assessment to support the learning and development of students*. The 40th annual International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference, Singapore, Singapore.

Leung, C., Davison, C., East, M., Evans, M., Liu, Y., Hamp-Lyons, L., & Purpura, J. E. (2018). *Useful assessment and evaluation in language education*. Georgetown University.

Leung, C., & Rea-Dickins, P. (2007). Teacher assessment as policy instrument: Contradictions and capacities. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 4*(1), 6-36.

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lie, A. (2007). Education policy and EFL curriculum in Indonesia: Between the commitment to competence and the quest for higher test scores. *TEFLIN Journal, 18*(1), 1-14.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. SAGE Publications.

Lipnevich, A. A., & Smith, J. K. (2009). "I really need feedback to learn": Students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the differential feedback messages. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*(4), 347-367.

Littlewood, W. (2010). Communicative language teaching: an expanded concept for a changing world. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. II). Routledge.

Liu, L., & Zhang, Y. (2014). The application of constructivism to the teaching intercultural communication. *English Language Teaching, 7*(5), 136-141.

Liu, N.-F., & Carless, D. (2006). Peer feedback: The learning element of peer assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education, 11*(3), 279-290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510600680582

Luong, T. H. G. (2016). *Achieving change in student assessment in Vietnamese teacher training institutions* [Doctoral dissertation, Southern Cross University]. https://researchportal.scu.edu.au/esploro/outputs/991012821797202368

Mai, T. D., Nguyen, T. K. C., & Griffin, P. (2011). Developing a framework to measure process-oriented writing competence: A case of Vietnamese EFL students' formal portfolio assessment. *RELC Journal (Journal of Language Teaching and Research), 42*(2), 167. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0033688211402179

Makombe, G. (2017). An expose of the relationship between paradigm, method and design in research. *The Qualitative Report, 22*(12), 3363-3382. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss12/18

Malone, M. E. (2013). The essentials of assessment literacy: contrasts between testers and users. *Language Testing, 30*(3), 329–344.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Pearson.

Matsuno, S. (2009). Self- , peer- , and teacher-assessments in Japanese university EFL writing classrooms. *Language Testing, 26*(1), 75-100. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0265532208097337

Maxwell, G. S. (2001). *Teacher observation in student assessment*. Queensland School Curriculum Council.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry* (1st ed.). Routledge.

McCune, V., & Hounsell, D. (2005). The development of students' ways of thinking and practising in three final-year biology courses. *Higher Education, 49*(3), 255-289.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research : A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass

Mertler, C. A. (2004). Secondary teachers' assessment literacy: does classroom experience make a difference? *American Secondary Education, 33*(1), 49–64.

Meskill, C. (2010). Moment-by-moment formative assessment of second language development. In H. L. Andrade & C. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 198-211). Routledge.

Michell, M., & Davison, C. (2020). Bringing the teacher back in: Toward L2 assessment praxis in English as an additional language education. In M. Poehner & O. Inbar-Lourie (Eds.), *Toward a reconceptualization of L2 classroom assessment: Praxis and researcher-teacher partnership* (pp. 23-40). Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35081-9

Mok, J. K.-h., & Chan, D. K.-k. (2002). *Globalization and education: The quest for quality education in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong University Press.

Mutch, A. (2003). Exploring the practice of feedback to students. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 4*(1), 24-38.

Nassim, S. (2018). Digital storytelling: An active learning tool for improving students' language skills. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning, 2*(1), 14-29.

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (2017). Expanding our Understanding of Assessment and Feedback in Irish Higher Education. https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/expanding-our-understanding-of-assessment-and-feedback-in-irish-higher-education/

New Zealand Ministry of Education. Formative and summative assessment. https://assessment.tki.org.nz/Using-evidence-for-learning/Gathering-evidence/Topics/Formative-and-summative-assessment

Ng, E. M. W. (2014). Using a mixed research method to evaluate the effectiveness of formative assessment in supporting student teachers' wiki authoring. *Computers and Education, 73*, 141-148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.12.016

Ngo, X. M. (2019). *What do they really see when they observe? Novice teachers' use of observation as formative assessment*. The Second Vietnam Language Assessment Symposium (VLAS 2019), Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ngoc, K. M., & Iwashita, N. (2012). A comparison of learners' and teachers' attitudes toward communicative language teaching at two universities in Vietnam. *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL, 7*, 25-49.

Nguyen, D. M. (2014, March - April). *Overview of student learning assessment: The case of Vietnam*. NEQMAP's 7th Annual Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand. https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/themes/education/quality_education/neqmap/NEQMAP%20Annual%20Meetings/2nd%20Annual%20Meeting%202014/Vietnam-VNIES.pdf

Nguyen, P. M. (2008). *Culture and cooperation: Cooperative learning in Asian Confucian Heritage Cultures – The case of Viet Nam.* Utrecht University Netherlands.

Nguyen, T. H. (2015). *English teaching and learning in Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam.* [Master's thesis, RMIT University].

Nguyen, T. H. L. (2016). Development of Vietnamese pre-service EFL teachers' assessment literacy. [Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington]. http://hdl.handle.net/10063/8779

Nguyen, T. P. L. (2019). *Alignment of curricula, pedagogies, assessments, outcomes, and standards in Vietnamese English language teacher education* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Newcastle]. http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1408820

Nguyen, T. P. L., & Phung, N. T. (2015). Innovation in English language education in Vietnam for ASEAN 2015 Integration: Current issues, challenges, opportunities, investments and solutions. *ASEAN Integration and Role of ELT, 104*.

Nguyen, V. T., & Mai, N. K. (2015). Responses to a language policy: EFL teachers' voices. *The European journal of social and behavioural sciences*, *13*(2). 206-219. https://doi.org/10.15405/ejsbs.164

Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education, 31*(2), 199-218.

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing, 18*(2), 34-35.

Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching, 6*(11), 139-147.

NSW Department of Education. (2008). Principles for assessment and reporting in NSW government schools. *Education Public School.* https://janiceatkin.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/principles_ar.pdf

Nunan, D. (2003a). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *Tesol Quarterly, 37*(4), 589-613.

Nunan, D. (2003b). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw-Hill.

O'Hara, M., & Wood, J. K. (2003). Transforming communities: Person-centered encounters and the creation of integral conscious groups. In B. H. Banathy & P. M. Jenlink (Eds.), *Dialogue as a means of collective communication* (pp. 95-126). Kluwer/Plenum.

Odom, S., Glenn, B., Sanner, S., & Cannella, K. A. S. (2009). Group peer review as an active learning strategy in a research course. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 21*(1), 108-117.

OECD. (2005). Formative assessment: Improving learning in secondary classrooms. *Policy Brief*. https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/35661078.pdf

OECD. (2016). *Education in China: A snapshot*. https://www.oecd.org/china/Education-in-China-a-snapshot.pdf

Ogan-Bekiroglu, F., & Suzuk, E. (2014). Pre-service teachers' assessment literacy and its implementation into practice. *Curriculum Journal, 25*(3), 344–371.

Oros, A. L. (2007). Let's debate: Active learning encourages student participation and critical thinking. *Journal of Political Science Education, 3*(3), 293-311.

Panadero, E., & Brown, G. T. L. (2017). Teachers??? reasons for using peer assessment: positive experience predicts use. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 32*(1), 133-156. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-015-0282-5

Patton, C. (2012). Some kind of weird, evil experiment': Student perceptions of peer assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 37*(6), 719–731. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2011.563281

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualititative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.): SAGE Publications.

Peshkin, A. (1988). Understanding complexity: A gift of qualitative inquiry. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 19*, 416-424. https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1988.19.4.05x0919i

Peterson, E. R., & Irving, S. E. (2008). Secondary school students' conceptions of assessment and feedback. *Learning and Instruction, 18*(3), 238-250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2007.05.001

Pill, J., & Harding, L. (2013). Defining the language assessment literacy gap: Evidence from a parliamentary inquiry. *Language Testing, 30*(3), 381–402.

Pham, L. A. (2012). A case study into English classroom assessment practices in three primary schools in Hanoi: Implications for developing a contextualized formative assessment practice framework. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 29*(1), 1-16.

Pham, T. (2016, November to December). *Implementing formative assessment: An experience learned from Asian classrooms*. Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Pham, T. H. T. (2014). Cooperative learning in CHC countries. In T. H. T. Pham (Ed.), *Implementing cross-culture pedagogies* (pp. 29-50). Springer Verlag.

Pham, T. N. A., Nguyen, V. Q. N., & Nguyen, H. H. T. (2019). Vietnamese EFL teachers' classroom assessment practice at the implementation of the pilot primary curriculum. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 7*(4), 172-177. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijll.20190704.15

Phan, L. H. N. (2017, August). *Challenges/constraints in teaching today's English in Vietnam: Teachers' voices*. SEAMEO TESOL Conference 2017, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. http://www.vnseameo.org/TESOLConference2017/materials/21_PHAN%20Le%20hai%20Ngan_CHALLENGES_CONSTRAINTS.pdf

Pratt, D., Kelly, M., & Wong, W. S. S. (1999). Chinese conceptions of 'effective teaching' in Hong Kong: Towards culturally sensitive evaluation of teaching. *International Journal of Lifelong Learning Education, 18*, 241-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/026013799293739a

Price, M., Handley, K., Millar, J., & O'Donovan, B. (2010). Feedback: all that effort, but what is the effect? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(3), 277-289.

Prime Minister, T. t. C. p. (2017). *Quyết định 2080/QĐ-TTg Phê duyệt điều chỉnh, bổ sung đề án dạy và học ngoại ngữ trong hệ thống giáo dục quốc dân giai đoạn 2017-2025 [Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg on Approved amendments and supplements to the foreign language teaching and learning project in the national education system for the period of 2017-2025]*. Vietnam.

Puspha, S., Rathner, J., Loton, D., Klein, R., & Peter, H. (2019). A combination of active learning strategies improve student academic outcomes in first year paramedic bioscience. *Advances in physiology education, 43*(2), 233-240.

Qiao, M., & Jin, X. (2010). Jigsaw strategy as a cooperative learning technique: Focusing on the language learners. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 33*(4), 113-125.

Quyen, N. T. D., & Khairani, A. Z. (2016). Reviewing the challenges of implementing formative assessment in Asia: The need for a professional development program. *Journal of Social Science Studies, 4*(1), 160.

Qvortrup, A., & Keiding, T. B. (2015). Portfolio assessment: production and reduction of complexity. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 40*(3), 407-419.

Rae, A. M., & Cochrane, D. K. (2008). Listening to students: How to make written assessment feedback useful. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 9*(3), 217-230.

Ramburuth, P., & McCormick, J. (2001). Learning diversity in higher education: A comparative study of Asian international and Australian students. *Higher Education, 42*, 333-350. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1017982716482

Ramsey, B., & Duffy, A. (2016). *Formative assessment in the classroom: Findings from three districts.* Micheal & Susan Dell Foundation. https://education-first.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/MSDF-Formative-Assessment-Study-Final-Report.pdf

Rea-Dickins, P. (2001). Mirror, mirror on the wall: identifying processes of classroom assessment. *Language Testing, 18*(4), 429-462.

Rea-Dickins, P. (2006). Currents and eddies in the discourse of assessment: A learning focused interpretation. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 16*(2), 163-188.

Reese-Durham, N. (2005). Peer evaluation as an active learning technique. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 32*.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2017). *Curriculum development in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Rogers, C. R. (1977). *Carl Rogers on personal power: Inner strength and its revolutionary impact*. Delacorte.

Rogers, C. R. (1983). *Freedom to learn for the 80s*. Charles E. Merrill.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B. (2008). Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: Participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship. In K. Hall, P. Murphy, & J. Soler (Eds.), *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities* (pp. 58-74). The Open University.

Rowe, M. B. (1974). Wait time and rewards as instructional variables, their influenceon language, logic and fate control. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 11*(2), 81-94. https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.3660110202

Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems *Instructional Science, 18*(2), 119-144. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00117714

Sadler, D. R. (2010). Beyond feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(5), 535-550. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541015

Sande, J. C. G. d., & Adarsh, M. (2014, October). *Including peer and self-assessment in a continuous assessment scheme in electrical and electronics engineering courses.* 2014 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE), Madrid, Spain.

SBA Consultancy Team. (2005). *2007 HKCE English Language Examination: Introduction to the school-based assessment component (Training Package).* Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority/Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong.

Schwartz, H., & Jacobs, J. (1979). *Qualitative sociology*. Free Press.

Scriven, M. (1967). The methodology of evaluation. In *Perspectives of curriculum evaluation* (pp. 3-85). Rand McNally.

Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning teaching*. Macmillan Education.

Seetharaman, M., & Musier-Forsyth, K. (2003). Does active learning through an antisense jigsaw make sense? *Journal of Chemical Education, 80*(12), 1404-1407.

Serafini, F. (2000). Three paradigms of assessment: measurement, procedure, and inquiry. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(4), 384-393.

Shaban, A.E. (2017). The use of Socrative in ESL classrooms: Towards active learning. *Teaching English with Technology, 17*(4), 64-77.

Shepard, L. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher, 29*(7), 4-14.

Siegel, M.A., & Wissehr, C. (2011). Preparing for the plunge: Preservice teachers' assessment literacy. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 22*(4), 371–391.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*: SAGE Publications.

Skinner, B. F. (1938). *The behaviour of organisms*. B.F. Skinner Foundation.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behaviour*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Snyder, I., & Beale, D. (2011). The role of English in international education. In I. Snyder & J. Nieuwenhuysen (Eds.), *A home away from home? International students in Australian and South African higher education* (pp. 117-132). Monash University Publishing.

Solutes, J. F. (1990). The ethics of qualitative research. In E. W. E. A. Peshkin (Ed.), *Qualitative inquiry in education* (pp. 247-257). Teachers College, Columbia University.

Spindler, G. (1982). *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational ethnography in action*. Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Stevens, R. (2015). Role-play and student engagement: reflections from the classroom. *Teaching in Higher Education, 20*(5), 481-492.

Stoynoff, S. (2012). Looking backward and forward at classroom-based language assessment. *ELT Journal, 66*(4), 523-532.

Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Tepsuriwong, S., & Bunsom, T. (2013). Introducing peer assessment to a reading classroom: Expanding Thai university students' learning boundaries beyond alphabetical symbols. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(14), 279-286. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n14p279

The National Health and Medical Research Council, & The Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. (2007). *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 (Updated 2018)*. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Thorndike, E. (1932). *The fundamentals of learning*. Teachers College Press.

Tomlinson, B., & Dat, B. (2004). The contributions of Vietnamese learners of English to ELT methodology. *Language Teaching Research, 8*(2), 199-222.

Tran, T. D. (2015). *An exploratory study of current assessment practices for improving the learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in two Vietnamese universities* [Doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology]. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/84622/1/Thi%20Duyen_Tran_Thesis.pdf

Tran, T. T. O. (2004). Sự phù hợp của phương pháp đánh giá với các mục tiêu học tập ở đại học [Alignment between assessment methods and learning objectives at higher education]. *Scientific Journal, 6*, 23-28.

Trinh, T. T. H., & Mai, T. L. (2018). Current challenges in the teaching of tertiary English in Vietnam. In J. Albright (Ed.), *English Tertiary Education in Vietnam* (pp. 58-71). Routledge.

Tsagari D., & Vogt, K. (2017). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers around Europe: research, challenges and future prospects. *Language Testing and Assessment, 6*(1), 41–63.

Victoria Department of Education and Training. (2020a). *Feedback and reporting*. https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Pages/insight-feedback.aspx

Victoria Department of Education and Training. (2020b). *Formative assessment strategies*. https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/Formative-assessment-strategies.pdf

Volante, L., & Fazio, X. (2007). Exploring teacher candidates' assessment literacy: implications for teacher education reform and professional development. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30*(3), 749–770. https://doi.org/10.2307/20466661

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Walsh, D. J., Tobin, J. J., & Graue, M. E. (1993). The interpretive voice: Qualitative research in early childhood education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 464-476). Macmillan.

Walsh, S. (2006). *Investigating classroom discourse*. Routledge.

Wang, H., & Chen, C. W. (2019). Learning English from YouTubers: English L2 learners' self-regulated language learning on YouTube. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 14*(4), 333-346. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2019.1607356

Watson, J. B. (1913). Psychology as the behaviourist views it. *Psychological Review, 20*, 158-177.

Waxman, C. (2013). Classroom observation-purposes of classroom observation, limitations of classroom observation, new directions. http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1835/ClassroomObservation.html

Webb, N. L. (2002, April). *Assessment literacy in a standards-based urban education system*. AERA annual meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States. http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/aera%202002/alignment%20analysis%20three%20states%20math%20final%2031502.pdfwww.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/mps/AERA2002/Assessment%20literacy%20NLW%20Final%2032602.pdf

Weurlander, M., Soderberg, M., Scheja, M., Hult, H., & Wernerson, A. (2011). Exploring formative assessment as a tool for learning: Students' experiences of different methods of formative assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 37*(6), 747-760. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2011.572153

Widiastuti, I. A. M. S., Mukminatien, N., Prayogo, J. A., & Irawati, E. (2020). Dissonances between teachers' beliefs and practices of formative assessment in EFL Classes. *International Journal of Instruction, 13*(1), 71-84. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.1315a

Wiliam, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment*. Solution Tree Press.

Wiliam, D., & Leahy, S. (2015). *Embedding formative assessment: Practical techniques for F-12 classrooms*. Learning Sciences International.

Wiliam, D., & Thompson, M. (2007). Integrating assessment with instruction: What will it take to make it work? In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wilson, K. (2009). *Reading in the margins: EAP reading pedagogies and their critical postcritical potential*. University of Technology, Sydney.

Wiriyachitra, A. (2002). English language teaching and learning in Thailand in this decade. *Thai TESOL Focus, 15*(1), 4-9.

Wolcott, H. F. (1992). Posturing in qualitative inquiry. In M. D. L. Compte, W. L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 3-52). Academic Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. SAGE Publications.

Wright, M.C., Bergom, I., & Bartholomew, T. (2017). Decreased class size, increased active learning? Intended and enacted teaching strategies in smaller classes. *Active learning in Higher Education, 20*(1), 51-62. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417735607

Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. L. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy in practice: a reconceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 58*, 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.010

Yin, X., & Buck, G. A. (2015). There is another choice: an exploration of integrating formative assessment in a Chinese high school chemistry classroom through collaborative action research. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 10*(3), 719-752. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-014-9572-5

Yoko, K. (2018). Enhancing critical thinking through active learning. *Language Learning in Higher Education, 8*(1).

Yu, W. (2010). An analysis of college English classroom questioning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*(2), 136-144.

Zhang, B., & Misiak, J. (2015). Evaluating three grading methods in middle school science classrooms. *Journal of Baltic Science Education, 14*(2), 207-215.

Zhang, J. (2015). Professional development of English teachers in second language teaching. *Theory and practice in language studies, 5*(11), 2382-2386.

Zhao, H. (2010). Investigating learners' use and understanding of peer and teacher feedback on writing: A comparative study in a Chinese English writing classroom. *Assessing Writing, 15*(1), 3-17.

Zhou, J., Zheng, Y., & Tai, J. H. M. (2020). Grudges and gratitude: The social-affective impacts of peer assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 45*(3), 345–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1643449

APPENDIX A: School principal consent form

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Your school is invited to participate

Your school is invited to participate in a research project entitled

From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Ms Hong Anh Ma as part of Master of Education by Research at Victoria University (VU) under the supervision of Dr Oksana Razoumova and Dr Neil Hooley from College of Arts and Education at VU.

Project explanation

The aim of this study is to examine the Vietnamese's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perception of formative assessment used in their classroom and the in-class practices of formative assessment. By conducting in-depth interviews, classroom observation, and collecting teacher reflective notes, the researcher will have an in-depth analysis of how formative assessment is perceived and implemented in Vietnamese lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

This project is being undertaken as part of Master by Research thesis. The aim of this qualitative study is to examine the Vietnamese's EFL teachers' perception and their in-class practices of formative assessment in different Vietnamese lower and upper secondary schools**.**

Your school is invited to participate in this project because it is a Vietnamese secondary school. This study will investigate how assessment strategies are used to promote active student language learning in Vietnamese context. Your school is very important for the researcher to understand the practice of formative assessment in Vietnamese secondary schools. Research findings and implications from this study may enhance the quality of language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

Please also read the Information form which you have been provided.

If you have read the Information form and understood everything, please fill out this form. If you fill out this form, please send back to us and this will allow us to conduct the research in your school.

I,

_____(

name), principal

of_____

(school name), understand:

- the study and what it requires of the staff, students, and/or parents in my school,
- the privacy and confidentiality of any staff or student will be protected,
- I have the right to allow or reject this research study to take place at my school,
- I have the right to terminate the research study at any time,
- I have the right to review all consent forms and research documents at any time during the study and up to three years after the completion of the study.

I have also been informed that the confidentiality of the information provided will be safeguarded. I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered.

I find the above-named research valuable; its findings will be used to inform the work of my department/team.

I, therefore, grant permission to the researcher to conduct the above-named research in my school as described in the proposal.

Signed:_____

_____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher:

Researcher: Hong Anh Ma

Email: hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au

Telephone:

+ 61 450020610 (Australia)

+ 84 399573768 (Vietnam)

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
M E L B O U R N E   A U S T R A L I A

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled

From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Ms Hong Anh Ma as part of Master of Education by Research at Victoria University (VU) under the supervision of Dr Oksana Razoumova and Dr Neil Hooley from College of Arts and Education at VU.

Project explanation

The aim of this study is to examine the Vietnamese's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perception of formative assessment used in their classroom and the in-class practices of formative assessment. By conducting in-depth interviews, classroom observation, and collecting teacher reflective notes, the researcher will have an in-depth analysis of how formative assessment is perceived and implemented in Vietnamese lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

You are invited to participate in this project because you are an EFL teacher in a Vietnamese secondary school. This study will investigate how assessment strategies are used to promote active student language learning in Vietnamese context. Your teaching experiences are very important for the researcher to

understand the practice of formative assessment in Vietnamese secondary schools. Research findings and implications from this study may enhance the quality of language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Any work-related information discussed during the interview will be kept confidential. Your identity will be protected by ensuring the anonymity.

What will I be asked to do?

Your participation will involve (1) an online audio-recorded interview that will last approximately an hour of your time, (2) audio-recorded classroom observation, and (3) a teacher reflective note. The interview will include a number of semi-structured questions related to the use of formative assessment in your EFL classroom. The reflective note will be either a written document or audio-recorded, which recalls an occasion when your feedback has improved your students' learning.

What will I gain from participating?

It is anticipated that this study will not directly benefit you. However, the study will contribute to the improvement of assessment practices in Vietnam, so it will indirectly benefit you as a teacher in this education system. You may benefit through your involvement in the research, as you have the opportunity to reflect on your teaching practices to support your students' learning. The findings of this study will be reported to you so that you may recognise your strengths and limitations in teaching, which will enhance your own quality of teaching.

How will the information I give be used?

This research is confidential. The researcher will not use your name or include any personal information that would identify you in any reports. Only the researcher and the supervisors will read the notes or transcripts of the data (interviews, recordings, and reflective notes). All the data will be kept securely

and destroyed according to the Victoria University Research Data and Materials Procedure.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There will be minimal risks associated with this project. Inconvenience is expected as you might need to devote your time and energy to engage in the study. If you need assistance, contact **Vietnam-France Psychology and Psychiatry Institute** on +84977729396.

Your participation in this project is voluntary, which means you can withdraw from the study at any time at your pleasure. Also, any work-related information discussed during the interview will be kept confidential. Your identity will be protected by ensuring the anonymity along the research process.

How will this project be conducted?

First, the researcher will conduct an audio-recorded interview with you, with regard to your perceptions and practices of formative assessment in your classroom. The researcher will then audio-record three to five EFL lessons of yours for observational purpose. Also, you will be asked to provide the researcher with a reflective note (in either written or audio-recorded form). You will have the autonomy to choose the language (either English or Vietnamese) in which the interview and the teacher reflective note will be conducted. After all data from the interview, classroom observation, and teacher reflective note are collected, the researcher will transcribe and translate the data into English. The Vietnamese transcription accompanied with the English translation will be sent to you for verification purpose. The data will only be analysed when you confirm that the information is recorded and transcribed correctly. If you have any further questions related to this project, the contact detail for support in Vietnam is Mr Duy Anh Ma (Phone: + 84 989273599 – Email: maduyanh99@gmail.com) .

Who is conducting the study?

Hong Anh Ma

Research student

Institute for Sustainable Industries and

Liveable Cities

Victoria University

Phone:

+ 61 450020610 (Australia)

+ 84 399573768 (Vietnam)

Email: hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au

Dr Oksana Razoumova

Supervisor

College of Arts and Education/

ISILC

Victoria University

Phone:

+ 61 399194354

Email:

Oksana.razoumova@vu.edu.au

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
M E L B O U R N E   A U S T R A L I A

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into formative assessment entitled **From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment**.

This project is being undertaken as part of Master by Research thesis. The aim of this qualitative study is to examine the Vietnamese's EFL teachers' perception and their in-class practices of formative assessment. By conducting in-depth interviews, classroom observation, and collecting teacher reflective notes, the researcher will have an in-depth analysis of how formative assessment is perceived and implemented in Vietnamese lower and upper secondary schools.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, _____ (Participant's name) of
_____(Suburb)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:

From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment being conducted by Ms Hong Anh Ma as part of Master by Research at Victoria University.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Ms Hong Anh Ma and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- I will take part in the audio-recorded interview (which will last for approximately one hour)
- My three to five lessons will be audio-recorded for observational purpose (due to Coronavirus, the researcher might not travel to Vietnam)
- I will provide the researcher with my teacher reflective note (in either written or audio-recorded form)

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher:

Researcher: Hong Anh Ma

Email: hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au

Telephone:

+ 61 450020610 (Australia)

+ 84 399573768 (Vietnam)

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

APPENDIX D: The interview

From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese EFL Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment

Name: Hong Anh Ma – Student ID: s4621978

Course: Master of Education

Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities

Definition

Formative assessment: formative assessment includes 'all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged' (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Formative assessment is required to occur 'during the learning' or in other words, 'while the material is being taught' (Cowie & Bell, 1999; Kalh, 2005).

Examples: feedback, role play, debate, portfolio, peer assessment (with guided rubric), self-reflection

Active learning: active learning involves engaging students in an activity or task that will encourage them to think and analyse the contents being delivered to them. Active learning may take place 'at every stage or level of a lesson, from getting the students engaged in the topic, through actively and consciously taking part in discovering language and rules, to free, active production' (Gholami et al., 2014).

Interview questions (this contains three sections)

Section 1: Formative assessment

1. How do you assess your students' learning and provide feedback on those language tasks on a daily basis?

2. Can you describe your usual classroom every day when you engage students into participating in language tasks?

3. What are the examples of formative assessment in your classroom? Which one do you think is the most suitable in your classroom environment? (How often? What type of task? What are their reactions?)

4. How do different approaches to assessment engage students more?

5. What could be qualities of a good assessment task?

6. How do you communicate the feedback to students (records, rubrics, written feedback, verbal feedback?) How do you formalise this feedback?

Section 2: Summative assessment *(optional)*

1. How often do you use summative assessment in your class?

2. What tasks/activities do you use as summative assessment in your class?

3. What could be qualities of a good summative assessment task?

4. Why do you think it is important to use summative assessment in class?

Section 3: Participants background

1. Please talk about your education background in brief.

2. Please talk about your EFL teaching experiences of teaching EFL in brief.

3. On average, how many students are there in your class?

4. How many hours per week do you teach?

5. What did you learn about assessment before you start your teaching practice? When you start your teaching practice, how do you view students' learning through assessment?

6. Teaching culture: How does your school organise professional development activities? Do these activities require teamwork? What is the culture and attitude towards assessment in your school?

Từ Kiểm Tra Đến Học Tập Có Hiệu Quả Của Học Sinh: Nhận Thức Về Đánh Giá Quá Trình Của Giáo Viên Người Việt Nam Giảng Dạy Tiếng Anh Như Một Ngoại Ngữ (EFL)

Định nghĩa

Đánh giá quá trình: đánh giá quá trình bao gồm 'tất cả các hoạt động được thực hiện bởi giáo viên và/hoặc học sinh. Những hoạt động này cung cấp thông tin để được sử dụng làm phản hồi nhằm hướng đến việc cải thiện các hoạt động dạy và học (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Đánh giá quá trình diễn ra trong tiến trình dạy và học, hay nói cách khác, đánh giá quá trình diễn ra 'khi sử dụng tư liệu để dạy học' (Cowie & Bell, 1999; Kalh, 2005).

Các ví dụ của đánh giá quá trình: cung cấp các nhận xét phản hồi, hoạt động đóng vai, hoạt động tranh luận, đánh giá lẫn nhau (với phiếu tự đánh giá có hướng dẫn), đánh giá chiêm nghiệm

Học tập tích cực: học tập tích cực liên quan đến việc thu hút học sinh vào một hoạt động hoặc nhiệm vụ nhằm khuyến khích học sinh tư duy và phân tích nội dung học tập. Học tập tích cực có thể diễn ra 'ở mọi giai đoạn hoặc cấp độ của một bài học, từ việc thu hút học sinh tham gia vào chủ đề đến việc học sinh chủ động và có ý thức tham gia khám phá ngôn ngữ và các quy tắc, tự do và tích cực sáng tạo' (Gholami et al., 2014).

Câu hỏi phỏng vấn (phần này bao gồm ba phần)

Phần 1: Đánh giá quá trình

1. Làm thế nào để quý thầy/cô đánh giá học sinh của mình hàng ngày và cung cấp nhận xét/phản hồi cho các hoạt động trong lớp?

2. Quý thầy/cô hãy miêu tả một tiết học bình thường của quý thầy/cô khi quý thầy/cô thu hút học sinh tham gia vào các hoạt động của tiết học.

3. Quý thầy/cô hãy cho biết các ví dụ trong việc sử dụng các hình thức đánh giá quá trình trong lớp học của quý thầy/cô? Hoạt động nào quý thầy/cô nghĩ là sẽ phù hợp nhất trong môi trường lớp học của quý thầy/cô? (Tần suất sử dụng? Loại hoạt động? Phản ứng của học sinh?)

4. Việc sử dụng đa dạng các hình thức đánh giá sẽ cải thiện mức độ tham gia của học sinh như thế nào?

5. Yếu tố nào mà quý thầy/cô cảm thấy cần thiết và quan trọng cho một hoạt động đánh giá tốt?

6. Quý thầy/cô đã làm cách nào để truyền đạt thông tin phản hồi nhận xét cho học sinh (qua hồ sơ học bạ, rubric, phản hồi dạng văn bản, phản hồi bằng lời nói?) Quý thầy/cô làm cách nào để lưu trữ lại các nhận xét này?

Phần 2: Đánh giá tổng kết *(không bắt buộc)*

1. Quý thầy/cô hãy cho biết tần suất sử dụng đánh giá tổng kết trong lớp?

2. Quý thầy/cô sử dụng những hoạt động đánh giá tổng kết nào trong lớp?

3. Yếu tố nào mà quý thầy/cô cảm thấy cần thiết và quan trọng cho một hoạt động đánh giá tổng kết tốt?

4. Vì sao quý thầy/cô nghĩ cần sử dụng đánh giá tổng kết trong lớp?

Phần 3: Thông tin về người tham gia nghiên cứu

1. Quý thầy/cô hãy trình bày ngắn gọn về bản thân và trình độ học vấn.

2. Quý thầy/cô hãy trình bày ngắn gọn về kinh nghiệm giảng dạy bộ môn Tiếng Anh.

3. Quý thầy/cô hãy cho biết số lượng học sinh trung bình của một lớp mà quý thầy/cô phụ trách.

4. Quý thầy/cô hãy cho biết số lượng giờ dạy mỗi tuần.

5. Quý thầy/cô đã được giới thiệu những kiến thức gì về đánh giá trước khi bắt đầu chính thức giảng dạy? Khi quý thầy/cô chính thức giảng dạy, quý thầy/cô nghĩ thế nào về việc học sinh học tập thông qua phương pháp dạy học có đánh giá?

6. Trường của quý thầy/cô có thường xuyên tổ chức các hoạt động phát triển nghiệp vụ không? Nếu có, các hoạt động này có được tổ chức theo nhóm không? Quý thầy/cô hãy cho biết văn hóa và thái độ của trường quý thầy/cô đối với các hình thức đánh giá trong trường học.

APPENDIX E: Information to parents/ guardians form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS FORM

This information sheet is to inform you that the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom where your child is placed at will be audio-recorded for research purposes.

The EFL teacher in the classroom where you child is placed at is going to participate in a project entitled

From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Ms Hong Anh Ma as part of Master of Education by Research at Victoria University (VU) under the supervision of Dr Oksana Razoumova and Dr Neil Hooley from College of Arts and Education at VU.

Project explanation

The aim of this study is to examine the Vietnamese's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perception of formative assessment used in their classroom and the in-class practices of formative assessment. By the end of the project, the researcher will have an in-depth analysis of how formative assessment is perceived and implemented in Vietnamese lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

What will my child be asked to do?

I would like to audio-record three to five periods of the EFL classes where your child is placed at. Prior to the audio-recording, you will be asked to sign a consent form, indicating that you have been informed that the researcher will audio-record the EFL class in which your child is a part of. Your child and you are able to contact the counselling office within the school if you need any assistance.

What will my child gain from participating?

There is no payment or reimbursement to your child. The results of this study, however, will increase our knowledge of formative assessment used in EFL classes in Vietnam and will benefit your child in the long term.

How will the information my child give be used?

This research is confidential. The sole focus of this research is the way their teachers provide formative assessment within the EFL lesson. The researcher will not use your child's name or include any personal information that would identify your child in any reports. Only the researcher and the supervisors will read the notes or transcripts of the data. All the data will be kept securely and destroyed according to the Victoria University Research Data and Materials Procedure. The information collected from classroom audio-recording will be used to improve the quality of EFL teaching in Vietnam.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

The risks in this study are minimal. There are no foreseeable discomforts or dangers to either you or your child in this study.

All the data is anonymous and will be treated confidential. Only Ms Hong Anh Ma and her two supervisors will be able to have access to the data. The data will be kept in her laptop with files protected by the required password. Upon the completion of the project, the data will be put in a CD and kept confidential in a safe place in Victoria University.

How will this project be conducted?

Ms Hong Anh Ma will ask the participant to audio-record their three to five EFL lessons in which your child is a part of for observational purposes. If you have any further questions related to this project, the contact detail for support in Vietnam is Mr Duy Anh Ma (Phone: + 84 989273599 – Email: maduyanh99@gmail.com) .

Who is conducting the study?

Hong Anh Ma	**Dr Oksana Razoumova**
Research student	**Supervisor**
Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities	College of Arts and Education/ ISILC
Victoria University	Victoria University
Phone:	Phone:
+ 61 450020610 (Australia)	+ 61 399194354
+ 84 399573768 (Vietnam)	
Email: hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au	Email: Oksana.razoumova@vu.edu.au

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

APPENDIX F: Consent form to parents/ guardians

CONSENT FORM TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

We are informing you that the English as a Foreign language classes in which your child is placed at will be audio-recorded as a part of the study entitled **From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment**.

This project is being undertaken as part of Master by Research thesis. The aim of this qualitative study is to examine the Vietnamese's EFL teachers' perception and their in-class practices of formative assessment in different Vietnamese lower and upper secondary schools**.** The observational component in this project involves teachers and students being audio-recorded in three to five EFL lessons.

Please also read the Information to Parents/Guardians form which you have been provided.

If you have read the Information form and understood everything, please fill out this form. Parental consent is required for students aged 15 years and under, and strongly encouraged for those aged 16 and over. If you fill out this form, your child will bring it to us and this will allow us to audio-record their EFL lessons.

I, _____(name) certify that I am over the age of 18, and the parent or guardian of

_____ (youth's name).

I have been informed that the classroom where my child is will be audio-recorded for research purposes.

I have also been informed that the confidentiality of the information provided will be safeguarded. I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions

answered and that I understand that my child can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise them in any way.

Signed:_____

_____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Student sign to acknowledge parental consent:

_____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher:

Researcher: Hong Anh Ma

Email: hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au

Telephone:

+ 61 450020610 (Australia)

+ 84 399573768 (Vietnam)

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

APPENDIX G: Guidance for the teacher reflective note

Guidance for the teacher reflective note

Recall a teaching and learning occasion when a particular task or activity encouraged students to participate better in your context and reflect on:

- how students performed
- how you provided feedback on that performance
- whether your feedback made students think and analyse their participation in a different way
- whether your task and your feedback encouraged students to work autonomously and independently search for information on a given topic

Hướng dẫn cho ghi chú phản ánh của giáo viên

Quý thầy/cô hãy nhớ và ghi lại giúp một dịp mà hoạt động giảng dạy của quý thầy/cô đã khuyến khích học sinh tham gia tích cực hơn trong quá trình học tập.

Quý thầy/cô hãy viết về:

- cách học sinh thực hiện hoạt động nói trên
- cách quý thầy/cô cung cấp nhận xét phản hồi cho học sinh
- phản hồi của quý thầy/cô có khiến học sinh suy nghĩ và xem xét lại việc tham gia đóng góp vào hoạt động nói trên không
- hoạt động giảng dạy nói trên và nhận xét phản hồi của quý thầy/cô có khuyến khích học sinh làm việc chủ động và tự tìm kiếm các thông tin liên quan đến chủ đề được học không

APPENDIX H: Ethics Approval

Quest Ethics Notification - Application Process Finalised - Application Approved

quest.noreply@vu.edu.au <quest.noreply@vu.edu.au>

Wed 3/06/2020 11:24 AM

To: Oksana.Razoumova@vu.edu.au <Oksana.Razoumova@vu.edu.au>
Cc: Hong Anh Ma <hong.ma2@live.vu.edu.au>; neil.hooley@vu.edu.au <neil.hooley@vu.edu.au>

Dear DR OKSANA RAZOUMOVA,

Your ethics application has been formally reviewed and finalised.

» Application ID: HRE20-070
» Chief Investigator: DR OKSANA RAZOUMOVA
» Other Investigators: DR PETER HOOLEY, MS Hong Anh MA
» Application Title: From Testing to Active Student Learning: Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Perception of Formative Assessment
» Form Version: 13-07

The application has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted for two (2) years from the approval date; 03/06/2020.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the Office for Research website at: http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment. It should also be noted that it is the Chief Investigators' responsibility to ensure the research project is conducted in line with the recommendations outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).'

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Phone: 9919 4781 or 9919 4461
Email: researchethics@vu.edu.au

This is an automated email from an unattended email address. Do not reply to this address.