

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
HUE UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**NGUYEN THI LE HANG**

**EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ON THE USE OF  
INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN READING CLASSES AT TERTIARY  
LEVEL: A CASE STUDY AT A LOCAL UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY THESIS IN THEORY AND  
METHODOLOGY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**HUE, 2022**

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**HUE, 2022**

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**HUẾ, 2022**

## DECLARATION

I certify that the present thesis submitted today entitled “**EFL Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices on the Use of Interactive Activities in Reading Classes at Tertiary Level: A Case Study at A Local University in Vietnam**” for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in theory and methodology in English language teaching, is the result of my own research, and has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institutions, colleges, or universities. To the best of my knowledge and beliefs, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by other people except where the reference is made in the thesis itself.

Hue, 2022

Author’s signature:

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis adopted Mo's (2020) system of teachers' beliefs in teaching reading skills for EFL tertiary students with the purpose of investigating teachers' beliefs and practices of using interactive activities (IAs) in teaching reading skills to EFL tertiary students in a Vietnamese teaching context. This study was carried out with three EFL teachers from a local public university in the northern central region of Vietnam.

To seek for the answers to the research questions posed, the researcher gathered data from three data collection instruments which formed a triangulation of this research including in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews.

It was shown in the findings of the study that EFL teachers perceived the use of IAs in teaching reading subject through their beliefs of goals, beliefs of principles, beliefs of contexts and beliefs of the teachers' roles. In addition, the findings revealed that the teacher participants used IAs in their reading classes in different ways. Most of what they believed was consistent with the ways they acted in actual practices of teaching the chosen subject. However, there still existed some inconsistencies due to the impact of certain factors as addressed in the thesis.

This study, as the researcher's intention, does not aim at giving any generalization to the whole context of the EFL teaching and learning in Vietnam; however, it is expected to depict the picture of EFL teaching in some similar Vietnamese context. It is significant in helping Vietnamese EFL teachers have a deeper understanding about foreign language teaching and learning in tertiary education at local universities, which hopefully helps the policy makers have a better view on the whole picture of teaching foreign languages in Vietnam. In addition, some implications for whom the study may concern, and some recommendations for future research are also presented.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ELT	: English language teaching
CI	: Classroom Interaction
IAs	: Interactive activities
CEFR	: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
SCT	: Sociocultural Theory
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ESL	: English as a Second Language
L1	: First language/ Mother tongue
L2	: Second language
FL	: Foreign Language
MoET	: Ministry of Education and Training



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*Serving as the introduction to the thesis, this chapter contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research purposes, and research questions which are in turn presented. An overview of the research significance and the structural organization of the thesis are also addressed.*

### **1.1. Background of the study**

As a lecturer of English for nearly twenty years, I am personally aware that English is by far regarded as the most dominant language of communication in the trend of global integration. It is also the most popular language in schools, offices, business, tourism, services, and so on. Responding to this international trend, English is introduced as a core foreign language (FL) subject by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) from primary level of education with the aim of providing students with enough knowledge to use this language for different communication purposes; however, there exists a reality that in the FL context where English is not commonly spoken in society, students are not sufficiently exposed to it as a foreign language.

Despite the appearance of various teaching approaches, since the early 1970s when English was popularly taught as a core subject among different foreign languages in schools, the issue of classroom interaction has attracted the researchers' attention worldwide. Its main objective is to focus on the whole class interaction between teacher and students, since "through interaction, students can increase their language store, [...], and they can "use all they possess of the language [...] that they have learned or casually absorbed in real-life exchange" (Brown, 2000, p. 165). Fostering students to create an interactive language classroom has always been considered the target of English language teaching for the fact that it can facilitate communication in a classroom context, which may lead to the development of language competence through face-to-face interaction (Long, 1996). Besides, classroom interaction has been put in priority in language settings at different levels of education because it not only provides collaborative contexts for language learning where learners can work with language, receive feedback, and modify their language but also construct language knowledge which peers (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2013). These authors affirm that language learners construct their knowledge and

develop their target language through interaction with other related people in their learning environment.

Educational studies in the field of classroom interaction (CI) including interactive activities (IAs) in FL classes have provided realistic viewpoints about how IAs can be employed, and what benefits IAs bring to FL teaching and learning. Studies in the field show that using IAs in language classrooms often helps teachers create a successful and exciting environment for learning and allow teachers to tap into the range of “multiple intelligences” as described by Howard Gardner (1983, cited in Şipoş, 2017, p. 74). In addition, since IAs serve important functions in facilitating the learners’ involvement in the lesson, establishing and maintaining the social relationships between teachers and learners in the classroom environment where the learners can discuss, negotiate and express their ideas through the activities initiated by the teachers are regarded as the central tool to facilitate, mediate and assist learning (Poole, 2011). It is also noticeable that IAs are seen as a productive teaching technique since they enable the learners to develop their command of the English language as well as foster the effectiveness of English teaching and learning in a certain context (Yu, 2009; Yusuf, 2011). These perspectives advocate the importance and necessity of using IAs in a classroom environment for its significance to both teachers and learners.

Reading, an important skill to be mastered in learning a language, is a core subject in the EFL students’ learning program as it helps broaden their knowledge in other fields and supports the other basic skills of English. This subject truly becomes a challenge for many EFL students because it requires sufficient linguistic knowledge, appropriate reading strategies and reading environment. However, despite this challenge, reading has by far been regarded as one of the most commonly used skills at different levels of education and has played an important role in enhancing students’ English ability as well as accessing information (Monarisa & Suwarno, 2016). Furthermore, since it is considered a highly effective means of extending our command of language, reading is of importance in every language classroom, where language learning is the central purpose (Nutall, 1983, cited in Monarisa & Suwarno, 2016). Students’ reading abilities largely depend on language teachers’ instruction (Monarisa & Suwarno, 2016), and language teachers are encouraged to use collaborative reading techniques to facilitate students’ reading skills (Yusuf, 2011).

As an EFL teacher who has been in charge of teaching reading subjects for EFL tertiary students for a couple of years, the researcher is aware of the important roles of



reading skills in the English language and it is considered “a foundation” for ensuring the FL learning process, and acquiring effective reading skills in English is one of the most challenging activities (Huong. et al, 2021, p.84). It is no doubt that good reading skills surely help students succeed in their learning process at school and in their lives in general (Dechant, 1991, cited in Gamboa-González, 2017, p. 160); however, teaching EFL reading skills has not been an easy job for the fact that it requires teachers to use different teaching strategies and activities to not only reach all students’ comprehension but make them become active readers as well (Pan & Wu, 2013).

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Previous research has emphasized the importance of reading skills and the effectiveness of interaction in EFL reading classes at the primary level (Miller, 2002; Yusuf, 2011), lower secondary and secondary level (Biswas, 2015; Suryati, 2015), and higher education level (Gao, 2008; Rido et al. 2014; Ríos-Revoredo, 2017). These studies reveal that classroom interaction is seen as the key element to motivate the student’s active participation in activities set by the teacher, and it is the teacher who makes influences on the kind of interaction occurring in their own classrooms. This perspective is supported by Luck and Lin (2017) asserting that interactions in FL classrooms are important social activities for students to not only construct knowledge but also build confidence and identity as competent language users. Through findings revealed by some researchers, an interactive reading classroom has been proved to play a very important part in facilitating the students in reading texts, as well as helping them understand the texts and deal with the tasks more easily and effectively (Biswas, 2015; Ríos-Revoredo, 2016).

In Vietnam, since the Vietnamese economic reform (called Doi Moi) in 1986, a lot of changes have been made in every aspect of life. Thanks to the development of the nation, an open-door policy was initiated, which created a crucial need for foreign languages, especially English, the most popular language worldwide. Thus, English is selected as one of the compulsory subjects for all levels, from primary schools to universities in Vietnamese educational system and reading is taught as a basic practical subject for every EFL student. Identified as the most important and dominant language used in a large number of socio - economic sectors in Vietnam, English teaching and learning has been put into consideration by the MoET. The National Foreign Languages Project launched by the MoET has stressed the alarming necessity to enhance the quality of language teaching and learning foreign languages, particularly English to respond to the needs of students at all levels of education (MoET, 2008). In the Vietnamese context of teaching reading, students had little exposure to strategies

to process information and found this skill to be the most difficult among the four English language skills because teachers mainly base on traditional ways of teaching to transmit knowledge (e.g., H. B. Nguyen, 2013; T. T. B. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018; N. T. Pham, 2010). One way to help students enhance their reading comprehension is through interactive reading activities; however, this potential tool of English teaching and learning still remains limited in tertiary contexts. In addition, little is known about how teachers' beliefs and practices of IAs as scaffolding strategies may help them to facilitate students' learning reading skills within the context of English teaching and learning in Vietnam. The present study, therefore, expects to fill the gap of how teachers' beliefs and practices of using IAs may facilitate EFL tertiary students' learning of reading skills at a Vietnamese local university.

In addition, on searching related documents for the present study, the researcher realized that the issues of CI in reading classes have been much concerned by different researchers worldwide (Monarisa & Suwarno, 2016; Safriyani, 2017; Yusuf, 2011; Zhao & Zhu, 2012). In the Vietnamese educational setting, a number of studies investigating EFL reading such as reading strategies (Do Minh Hung & Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, 2014; Nguyen Thi Ngoc Minh & Nguyen Thuy Nga, 2019; Huynh Van O, 2020; Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy, 2018; Tran Thi Ngoc Yen (2018); teachers' scaffolding in reading (Tran Chau Ngoc & Nguyen Huan Buu, 2021). However, the studies on the employment of IAs in EFL reading classes have not been thoroughly investigated yet, and it is particularly new in the Vietnamese tertiary context. To the researcher's knowledge, hardly any studies relating to the field of IAs employed by EFL teachers in reading classes, especially the teachers' beliefs and practices of IAs employed in reading classes at the tertiary level in the teaching context of Vietnam have been carried out, which leaves uncharted land for researchers in Vietnam and others all over the world. Furthermore, since the empirical studies on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of classroom interactions, especially IAs in teaching reading in a certain Vietnamese context has been rather few, a real demand for a scientific study of this matter conducted in a Vietnamese setting may be needed, the result of which is expected to provide an insight into what English teachers' cognition of IAs in reading class.

Besides, the researcher's experience as an EFL teacher at a local university in Vietnam may be considered the personal and intrinsic motivation to conduct this study. To the researcher's beliefs, although a large number of policies or guidelines have been issued to foster the quality of teaching and learning English to students at different levels of

education, from elementary to tertiary levels, especially for those living in rural or remote areas, the result seems not to be as high as expected. The researcher also agrees with Trinh Thi Thu Hien and Mai Thi Loan (2018) stating that since English is taught and learned in a non-native environment, students are not fully provided with conditions to better their language levels. Besides, although the learner-centered approach has been encouraged to apply in EFL language teaching, some teachers still keep following traditional ways of teaching. Thus, it appears that having the entire classroom interactions in a creative and friendly atmosphere which can motivate the learners' interest, motives, and comprehensible input becomes very significant for every teacher of English.

For the reasons above, the current study is carried out to investigate the topic of interaction, the main focus is on the IAs in EFL reading classes in a local university. This study is expected to address the issue by investigating how IAs are perceived and employed by the teachers in reading classes so as to help students better at the subject. More specifically, together with examining the teachers' beliefs of IAs in teaching EFL reading subjects, the researcher focuses on investigating the teachers' actual practices and factors that may affect their use of IAs in reading classes from the teacher participants' viewpoints. Grounding on the research findings, possible implications to improve the teaching of reading subjects at the tertiary level in local universities and in EFL language teaching context and the suggestions for bettering the teachers' employment of IAs in reading classes are also recommended and provided respectively.

### **1.3. Purposes of the study**

The overall aim of this study is to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs of IAs and their application of IAs in reading classes at a local university in Vietnam and explore the factors affecting the employment of IAs in reading lessons. More specifically, it investigates the teachers' beliefs about using IAs in their reading classes in order to identify how they perceive the importance and benefits of IAs in improving the students' reading skills. Furthermore, it aims to identify the EFL teachers' actual teaching practice to understand whether what they perceive and what they really act in their reading classes are compatible or incompatible.

In order to have a deep understanding of the congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices in using IAs to make a collaborative classroom environment and improve EFL students' reading skills, the study explores the factors which may affect the application of IAs to attract the students' engagement and participation in reading classes for the sake of addressing issues that may support or hinder the teachers'

employment of IAs in teaching reading skills for EFL tertiary students. More importantly, it aims to develop a thorough understanding of classroom interaction and improve the quality of teaching and learning reading skills in an EFL environment with IAs in the selected university as well as others with similar contexts.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

The study desires to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' beliefs in using interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading classes?
2. How do EFL teachers' beliefs correspond to their actual practice of using interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading classes?
3. What factors do EFL teachers think may affect their employment of interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading classes?

#### **1.5. Scope of the study**

Research on the field of CI in language teaching and learning is a broad field. Within the scope of this qualitative case study, the researcher does not aim at covering all types of CI that takes place in reading classes at different educational levels but focuses on examining the teachers' beliefs and practices as well as the factors that may affect the relationship of teachers' beliefs and practice in terms of teaching reading subjects with IAs at a selected university in the central region of Vietnam.

The issue of using IAs in teaching reading skills to EFL students in the study puts its focus on the teacher-student(s) verbal interaction instead of covering both domains of classroom interaction (verbal and non-verbal). The interaction can be between the teacher and an individual student, between the teacher with a small group of students, or between the teacher and the whole class through a conversational exchange. Regarding teacher's beliefs, within the scope of this study, the notion of teacher's beliefs is used as a type of teacher's cognition which means "what teachers think, know and believe" (Borg. 2003, p.81). In terms of teachers' practice, this study mainly focuses on the investigation into how IAs are organized by the teachers in actual EFL classrooms. More specifically, the study is only conducted at the tertiary level, and merely in reading classes, not focusing on the IAs in any other basic skills of English at lower levels of education in Vietnam. Although the results of the study are not expected and intended for generalization, its findings are expected to be transferred to other similar teaching contexts.

## **1.6. Significance of the research**

The findings of the research might be beneficial and be able to contribute to the improvement of the effective English teaching and learning process in theoretical, pedagogical and practical aspects.

Theoretically, the study hopes to contribute to the appropriate literature on teachers' cognition of classroom interaction through the lens of sociocultural theory, which can be employed to explain and interpret teachers' beliefs of IAs used in teaching reading subjects. In addition, since a study of teachers' cognition not only "shapes what teachers do but also is in turn shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate" (Borg, 2003, p. 95), the present study might be significant in providing the researchers who desire to investigate deeply into the related issues as well as the teachers who want to use IAs to teach reading subjects in practice with a broader view of IAs and its use in EFL reading classes in the same context.

Pedagogically, the findings of the current research may provide implications for teachers in managing and promoting IAs effectively in teaching reading classes. On one hand, understanding teachers' beliefs is important in the ELT context. It is even more necessary to find out teachers' beliefs of IAs as they may indicate how teachers behave in their actual reading classes with IAs, and how teachers' beliefs can influence their teaching behaviors and actual teaching practices, as stated by Nguyen, N. T. (2014) that teachers' beliefs influence instructional behaviors and actual teaching practices.

Practically, this research hopes to make a positive contribution to increasing the quality of teaching English in reading classes by using IAs as a preferable technique. More importantly, the findings from the data analysis are expected to be of great significance in helping EFL teachers in the selected university and others in the similar teaching context gain more experience in not only designing IAs but also scaffolding their students in reading class in the most efficient ways. In addition, the findings are desired to give valuable insight and useful evidence for the benefits of using IAs in teaching reading subjects and can also be addressed as a potential topic for other researchers who are interested in a similar field with respect to the improvement of EFL teaching quality in the Vietnamese context.

## **1.7. Definitions of key terms**

Following is the list of definitions of key terms used throughout the present study. These key terms assist in framing the relevant issues in the deepest way. Some other key terms are given when needed over the discourse of this chapter.

*Interaction:* In this study, interaction is defined as *social relationships* formed during collaboration in a classroom environment, devising a cognitively-working space for knowledge construction by involved members.

*Interactive* describes direct two-way communication (i.e., face-to-face) between the teacher and students or among students in reading classes.

*Activity* is defined as a task selected to achieve a particular teaching/ learning goal (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 161).

*Interactive activity* is a reciprocal one deliberately used by teachers in order to scaffold and motivate students' involvement, participation, and collaboration in the process of learning reading subjects. In this study, interactive activities mean a set of actions performed by students in EFL reading classes as a response to the different types and degrees of scaffolding provided by teachers in reading classes.

*Scaffolding:* This study borrows and Schmidt's (2012, p. 466) definition of scaffolding. Then, it is defined as a teaching - learning strategy in which the teacher and students engage in a collaborative problem-solving activity with the support and guidance of the teacher to enable students to become increasingly independent. In other words, *scaffolding* is the activities used by teachers to help students to become more independent learners during reading lessons, i.e., to take on targeted tasks as much and proactively as possible.

## **1.8. Organizational Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis was structured into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction of research rationale, research questions, scope and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 is the Literature Review which aims to review the relevant literature to this study including some key points in Vygotsky's SCT, the nature of reading in EFL environment, teachers' beliefs and practices in the investigated field, and the related studies in the field to be investigated.

Chapter 3 focuses on Research Methodology where research approach and design, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis methods and the issues of validity and reliability are presented.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 present major findings and discussion of research questions with detailed discussion.

Chapter 7 is the Conclusion and Implication summarizing major findings, stating pedagogical implications and limitations of the study, and recommending avenues for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*This chapter critically reviews relevant literature in order to provide a foundation for the research questions that the present study is grounded on. Firstly, a brief description of sociocultural perspectives in relation to social interaction in English reading classes is stated. The issues relating to teachers' beliefs, and teachers' practices concerning teaching English reading subjects with IAs are justified. The chapter also includes a review of related studies around the world and in the Vietnamese teaching context, spotting the gaps in the relevant literature and the theoretical framework navigating the present study. The final section summarizes what has been previously discussed.*

#### **2.1 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT)**

##### **2.1.1 Sociocultural in Language Teaching and Learning**

Partially derived from the study of a Russian psychologist named Lev Vygotsky (1978) and his colleagues, the sociocultural theory focuses on the cognitive cycles of human beings which originate from two social levels: interpersonal level and intrapersonal level. At the interpersonal (social) level, this theory views learning and development as a process being embedded within social events and occurring as a learner uses language to interact with other people, objects, and events in the collaborative environment. At the intrapersonal (individual) level, learners also use language as the key mediational tool to support the cognitive development inside their minds to construct knowledge. Although these two levels are distinctive, they share a common feature that at both social and individual levels, language plays a primary role and is, thus, considered a powerful mediational tool. As a result, the sociocultural perspective maintains the relationship between social interaction and language learning through which the cognitive knowledge is co-constructed because the higher mental functions like problem-solving, voluntary attention and logical memory are mediated through the people's interaction by the use of mediational tools (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Watanabe, 2014).

Grounding on the lens of SCT which emphasizes the importance of the interpersonal (social) level in the process of cognitive growth, Roth (2000) confirms that making sense of others and constructing knowledge on such a social level allow learners to relate themselves to different circumstances. He also states that the roots of individuals' knowledge are found in their interactions with their surroundings and

other people before their knowledge is internalized. The sociocultural view also shows that language is not composed of internal structures located in the individual (Lantolf, 2000) but fundamentally social with linguistic resources in our everyday communicative activities and practices (Wells, 1993), and classrooms are important sociocultural contexts for the learners to conduct their learning. Le Pham Hoai Huong (2003) describes SCT as a meaningful foundation for language learning and development due to its notion that human activities take place in a cultural context, are mediated by language and other symbol systems. These viewpoints support Vygotsky's (1978) theory stating that learning is a continual movement from the current intellectual level to a higher level which more closely approximates the learner's potential in a certain social and cultural environment.

SCT views social and cultural environment as the core or primary element for the language learners to achieve cognition. Through their participation in interactional activities with more capable members such as teachers and peers, learners acquire the linguistic, sociocultural, and other knowledge and competencies considered essential to full participation (Hall, 1995; Lantolf, 1995; Lantolf & Appel, 1994). That is to say, the social environment is seen as the place where learners acquire their cognition, and individual development cannot be achieved without its social context. In other words, SCT states that “without social interaction with other more knowledgeable peers, cognitive development will not occur” (Ghafar & Dehqan, 2013, p.68). Thus, the focus of this theory is on the importance of language which implies that “participation in a culturally organized activity is essential for learning to happen” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 214). Among various key concepts suggested by SCT initiator and his followers, zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding are the two most relevant ones closely related to this current study.

### ***2.1.2 Major tenets of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory***

Two major tenets which lay behind Vygotsky's work in the SCT in learning are Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). As described by SCT perspectives, learners' cognitive development is not an internal process. Instead, it involves the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom context where “all higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.157), which emphasizes the teacher's role in mediating and assisting the learners' learning and identifies individual learner's current level of development as well as provides them with opportunities to cross their ZPD. From the SCT perspective,



learning is viewed not as “products and states” but as “changes and processes” (Schinke-Llano, 1995, cited in Vo Thi Khanh Linh, 2020). These “changes and processes” occur in the interaction learning context of the language learners in their ZPD through mutual scaffolding.

#### *2.1.2.1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*

One of the major tenets of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) presenting a crucial concept in the socio-cultural theory which clarifies the important role of teachers as mediators (Clark & Graves, 2004; Kozulin, 2004; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, Reza & Mahmoud, 2013). Defined as “the distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.81), ZPD emphasizes that human mental activity is a particular case of social experience, that is, human beings can learn things through interacting with the more capable peers in the social environment if the knowledge is within their ability to acquire.

According to sociocultural perspectives, language learning occurs through social interaction when individuals use language to interact with their more proficient peers in the learning environment. In the sense of ZPD, through collaborative working, learners can complete tasks more easily (Donato, 1994; Kos 2016; Watanabe, 2008). ZPD is, therefore, regarded as “the core element” of Vygotsky’s theory as it “refers to a distinguishing point between students’ performance when they are not guided or helped by other people” (Salem, 2017, p. 97). In other words, learning in the ZPD is activated “only when a child is interacting with people in his environment” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90), and the learner’s performance when guided by teachers is better than the performance of those who do not receive any help and guidance. Thus, an understanding of human thinking and knowledge depends on an understanding of the social experience and the force of the cognitive process derives from social interactions.

The notion of the ZPD has led to valuable and insightful studies in the field of teaching languages to learners at different levels of education. At tertiary level, a number of related studies were conducted. For example, Anton (1999) investigated interactive exchanges between teachers and learners in the L2 classroom through learner-centered and teacher-centered discourse. The research data were collected from

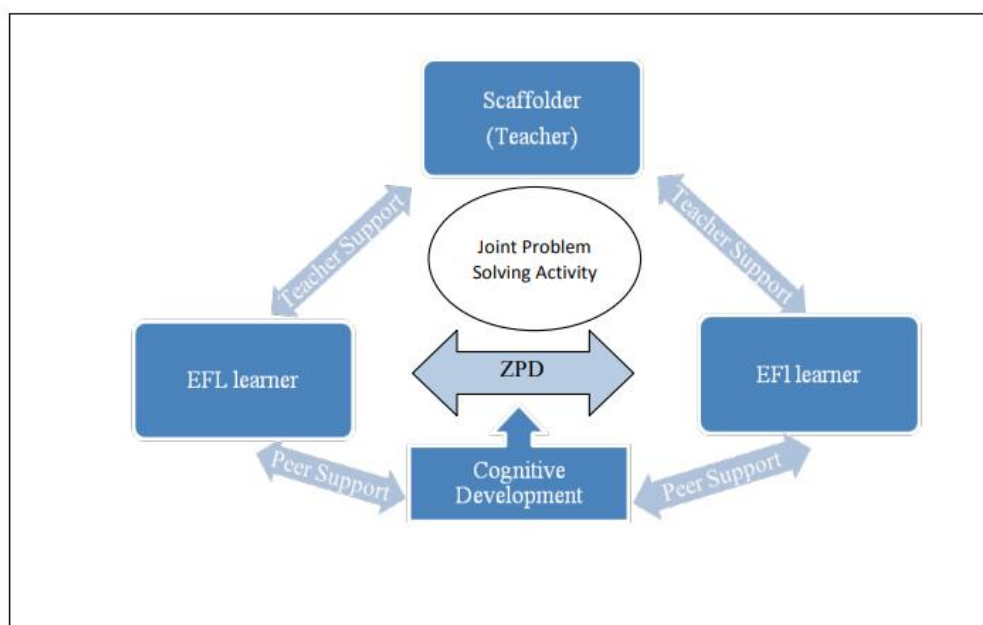
the observation of first-year university French and Italian classes throughout a semester. The research results showed that in comparison with the teacher-centered classroom where the opportunities for negotiation and scaffolding within the ZPD were reduced, in the learner-centered classroom, teachers could lead students to become highly involved “in the negotiation of meaning, linguistic form, and rules for classroom behavior during classroom activities” (Anton, 1999, p.314). A similar study conducted by Donato (1994) investigating teacher-learner interaction during the presentation of grammatical concepts was an example of employing ZPD in language teaching and learning. With a set of data from an open-ended classroom activity in an intermediate-level French class in college, the finding of the study showed how formal explanations could be constructed by teacher and learners through a negotiation process. It also demonstrated that the learners provided peers with appropriate guidance in engaging activities in class, enabling the students to accomplish a higher than their current level.

In brief, ZPD is an important tenet in SCT because it “puts the emphasis on social aspect and regards it as primary for cognitive development to occur” (Ghafar & Dehqan, 2013, p. 405). Vygotsky’s notion of ZPD emphasized that learning does not occur in isolation. Instead, it is strongly influenced by social interaction which takes place in meaningful contexts. In other words, the social interaction with more knowledgeable and capable others and the environment, impacts their ways of thinking and interpreting situations (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, as cited in Ghafar & Dehqan, 2013, p. 405).

#### 2.1.2.2 Scaffolding

The term “scaffolding” was not directly described in Vygotsky’s (1978) theory, yet it is, in fact, included in his interpretation of the ZPD tenet. As the first introducer of scaffolding, Wood (1988, cited in Aliyu & Yakubu, 2019) describes it as a process of constructive support in form of interaction in ZPD between an expert (more capable peer) and a novice (less capable peer) until the novice can do things independently. According to Wood (1988, as cited in Aliyu & Yakubu, 2019, p. 87), scaffolding is a “tutorial behavior that is contingent, collaborative and interactive”. He explains that scaffolding is *contingent* because in the learning process, the teacher and the learner may influence or be influenced by one another. It is *collaborative* because learners jointly achieve the result. It is also *interactive* because in the teaching and learning process, two or more people are mutually engaged in the activities.

Regarded as a key concept of sociocultural theory regarding social interaction, scaffolding, together with ZPD, “places the social context at the heart of the learning and communication process” (Jalilvand, 2014), where students can get benefits from social interactions “under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 4). By providing enough assistance to EFL learners, teachers can facilitate their students’ learning ability, and gradually they can perform by themselves in similar situations as they were (Poorahmadi, 2009). The above viewpoints of scaffolding prove that this tenet can occur in collaborative form and accomplishment where both scaffolders and scaffoldees can exchange their roles and get mutual benefits from scaffolding activities (Donato, 1994). Since scaffolding is seen as an interactive process occurring between teacher and students who must participate actively in the teaching and learning process, the study follows the current trends of viewing scaffolding as an interactional process of teacher’s assistance in the language learning environment through IAs.



**Figure 2.1 Interaction and Collaboration Among Learners, Peers, and Teacher in an EFL Context (Behroozizad et al., 2014, p.222)**

Figure 2.1 shows that in the scaffolding process, the problem-solving activity is aimed to justify the distinction between an individual learner’s actual development level and his/her potential level. By collaborating with a more capable person such as a teacher and/or peer in problem-solving activity, the learners are expected to shorten the distance between their actual level of development and potential level. In EFL classrooms, learners can develop a framework or skeleton for their learning through social activity under the guidance of the teacher as an expert. A teacher who provides

a supportive learning environment plays a central role in helping the learners become more involved in the performance of different language tasks. In this case, mutual interaction (peer scaffolding) between teacher and students and among students would be promoted. This enhanced interactive relationship is supposed to motivate the learners' participation and collaboration, which may result in effective communication by employing a set of learning strategies (Behroozizad et al., 2014).

Van de Pol et al. (2010) classify scaffolding into six categories to help complete learning activities: feedback, giving hints, instructing, explaining, modeling, and questioning. This classification is based on the studies of Gallimore (1988); Tharp and Gallimore (1988); Van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen (2010, 2011); Wood et al. (1976). Tharp and Gallimore (1988) regard these categories as six means of "assisting performance" namely modeling, contingency management, feeding back, instructing, questioning, and cognitive structuring, and Wood et al. (1976) confirm that scaffolding has six different functions that contribute to the interactive environment of the language classrooms: recruitment, reduction of degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control, and demonstration. Van de Pol et al. (2010) support previous studies and they emphasize that these six categories are seen as scaffolding strategies that help make students be "active participants" (p. 273) in foreign language learning process.

More specifically, six means of teachers' scaffolding to the students' learning activities are described or defined as follows:

**Table 2.1 Description of scaffolding means in language teaching**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Scaffolding means</i>	<i>are defined/ described as...</i>
1	<i>Feeding back</i>	the provision of information regarding the student's performance to the student him/herself.
2	<i>Giving hints</i>	entails the provision of clues or suggestions by the teacher to help the student go forward. The teacher deliberately does not supply the entire solution or detailed instructions under such circumstances.
3	<i>Instructing</i>	the teacher telling the students what to do or explanation of how something must be done and why.
4	<i>Explaining</i>	the provision of more detailed information or clarification by the teacher.
5	<i>Modeling</i>	"the process of offering behavior for imitation". (Cited in Tharp and Gallimore 1988, p. 47)

6	<i>Questioning</i>	asking students questions that require an active linguistic and cognitive answer.
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(Adopted in Van de Pol et al., 2010, p. 277)

In brief, under SCT's lens, learning is generally a process through which learners acquire knowledge from interactions with more knowledgeable peers and experts whose scaffoldings likely advance them to be more capable of performing tasks slightly beyond their current capacities in comparison with when they work individually. That is to say, scaffolding is "construed as the support given by a teacher to a student when performing a task that the student might otherwise not be able to accomplish" (Van de Pol et al., 2010, p. 274). When learners appear to be more autonomous, support is advisably withdrawn so that they can internalize acquired knowledge and experiences on their own (Vygotsky, 1978). Since the nature of classroom interaction is the collaborative teaching and learning relationship, Vygotsky's (1978) SCT is seen as the skeleton of this study which focuses on the IAs employed in EFL reading class, and particularly concentrates on scrutinizing the interactive processes of the teachers and learners involved in the particular teaching and learning context of reading classes.

## **2.2 Reading Comprehension from Sociocultural Theory**

### ***2.2.1 Some perspectives about Reading Comprehension***

Reading is a rather complicated skill in the process of English language acquisition which "involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed words" (Linse & Nunan, 2005, cited in Haryanto et al., 2016, p. 89). Because of its complexity, researchers in this field have suggested different definitions of reading. Nunan (1999) views reading as a receptive skill as it involves the processing of the generated ideas by others that are transmitted through language. In contrast, some other researchers (Alyousef, 2005, Celce-Murcia, 2001; Dana and Hedgcock, 2009) show their opposition to Nunan's viewpoint by stating that reading can be seen as an "interactive" process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency, or a complex interaction of cognitive processes and strategies used by the reader and various types of information contained in the text. The viewpoint that reading is not a passively receptive skill is also supported by Brown (2000) who views reading as "a process of negotiation of meaning" or "an interactive process involving a text, a reader, and a social context in which the reading process occurs" (p. 189), and Alpini (2019) who regards reading as a highly complex activity, including various

important aspects, such as recognizing symbols quickly and accurately comprehending clearly and with discrimination the meanings implied by the author.

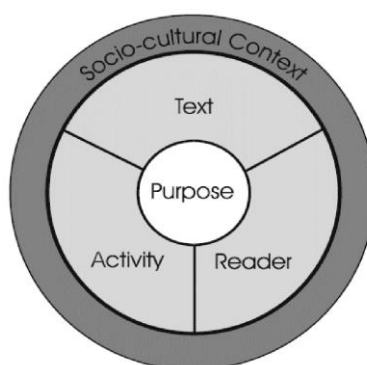
Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the readers' existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of reading situation (Anthony et al., 1993; Birsch, 2011; Farrell, 2012; Gilakjani & Sabouri 2016; Pressley, 2000). Here, reading is, once again, viewed as an interactive process between a reader and a text in which learners are involved in processing, constructing texts, and elaborating their meaning to enhance comprehension. (Paris, et al., 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Hermosa (2002) and Meniado (2016) support this viewpoint by stating that reading comprehension is a series of cognitive activities that include a lot of dimensions like the understanding of words and their meanings, mindful reaction, and integration.

From the above perspectives about reading skills, it can be summarized that reading comprehension is a process to decode the meaning encoded from the text with three main components involving the reader, text and activity. These three components are interrelated in different stages of reading, and the reader's levels of comprehension can also be classified based on the interaction of those components. Since the main purpose of reading comprehension is to show the reader's ability to read a text and understand the meaning it implies, comprehension in teaching reading is highly emphasized, as stated by Snow (2002), without comprehension, reading is nothing but symbols that do not provide the reader with any information. More specifically, in the English language classroom setting, reading comprehension is both an active and an interactive process where teachers set a good interaction with their students in the classroom environment. Through the teachers' assistance and guidance characterized as teachers' scaffoldings, the interaction between the students and the texts is much smoother, and the students are expected to comprehend the reading text more quickly and deeply.

### ***2.2.2 A Sociocultural Perspective of Reading***

For many years reading has been viewed purely from cognitive perspectives, and a great deal of research has focused on the cognitive aspect of reading which put their emphasis on the individual cognitive process (King, 1987; Rueda, MacGillivray, Monzo, & Arzubiaga, 2001; Segalowitz & Lightbown, 1999). Within the socio-cultural context, Snow (2002, cited in Woolley, 2011) identifies areas that impact the students' reading comprehension including *the text*, *the activity*, and *the reader*.

(Figure 2.2). These areas revolved around the purpose of the reading and interrelated in dynamic ways in the reading process. As shown in Figure 2.2, reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. These three elements, i.e., reader, text, and activity which are entailed in the comprehension process, as implied by Snow's (2002) chart, are influenced by the sociocultural context. According to Snow's (2002) perspective, these three elements form a triangulation of the reading circle, the *reader* does comprehending, the *text* is to be comprehended, and the *activity* is a part where the comprehension process takes place. That explains why these three elements cannot be separated from their sociocultural context. Comprehension is, therefore, the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they do not achieve the goal of reading.



**Figure 2.2 Variables that affect reading performance**  
(Woolley, 2011, p. 21, after Snow, 2002)

As reviewed in the previous part, in language learning contexts, scaffolding is a kind of support given to a learner by either a teacher or peers in a learning process in order to attain ZPD. In reading classes, scaffolding refers to any support given to a learner which helps him/her obtain meaning and get an overall understanding of the content of a text through reading activities (Aliyu & Yakubu, 2019). For instance, before a reading comprehension lesson or at the pre-reading stage, a teacher can provide the students with the meaning or pronunciation of a difficult word used in a text. Teachers can also give background knowledge of the text in order to facilitate the students' understanding of the overall meaning of a text. Furthermore, at the end of the lesson, or at the post-reading stage, teachers can also ask the students some questions which would also enhance their reading comprehension. In this case, learning occurs through interaction, negotiation, and collaboration among learners. Therefore, supporting students to engage in the activities, talk, and use of tools in order in the learning process should be the goal of teachers.

The interpretation of the chart above shows that reading comprehension is an active process where readers construct the meaning of the reading text by combining their prior knowledge and experience, the information in the text, and their views of the text. According to the SCT, learning is a process through which learners acquire knowledge from interactions with peers and experts that are more knowledgeable. With the guidance and support of their peers and experts, learners become more capable of performing tasks that are slightly beyond their own independent knowledge and ability. As such, they become more knowledgeable and experienced with the task, the supports are withdrawn while they internalize the acquired knowledge and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotskian SCT, therefore, provides the basis for a different focus, which helps characterize reading comprehension as a result of different types of interaction occurring when the teachers provide their learners with mediation by different scaffolding techniques in order to help the learners gradually withdraw from the teachers' assistance and become more independent readers.

## **2.3 Interactive Activities (IAs)**

### ***2.3.1 Interactive Activities in Language Teaching***

According to Redondo (1997), “*interactive*” proliferates to the point that it has been a popular term with most researchers. In Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (2005), to *interact* means to *communicate with somebody while you work, play or spend time with them* (p.777), and *interactive* means *involving people working together and having influence on each other* (p.778). These definitions emphasize the direct two-way communication of the interaction which are seen as the working definition of this study.

In ELT environment, interactive teaching and learning is a special form of the organization of cognitive activity, a method of cognition implemented in the form of joint activities of teacher and students, in which all participants interact with each other, exchange information, jointly solve problems, simulate situations, evaluate the actions of others and their own behavior, immerse themselves in the real atmosphere of business cooperation to solve the problem (Vinogradova et al., 2018). In other words, IAs provide opportunities for learners to use the target language in a communicative way for meaningful activities. Thus, learners are required to participate and involve in activities to produce the target language to become effective communicators. As highlighted by Swain (1985, as cited in Jeyasala, 2014), IAs make the students really use the language. This idea is supported by Lee (2004) saying that promoting IAs seems to



be an alternative means to help L2/FL learners to acquire the target language in a meaningful and appropriate way. It is believed that by means of interaction, L2 learners can optimize their language competence and use appropriate strategies to modify and negotiate meaning in spite of their inaccurate and incomplete utterances. In order to achieve the best effectiveness of IAs, as suggested by Gebhard (1998), at least five following factors should be taken into account. They are (1) reducing the central position of the teacher; (2) appreciating the uniqueness of individuals; (3) providing chances for students to express themselves in meaningful ways; (4) giving opportunities for students to negotiate meaning with each other and the teacher; and (5) giving students choices as to what they want to say, to whom they want to say it, and how they want to say it. The above factors emphasize the central position of students in a foreign classroom. Instead of teachers' domination in class, students are given more opportunities to express their ideas and share their thoughts for the sake of increasing their target language use and improving their language competence.

IAs are also defined as activities involving the participation of both teachers and students in class (Safriyani, 2017). For example, the teacher interacts with the whole class; the teacher interacts with a group, a pair, or an individual learner. Learners interact with each other: in pairs, in groups, as individuals or as a class and learners work with materials or aids and attempt the task once again individually, in groups or so on. As also stated by Safriyani (2017), teaching is an interactive act, and interaction is achieved through activities or utterances produced by lecturers and students in the teaching and learning process. Walsh (2011) also regards classroom interaction as “a central tool to facilitate, mediate and assist learning” (p.158) where teachers and students can establish social relationships, negotiate and express their ideas through discourse (Cazden, 1988). In this interactional process, the teacher plays the role of a scaffolder who “controls the floor, asks questions, issues instruction, prompts, and evaluates” (Richards, 2006, p. 61), and the students involve giving their answers to the teacher and responding to the teacher's turns.

The review above shows that IAs employed in the classroom facilitate conversational exchanges and collaborations between teachers and students, as well as among the students. These activities require the active participation and learning of the learners, which is seen as a vital element to make the language class more interactive. In this process, conversations are part of the sociocultural activities through which

students construct knowledge collaboratively. Learners' participation in such activities can create interaction which helps them enrich their linguistic resources and build their confidence to communicate with others in English. In other words, teachers and students use IAs to exchange thoughts, feelings or ideas in their classroom environment. They are also seen as the medium through which the process of teaching and learning is realized directly in the classroom. It is based on the assumption that through IAs, teachers can deliver their messages or lectures to the learners and the learners can decompose the teaching structures and derive meaning from classroom activities.

### ***2.3.2 Interactive Activities in Reading Comprehension***

A lot of studies conceptualize reading as an act of connecting written symbols to oral language, and structuring the meaning (Anderson, 2003; Birch, 2007; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Hedge 2001; Israel and Duffy, 2009; Linse and Nunan, 2006; McKenna and Robinson, 2005; Paris and Hamilton, 2009). According to Hedge (2001), in EFL reading class, interactive reading comprehension activities are those in which there is an interaction between the text and the reader while the reader is trying to make sense of the text. These activities are also those which require the interaction among/between different levels of knowledge of the reader during the process of making sense of the text. From the interactional angle, reading comprehension is viewed as a process in which a reader with a purpose in mind interacts with the text through a certain activity, extracting meanings for the purpose of comprehension. This proves that reading comprehension is an active and interpretive process rather than a receptive one as defined by Goodman (1998). Smith (2012) adds that reading comprehension is an interactive process because readers constantly form hypotheses, test predictions, and use their knowledge to construct meaning. As stated by Grabe (1991), reading consists of a number of interactive processes between the reader and the text, in which readers use their knowledge to build, create, and construct meaning. This idea is supported by Ruiz (2015) saying that reading is an interactive, problem-solving process of making meaning from texts. Reading comprehension is, therefore, viewed as an interactive process between a reader and a text and the purposes for reading in which learners are involved in processing, constructing texts, and elaborating its meaning to enhance comprehension.

Unlike other language skills, teaching reading skills is a more complex task since the process of reading can be done internally and individually. Seeing the quiet

seems to be the indicator of learning taking place, which means that reading classes are often individually assigned (Safriyani, 2017). However, different from cognitive aspect of CI which puts stress on the individual mental activities when conceptualizing thinking and views interaction as supporting the individual's knowledge construction since it helps to activate existing knowledge of the individual, sociocultural perspective views that although this is an individual task, it does not mean it excludes interaction with others. While cognitive perspective views reading as an individual activity, and what happens in reading activities can take place inside the reader, sociocultural viewpoints regarded reading as interactive both internally and externally. The internal factors emphasize the students' language competence and their internal reading ability and the external factors focus on the teachers' interference and performance to students' reading ability, such as teaching methods, teaching materials, the content of reading lessons, and the potential application of learned knowledge in daily life. These two factors of interaction can foster or hinder learners' reading performance (Taladngoen, Palawatwichai, Estaban, & Phuphawan, 2020).

In the current trend of language teaching and learning, using IAs in FL classroom settings in general and in English reading in particular seems to be preferable by the teachers because they may meet the needs of students with different levels. In addition, even though it is not as perfect as expected, it is applicable in explaining, instructing, or fostering EFL students to read texts with the most excitement and effectiveness. IAs are, therefore, worth being applied in reading classes (Nunan, 1991; Safriyani, 2017, Walsh, 2011). These researchers affirm that IAs are of great importance since it is seen as interactional scaffolding activities which help the teacher allow his/her learners to interact and express their ideas but also guide them to become more reciprocal, which is considered to be essential for teachers to manage their class and the activities they set for their students in the lessons. In the present study, the term "interactive activities" is suggested as teacher's interactional scaffolding activities taking place in an EFL reading class to motivate students' participation, collaboration, and exchanging ideas for constructing the meaning conveyed in the reading texts. This interpretation, on one hand, expresses the nature of interaction taking place inside a foreign language classroom; on the other hand, it serves the purpose of the present study which aims at investigating what teachers believe and what they really do in their reading class with the activities they design and/or organize to encourage their students' collaboration in reading lessons as well as

the influencing factors affecting the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices.

### ***2.3.3 Principles of teaching EFL reading skills***

As Safriyani (2017) stated, "teaching is an interactive act, whereas interaction is the communication among teacher and students which run continuously as responsive acts" (p. 292). Unlike other language skills, reading is rather distinctive since "reading classes are often very quiet" and "seeing the quiet seems to be the indicators of learning taking place" (p.292). Hizriani (2017) listed out a number of studies on identifying some principles in teaching reading which have been conducted by Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996), Harmer (1998), and Brown (2001). Related to their findings, the writer considers that there are five key principles for developing reading skills: (1) determining the profile of the learners, (2) determining clear objectives of the reading classroom, (3) recognizing the role of the teacher (and the students) in the classroom, (4) using different reading strategies and techniques, and (5) using authentic and variety materials.

Firstly, it is very important for teachers to know the profile of their students, in terms of their cultural background, age, and level of competency in L2/FL reading because the differences among learners can affect learning processes and teaching procedures. This principle is supported by Hedge (2000, p.16, cited in Hizriani, 2017) who states that teachers need to keep a sense of their students as individuals when making decisions about course content and methodology. In case of EFL reading classes, it is the teachers who should understand the students' level of English reading ability. Although it is clear that there is a progression of reading abilities for language students from a beginner level to an advanced level, teachers should take into account some other aspects to determine the level of students' proficiency (Hood, Solomon, and Burns, 1996, p.30, cited in Hizriani, 2017). By doing so, the teachers can select appropriate approaches, suitable texts and activities for their students.

Secondly, teachers should set clear and specific objectives of reading classroom. Since reading in FL classes is an activity with an academic purpose rather than simply reading for enjoyment or entertainment, it is important that the teacher should know the reader's purpose because it will help students to comprehend the reading texts and achieve satisfactory results in reading. Students want to improve their reading skills for many different important reasons. Their goals may be related to their further education which is involved reading textbooks and lecture notes, or they want to improve their employments

prospects or for other practical purposes. The purposes for reading not only guide the teachers to select the right materials but also help them determine the appropriate approach to apply in their reading classes. Davies (1995, p. 132, cited in Hizriani, 2017) confirms that there is a close mutual relationship between reading purposes and reading texts. While reading for pleasure typically requires narrative or literary style, reading for learning is predominantly informative texts. Therefore, identifying the purpose in reading is required for the students' efficient reading comprehension.

Thirdly, teachers should recognize their roles in the reading classroom. As the most important elements in a reading class, teachers play essential roles since their attitude and performance may have either positive or negative influence on students' performance. Harmer (2001, p.213, cited in Hizriani, 2017) explains that in order to encourage students to read enthusiastically in class, teachers have five main roles, i.e. an *organizer* who tells students exactly what their reading purpose is and gives them clear instructions about how to achieve it; an *observer* who observes students' progress to know how well they are doing individually and cooperatively; a *feedback organizer* who organizes feedback sessions after reading to self-check about their performance in order to motivate their students' engagement in reading lessons; a *prompter* who reminds students to pay attention to the language features in the text, and a *controller* who directs students to certain features of text construction, clarifies in ambiguities, and makes them aware of issues of text structure which they had not met before. Moreover, Nuttal (2005, p.32, cited in Hizriani, 2017) mentions that teachers should be responsible for helping students to get pleasure from their reading by choosing suitable texts and tasks to practice, making sure that all of the students work productively and apply their full potential to interpret the text themselves, and monitoring students' progress according to their capacity.

Fourthly, teachers should use different reading strategies and techniques in the reading classroom. It is essential for the teachers to make use of various strategies, techniques and activities in teaching reading for the students to adjust their reading style to conform with different situations and goals. When various reading strategies and activities are employed, the students can manage their reading experience, and they can gain confidence in their reading ability. Keatley and Kennedy (1998, cited in Hizriani, 2017) suggest some typical strategies which can help students read more quickly and effectively including previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, guessing from context, and paraphrasing. Using various strategies and techniques,

especially interactive reading activities in teaching reading is of great benefits for helping the students to adjust their reading style in order to deal with different situations and goals of reading skills.

Finally, teachers should use authentic and variety materials. In selecting materials, teachers should take into account some aspects related to their students. Nuttal (2005, cited in Hizriani, 2017) offers three criteria for choosing reading text for students: (1) suitability of content, (2) exploitability, and (3) readability. Authentic material is often preferred to use in reading classes since they not only have characteristics of true discourse, being coherent and clearly organized but may be more motivating as well. Hizriani (2017, p. 6) recommends that “authentic material is ideal since teachers want their students to be able to cope with the same kind of reading that encountered by native speakers of target language”; however, if the teachers cannot find the material at the right level, they can “simplify or specially rewrite it” (p.6).

Mo (2020) also suggested five general principles in the teaching of reading namely (1) teaching background knowledge for comprehension, (2) building main-idea comprehension, (3) promoting comprehension by focusing on key details, (4) building rapport with students, and (5) developing language skills for English exams.

Regarding teaching background knowledge for comprehension, Mo (2020) adopted three approaches in the teaching of background knowledge: teacher-led, student-centered, and interactive. Teacher-led approach was realized by the teacher’s direct instruction of background knowledge; student-centered one involved the use of presentation in which students worked in groups to collect, design, and present background knowledge in front of the class, and the third concerned the use of communicative activities that engaged students in obtaining background knowledge in a constructive way. As for building main idea comprehension, Grabe (2009, p. 204, as cited in Mo, 2020) said that main-idea comprehension refers to the ability to “identify main ideas of the text, integrate them into a text model of reading, and develop an appropriate situation model of reader interpretation”. In addition, promoting comprehension by focusing on key details is included in Mo’s (2020) principles, as stated by Grabe (2009), is an integration of background, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, effective use of comprehension strategies to deal with difficult texts, and strategic processing abilities to maintain a high level of comprehension. The fourth principle is building rapport with students. Mo (2020) said that the teaching of reading is not only an instructional process but also a social one that involves social interactions between teachers and students.

Building this rapport well can create a positive classroom climate and enhance students' confidence and communication skills. The fifth principle is developing language skills for English exams. Through this principle, teachers can reinforce students' language skills and language knowledge by making use of training sessions or exercise classes. Thus, these principles, which are set in teachers' beliefs form the foundation stones for structuring a theory of interaction in the language classroom (Brown, 2000), and are important in designing IAs in teaching reading.

In brief, different authors have different ways of interpreting about the principles of teaching reading. All of them are regarded as important principles that the teachers should follow to get the success in teaching reading subjects, since by recognizing the profiles of the learners, the roles of teachers (and students), setting clear objectives and purposes, using authentic material with various strategies and approaches can serve the purpose of facilitating the students to improve their reading skills.

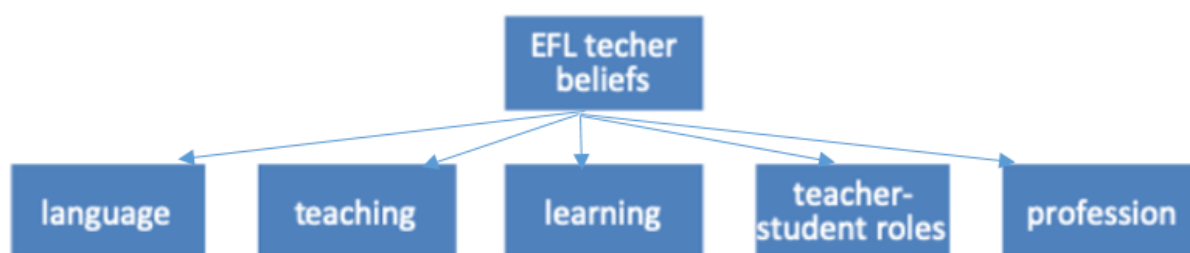
## **2.4 Teachers' beliefs and practices**

### ***2.4.1 Teachers' Beliefs***

Teacher beliefs are significant subjects in teacher education that have been designed to help teachers develop their thoughts and principles. However, as stated by Johnson (1994, p. 439), teacher beliefs are neither easy to define nor study because they are not directly observable" despite the fact that their perceptions about teaching and learning "are generally stable" and "reflect the nature of the instruction the teacher provides to students. Li (2012, cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) represents that teachers' beliefs have a key role in language teaching since they can influence teachers in terms of the teaching approach in their classes, their values, their perceptions of the world, lesson planning, decision-making, and classroom practice.

Issues relating to teachers' beliefs have been a matter of concern by different researchers such as Borg (2003), Burn (1996), Calderhead (1996), Chu (2014), Erkmen (2012), Mo (2020), Kumaravadivelu (2012), Pajares (1992), Xu (2012), and Zhang (2020). It is firmly believed that teachers' beliefs are innate in people's concepts, similar to personal capacity or knowledge and that such beliefs may develop alongside the application of teaching practices. The construct "teachers' beliefs" is interpreted by Borg (2003) as teachers' perceptions. It is, to a larger extent, regarded as the teachers' cognition, which is conceptualized as "what teachers think, know, and believe" (p.81). Notably, when Borg (2003) reviewed research concerning teacher beliefs, he found that in teachers' individual cognitive world, it is highly challenging to distinguish between some specific concepts, to

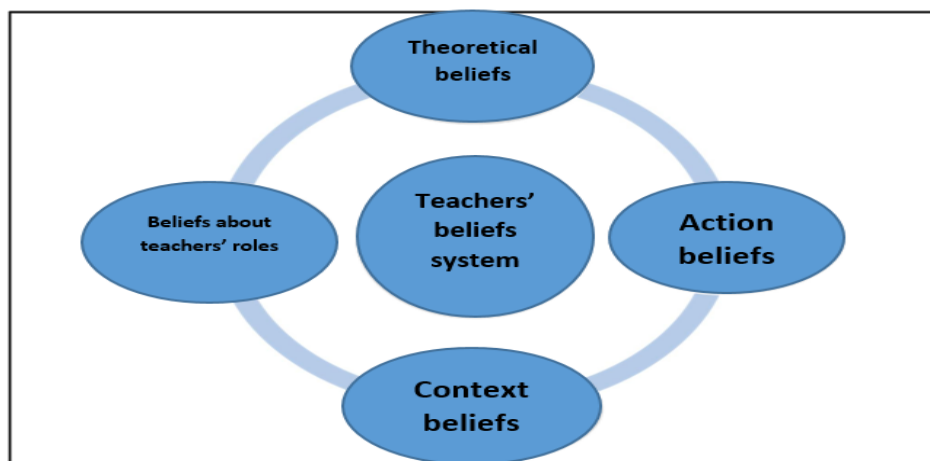
name a few, ‘knowledge,’ ‘belief’ and ‘conceptions.’ According to Borg (2003), terms like “teacher belief” and “teacher cognition” are often applied interchangeably, and they can both be used to describe teachers’ conception, perception, and knowledge in the stages of teachers’ professional development. In Calderhead’s (1996) study, he mentions five main categories of teachers’ beliefs which are well connected with each other – beliefs about learners and learning, teaching, curriculum, learning to teach, and about the self and the nature of teaching. Burn (1996) also divides teacher beliefs into five categories which he calls core beliefs for EFL teachers: English language beliefs, teaching beliefs, learning beliefs, beliefs regarding the roles of teachers and students, and professional beliefs (Figure 2.3). Calderhead (1996) and Burn (1996) share the same number of core categories in teachers’ beliefs; however, only two of them are quite the same: beliefs of teaching and beliefs of learning. The three remaining items are different. While Calderhead (1996) emphasized teaching curriculum, the ways to teach, the self and the nature of teaching, Burn (1996) put more focus on language, teachers’ and students’ roles, and teachers’ profession.



**Figure 2.3 Categories of Teachers’ Beliefs (Burn, 1996)**

Mo (2020) chooses Skott’s (2015) definition of teachers’ beliefs which refers to “individual, subjectively true and value-laden mental constructs that are of relatively stable results of substantial social experience and that have a significant impact on one’s interpretations of and contributions to classroom practices” (p. 19, cited in Mo, 2020, p. 53) as the working definition for his study. He points out four main features of teachers’ beliefs in language teaching from Skott’s definition, i.e., (1) being subjectively true; (2) involving both cognitive and affective aspects and being value-laden, (3) being considered as contextually situated and remains relatively stable; and (4) having a significant influence on the way in which teachers interpret and deal with problems in practice. Grounding on Skott’s (2015) definition of teachers’ beliefs and Fives and Buehl’s (2012) classification of the functions of teachers’ beliefs, Mo (2020) builds a framework of teachers’ beliefs system as modeled in Figure 2.4.





**Figure 2.4: Teachers' beliefs system by Mo (2020)**

#### *2.4.1.1 Theoretical Beliefs*

Mo (2020) defines theoretical beliefs as “the mental construct concerning the interpretations of goals in the teaching of reading” (p.57). Borrowing Mo’s (2020) conception, in this study, the researcher defines theoretical beliefs as a set of goals that EFL teachers believe to be achieved in the process of applying IAs into teaching EFL students reading comprehension subjects with the aim of motivating students’ active participation and collaboration in the reading lessons, which can better their reading comprehension ability. These goals provide some kind of information about teachers’ beliefs. “Teacher’s beliefs and values shape the prioritization both of goals and knowledge employed to work toward those goals” (p.8), or “they (beliefs) shape the goals teachers have for classroom interactions” (Schoenfeld, 1999, p.248).

#### *2.4.1.2 Action Beliefs*

Mo (2020) refers to action beliefs as a type of theory-in-use that are demonstrated in teachers’ classroom practices. Such beliefs are unarticulated and can be inferred through their actual practice in classroom settings, especially “the way they worked with students and the tasks that they required of the students” (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001, p. 478). They can be seen as a set of action principles that guide teachers’ immediate actions and deal with pedagogical tasks and problems. Classroom practices can be seen as a type of compromised behaviors or actions emerging from the self-negotiation process of different sets of beliefs and the desire to ease the instructional tensions in specific situations. From the perspective of the theory of actions, there may be inconsistencies between theoretical beliefs and action beliefs, which can be attributed to both external factors (situational constraints) and internal factors (teachers’ awareness).

#### *2.4.1.3 Context Beliefs*

Context beliefs are concerned with teachers' evaluative understandings of their social practices in relation to the significance of their teaching, which is best conceptualized as teachers' concerns on how specific factors support or hinder the enactment of their beliefs. These concerns involve teachers' needs, current goals, values, or anything that they care about. From Van der Meulen's (2002) perspective (as cited by Mo, 2020), context beliefs reflect teachers' understanding of contextual influences on their teaching. Context beliefs may serve as a set of psychological variables that help teachers make sense of the instructional tensions they face. Grounding on Skott's (2013) PoP model, Mo (2020) conceptualizes teachers as the agent that actively participates in and makes sense of their social activities emerging from dynamic interactions with colleagues, administrative staff and students. Context beliefs provide an alternative perspective that allows researchers to "think" beyond classroom teaching and situate teachers' classroom practices in the school environment. In this sense, teachers' classroom practices and social practices are closely related and constitute the key parts of their professional lives.

#### *2.4.1.4 Beliefs about Teachers' Roles*

Mo (2020) defined beliefs about the teachers' roles as "the evaluative understandings of a set of characteristics associated with teachers' professional roles" (p.59). This author regards beliefs about the teachers' roles as the core beliefs, which reflect teachers' fundamental understandings on the key elements in teaching, the idea of what constitutes a good teacher and education, a view of knowledge, as well as their positions about others in the school community (Wang and Du, 2006, cited in Mo, 2020). It suggests that teachers' roles are more dynamic and span over a certain stage rather than their entire professional lives. In this case, teacher beliefs about their roles, coupled with other beliefs, represent "the interconnected, affective, conceptual and evaluative perspective that teachers develop about themselves, their students, students learning, a method of instruction, curriculum, and schools as social institutions" (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 174, cited in Mo, 2020).

That teachers' beliefs play an important role in language teaching has been firmly asserted because grounding on their beliefs, teachers can decide which of their teaching approach is the most appropriate. As indicated by Borg (2003), "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of

knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (p. 81). This perspective is advocated by Farrell and Bennis (2013) who state that teachers’ beliefs can affect their goals and processes, teaching materials, classroom interaction models, their roles, students and workplace, teachers’ teaching practices and instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers’ beliefs also affect teaching processes, decision-making in the classroom as well as direct the implementation of the teaching approach which can influence the outcomes in term of teachers’ teaching development and students’ learning performance (Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021).

The literature reviewed above shows that there are quite a few researches which have tried to show the importance of teachers’ beliefs in their teaching practice. These studies provide a firm foundation to understand the relationship of teachers’ stated beliefs and actual classroom practices as well. Thus, for this study, teacher’s beliefs mainly refer to teachers’ interpretation or understanding of teaching and learning EFL reading with IAs, which helps to solidify this foundation and studies the relationship of the beliefs and practices of the EFL teachers working in a local university in Vietnam with reference to their application of IAs into teaching of reading.

#### ***2.4.2. Teachers’ Practices***

As stated by Borg (2003), grounding on different purposes of each study, the concept of teachers’ practices may be interpreted as what teachers do in the classroom with different types of activities. He also reaffirms that teachers’ practices are also shaped by “the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom” (p. 94). From his viewpoint of teachers’ cognition and the key factors of teachers’ practices, he defines classroom practice as the interaction of cognitions and contextual factors. Teachers’ practices, like teachers’ beliefs, depend on the particular teaching context. Borg (2003) highlights, “teachers’ practices are [...] shaped by the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom” (p. 94). He also emphasized parents, principals’ requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and availability of resources as the factors affecting the way the teachers actually do in their teaching process. Thus, in the framework concerning elements and processes in teachers’ cognition, Borg (2003) defined teachers’ practices as the interaction between the cognition and influential factors. Besides, while investigating teachers’ practices, it is vital that this issue should be put in relation to not only teachers’ cognitions but

influential factors in the particular teaching context as well.

Fives, Lacatena and Gerald (2015, cited in Le, 2017) define teachers' practices as "all activities associated with the practice of teaching, including but not limited to lesson planning, assessment activities, instruction and interaction with students, parents and colleagues" (p. 252). Isac et al. (2015, cited in Le, 2017) divided the process of teachers' practice into two main areas: teacher instructional practices (instructional strategies that the teachers use in the classroom) and teacher collaborative practice (the collaboration process inside and outside the classroom), and they found out that these two types of activities are "different but yet interconnected" (p. 22 - 23).

In this study, the concept of teachers' practices mainly focuses on the activities teachers use in the reading classroom, as well as their organization of IAs at different stages of reading lessons for the sake of motivating students' collaboration and participation, from which to achieve the most fruitful learning outcomes. Particularly, the analysis of teachers' practices puts its direction to the teaching procedure, and teaching approach that teachers apply to make their reading class as interactive and effective as they can.

#### ***2.4.3 Relationships between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices***

Teachers' beliefs (what teachers believe) have been proven to have an influence on their behavior (what teachers do in their classroom practices) (Baker, 2014; Basturkmen et al. 2004; Borg, 2003). As stated by Basturkmen et al. (2004), teachers' beliefs could be a factor influencing classroom practices in either compatible or incompatible ways.

In a number of recent studies relating to the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices, some researchers found the compatibility between these two elements in foreign language class settings (Barrot, 201; Kuzborska, 2011; Wang, 2006). Moreover, according to Lefebvre et al. (2006), it can be affirmed that teachers' actions in the classroom are connected with the thinking and feelings from their previous experiences. As stated by Pajares (1992, as cited by Bingimlas & Hanrahan, 2010, p. 418), "teachers' beliefs influence and play a fundamental role in their knowledge acquisition and interpretation, task selection, and course content interpretation". It means that beliefs can influence actions, learning processes, thinking, and also the decisions making about content, task, and activities. In a study conducted in a similar context by Mansour (2008), an interesting finding is drawn out

that beliefs control the gaining of knowledge and are also influenced by the knowledge. It can be said that there is a correlation between belief and teachers' knowledge, and also, beliefs are part of the different characteristics that compose the teaching process.

However, a number of studies have found inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and their practices. For example, Pham Hoa Hiep (2007) investigates three teachers' beliefs and implementation of communicative language teaching in Vietnam. His findings reveal that although these teachers' beliefs are in line with the principles of the communicative language teaching approach, they are not able to implement activities such as pair work, group work, and role play. The inconsistency between teachers' expressed beliefs and their actual classroom practices was due to several contextual factors such as traditional examinations, large class sizes, beliefs about students and teacher roles, students' low motivation, and teachers' limited expertise in creating communicative activities.

Similarly, Richards and Pennington (1998) studied five teachers who had been trained to implement the principles of communicative language teaching in Hong Kong secondary school classrooms. They reported that although these teachers expressed their belief in a communicative teaching methodology during their first year of teaching, practical considerations such as large classes, exams pressures, lack of confidence to go beyond the textbook, discipline problems, and unmotivated students forced these teachers to deviate from communicative language teaching.

In summary, the above-mentioned studies provide evidence that beliefs affect teachers' practices in many ways. They indicate how a teacher's set of beliefs can have an influence on the overall nature of his/her practices. They also show that what teachers admit to believe and what they actually do in the classroom may or may not be consistent, and that the degree of congruence can be influenced by various contextual factors. Since the focus of the current study is investigating what EFL teachers believe and what they actually do when teaching reading subjects to EFL students at tertiary level with IAs, identifying the relationship between these two aspects is of great usefulness, because what the teachers believe may match or mismatch with what they do or perform in their actual reading class.

#### ***2.4.4 Factors affecting teachers' beliefs and practices***

That the beliefs can influence teachers in terms of the teaching approach in their classes, their values, their perceptions of the world, lesson planning, decision making, and classroom practice has been supported by different researchers such as Chu (2014),

Erkmen (2012), Kumaravadivelu (2012), Pajares (1992), Xu (2012), and Zhang (2020). Xu (2012) mentions that teachers' beliefs can determine their actual behavior toward students. He adds that when the teachers realize students' English background knowledge and their language proficiency level, they consequently attempt to determine and adapt their teaching behavior and methods to serve students' better-learning performance. Another researcher, Kumaravadivelu (2012), showed his support for Borg's (2001) viewpoint that beliefs serve as "a guide to thought and behavior" (p. 186) in language teaching by regarding beliefs as "the driving force behind the decision that individuals make throughout their lives" (p.60). These viewpoints prove that beliefs and practices are two interrelated items. However, these two issues may be compatible or incompatible with each other by a number of related subjective and objective factors.

Borg's (2003) framework of teachers' cognition highlighted four main elements affecting teachers' beliefs namely schooling, professional coursework, classroom practice and contextual factors which can be addressed as the major influential factors. The first factor relates to "*schooling*". Andriani (2014) points out that teachers' level of general education, training, age, salary, and the principals' support are also related to the beliefs and practices of teachers (p.138). Supporting this idea, Andriani (2014) says that the teacher's learning experience from the very first schooling to the latest which is very strongly influential in the beliefs the teacher has later positively or negatively. In addition, as identified by Gürsoy (2013), the prior language learning experience accumulated by the teachers is seen as a form of beliefs that seemed to be quite stable and resistant to change.

The second factor goes to "*professional coursework*", referring to teacher education and training programs. Some researchers (Almarza,1996; Richardson, 2003, cited in Zheng, 2009) found out that short training programs made little positive impact on teachers' beliefs while some others such as Andriani (2014), Debri (2012), Soldat (2009) might see the great changes of this factor in the teachers' beliefs within a certain amount of time. Gürsoy (2013) made a comparison between teachers' education and teachers' experiences to see which is more effective in forming teachers' beliefs and found out that both factors were equally influential. Thus, it is probable that the impacts of teachers' education and experience on the ways they think and believe might depend on certain contexts as well as the types and the duration of the training programs.

In terms of "*classroom practice*", Borg (2003) viewed this factor as the

teachers' teaching experience which has been identified to make a great impact on the teachers' cognition. His viewpoint was supported by Breen et al. (2001); Larcote and Canabal (2005), and Nunan (1992). Among the factors addressed, classroom practice was regarded as the most influential one since it controls the teachers' instruction performance (Phipps & Borg, 2009). However, according to Le Van Canh (2011), "the number of studies on the impact of teaching experiences on teachers' beliefs is quite small and most of these studies were conducted with ESL rather than EFL teachers" (p.46), which is considered as a gap for the researchers in the field.

Regarding the fourth factor, *contextual factors*, Borg (2003) addressed it as the culture of teaching where social and institutional layers were the focus. As stated by this researcher, there were a number of factors relating to the teaching environment to be taken into account. For example, the interaction of the teachers with their students, their colleagues, and administrative boards as well as other elements such as the rewards for teaching profession, the intrinsic value of the teaching career, and the environment where they are working. However, as Borg's (2003) claim, there still exists an absence of research investigating the impact of contextual factors on teachers' practice.

In his study, Mo (2020) also addresses four typical factors that may hinder the consistency level between EFL teachers' beliefs and their practices of teaching EFL reading skills in the Chinese tertiary context: (1) an examination style, (2) the roles of the teacher, (3) working conditions, and (4) teachers' professional development.

In terms of the examination style, Mo (2020) identifies that the dominance of the examination-oriented education exerts a profound and lasting influence on the ways of teaching ELT in the Chinese university context. Therefore, both teachers and students highly emphasize the importance of exam preparation. While the teachers spend a significant amount of classroom time and energy helping students familiarize test formats and providing students with appropriate guidance to do the test well, the students are encouraged to learn effortfully in order to pass the English test in the most fruitful way.

Regarding the roles of the teachers, Mo's study reveals that EFL teachers still play traditional roles in teaching English in general and reading comprehension in particular. The educational reform requires that the teachers should construct a new role aligning with the paradigm of student-centered teaching, and the new role should be built on a student-centered awareness, subject matter knowledge, flexible pedagogical skills, and competence in using advanced information technologies; however, the teacher finds it very challenging and complicated to fulfill because they

“have to replace their prior knowledge and skills with the new educational philosophies and skills” (p. 37).

As for the working conditions, Mo (2020) finds out that EFL teachers are, to some extent, dissatisfied with the unfavorable working conditions that they are dealing with. Large class sizes, limited number of instructional hours, mixed ability students, an increasing workload, low salaries, and unstable employment are the prominent factors affecting their commitment to the teaching job of ELT in China. Together with the limited instructional hours which are often called “a tip of the iceberg” (Mo, 2020, p 38), the teachers have to spend a large amount of their time on the associated work such as writing lesson planning, giving feedback on students’ assignments, scoring students’ test papers, and participating in the teaching panels’ activities. Another factor, teachers’ low salaries, poses a significant challenge to the success of the current ELT reform in general and in language classes in particular. If teachers are expected to undertake the major responsibilities of transforming reform initiatives into classroom practices, as Mo (2020) suggests, the problems relating to low salaries should be adjusted and solved. Challenges coming from the issue of unstable employment are also seen as influential factors that affect the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ practices. According to Mo (2020), “higher education is viewed as a huge market in China” (p. 39) so the teachers’ employment is very competitive. University teachers are not traditionally hired by the government with a permanent position as they used to be. Instead, they are working under short-term contracts with universities, which makes them feel unstable. This negative feeling may affect their dedication to the teaching job.

Regarding teachers’ professional development, Mo (2020) states that the teachers’ increasing workload is seen as another factor affecting their professional development. In addition, due to the lack of necessary communication between teachers and policymakers, teachers may be resistant to the reform initiatives (p.40). The quality of professional development programs offered to teachers is also seen as the hindrance to the teachers’ professional development as they seem theory-oriented or more concerned about academic achievement rather than the quality of classroom teaching. It is true that continuous professional development may help teachers improve their teaching effectiveness, but some of the issues mentioned above may be the barriers to the teachers’ professional development.

Some researchers also addressed the factors affecting teaching reading skills



(Boonchum, 2020; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Tran Quoc Thao et al., 2018). These researchers drew out a number of significant factors sharpening teachers' beliefs such as teachers' professional training, instructional materials, teachers' experiences, students' previous knowledge and language proficiency, lack of experts' pedagogical theories, etc. Therefore, the success of teaching reading skills is affected by different factors, which should be concerned by the teachers in the field. Especially, teachers' professional development, working condition, teaching hours, testing style, authentic materials for the course and students' background knowledge and language competence can be addressed as the major factors affecting the effectiveness and proficiency of teaching and learning EFL reading skills.

## **2.5 Previous related studies and gaps in the literature**

### ***2.5.1 Previous related studies***

Up to now, the matter of applying interactive reading activities to teach reading skills to EFL students has been widely investigated (Alshammari, 2015; Attarzadeh, 2011; Babashamsi et al., 2013; Dehqan and Ghafar, 2013; Dong, 2017; Saleem and Azam, 2015; Yusuf, 2015).

Alshammari (2015) shows his approval of developing interactive approaches to EFL reading classes by mainly focusing on the interactional elements not only between the bottom-up and top-down approaches but between what is written in the text and what the reader brings to it to seek thorough comprehension as well. By using a comparative descriptive method, this researcher claims that "traditional ways of comprehension are of very limited potential as learning activities" (p. 6) and suggests "active reading task" (p. 6) that may change the way students interact with the given texts. He also lists out activities that can be useful for an interactional (pre, while, post) reading process with the aim of improving the student's reading skills. However, despite various reading activities he could collect from three textbooks, he failed to classify which ones are used to facilitate interactions in reading classes.

As for the IAs in teaching reading skills, Yusuf's (2011) experimental research investigated the impact of IAs on students' performance in reading comprehension. According to her, IAs comprise of "the activities that learners can be exposed to that demand high levels of students' participation" (p. 524). By analyzing the results of two reading tests, pretest and posttest with the participation of eighty senior secondary students in Kaduna, Nigeria, the researcher affirms that IAs have a positive impact on students' reading skills. The finding also indicates that IAs can improve the students'

reading performance by motivating them through positive interaction between teacher and student and between students and students.

Regarding the effect of sociocultural perspectives on teaching EFL reading skills with IAs, Dehqan and Ghafar (2013) investigate the possible effects of sociocultural-based teaching techniques on reading classes among Iranian EFL university learners. The researchers of this study are sure about the existence of no difference in the level of proficiency of the two groups by conducting an independent sample t-test. The finding of this study shows an interesting result that learners who receive sociocultural teaching techniques outperform those who do not in their use of reading strategies. The finding also reveals that the scaffolding techniques cater to language learning strategies in general and reading strategies in particular. From the research findings, they conclude that Vygotsky's SCT on social interaction found positive effects of teachers' IAs to help language learners better at their reading ability. Similarly, Saleem and Azam's (2015) study shared the same findings as Dehqan & Ghafar's (2013) indicating that sociocultural teaching strategies provide a better reading perspective for EFL learners' RC in comparison to those of the conventional method, and suggested a new way for language teachers and researchers into how to equip EFL learners with language learning strategies.

In another study, Salem (2017) investigates whether EFL teachers employ scaffolding strategies for developing their students' reading comprehension skills or just for assessing their comprehension, and tries to demonstrate whether teachers are aware of these strategies or they use them as a matter of habit. This descriptive qualitative study uses a questionnaire and structured interviews for collecting data from ninety-four non-native English language teachers in the intermediate schools to assure the suitability for the nature of the study. The study findings reveal that teachers tend to keep using scaffolding strategies to achieve better performance in reading comprehension. More interestingly, those teachers use such strategies in order to achieve comprehension rather than to assess comprehension. Results of the study consolidate such premise that there are statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in three main scales; using cooperative strategies, using multiple strategies to help them practice skills, and using metacognitive skills in favor of female teachers.

Alyousef (2005) suggests six general component skills and knowledge areas involved in reading, i.e., automatic recognition skills, vocabulary and structural

knowledge, formal discourse structure knowledge, content/world background knowledge, synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies, and metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring. He also lists the IAs that the teachers can take before reading a text, i.e. discussing the titles, subheadings, photographs, identifying text structure, previewing, relating the passage students are going to read to something that is familiar to them; providing a brief discussion question that might engage the students and providing an overview of the section they are about to read; naming the selection, introducing the characters, and describing the plot; and directing the students to read the story and look for particular information. In the while-reading stage, Alyousef (2005) shares an interesting finding that most of the students participating in his study had a positive report on the IAs used in this phrase. He also suggested that teachers should use a balanced approach to teaching reading by incorporating both top-down and bottom-up processes in order to get better reading outcomes.

In a study by Attarzadeh (2011), the effects of scaffolding language on learning reading of various text modes on Iranian EFL learners with different levels of language proficiency were examined through a quantitative experimental design. In this research, 180 EFL learners were randomly selected and divided into three groups of low, mid and high proficiency through the TOEFL language proficiency test. They were taught different text types such as narrations, argumentations, descriptions and explanations. The scaffolded groups were exposed to a constructivist interactive model of learning while the non-scaffolded groups were subjected to the traditional individual reading. The finding of his study revealed that the scaffolding reading subjects of various text modes, levels of learners and interaction of them were highly significant. The scaffolded narrative text type with the strongest mean was superior to all other text types and mid-level learners also had the strongest mean in comparison with the other levels. Significant interaction effects on any of the dependent variables were also found.

More recently, Aliyu and Yakubu (2019) conduct research to investigate the impact of sociocultural factors on teaching and learning reading skills in Nigerian classrooms. Using semi-structured interviews with 18 ESL second-year undergraduates, the study discusses the sociocultural views on reading comprehension and reports students' views of a problem-based learning approach on their reading comprehension. The findings reveal that the problem-based learning approach has a positive impact on participants' reading comprehension. It increases their interest and engagement with texts during reading. The study also provides some implications for

teaching reading skills in the sociocultural context and encourages further research to investigate the effectiveness of instructional approaches that incorporate the socio-cultural perspectives on EFL reading.

In searching for the most compatible approach to teaching Vietnamese EFL tertiary students reading skills, a lot of research has been conducted on different issues relating to classroom interaction such as peer interactions in EFL university classes, interactions in large classes, and classroom interaction through cooperative learning activities. Some major issues relating to teaching reading skills such as reading strategies, the impact of background knowledge on EFL reading, difficulties encountered by EFL university students in reading, or the teacher's belief and perception of teaching reading in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2012; Do & Nguyen, 2014; Bui 2017; Nguyen, 2018). Unlike primary and secondary students, tertiary students are better motivated to learn English because high proficiency in English is of great importance for them to find good jobs after graduating from the university (Hoang, 2010). Do and Nguyen (2014) indicate the importance of reading skills to EFL students by stating that "reading English texts is the base that helps them to master the target language, enabling them to study at higher education and life-long learning, and also weaving into the English-speaking academic community as well as global job-market organizations of increasing competition demands" (p. 10).

Tran Thi Thanh Thuong (2018) investigated the strategies used by English teachers to manage interactions in large classes. The result findings indicated that the majority of the teachers reported adopting team work, group work and pair work as strategies to provide students with more opportunities to interact. The authors pointed out that large English classes in Vietnam could adopt the principles of SCT to promote interactions between teachers and students and among students.

In another study, Phuong Hoang Yen and Nguyen Thi Lam Giang (2017) examine teachers' questions in a Vietnamese high school reading classroom. This case study is conducted with six EFL high school teachers and 10 reading lessons in Vietnam to explore the teachers' use of questions and to analyze if these questions facilitate the students' critical thinking. Classroom observations and the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy are used as the research instruments. The study results reveal that teachers asked lower-cognitive questions related to recalling facts or grasping the main contents of materials, especially knowledge, than higher-cognitive questions. The results also reckon the limited use of higher-cognitive questions would

limit the development of students' critical thinking. Therefore, the case study recommends that teachers are expected to pay more attention to higher-cognitive questions after asking a series of lower-cognitive questions in order to provide an environment rich in opportunities for enabling critical thinking. Additionally, teachers should be trained how to ask questions appropriately and effectively, especially higher-cognitive questions.

Vo Thi Khanh Linh (2020) conducts a study to investigate peer interaction in speaking tasks by EFL college students in Vietnam. Thirty second-year students from a college of pedagogy in Vietnam are chosen as the participants. Video - recordings, semi-structured interviews and learning diaries are used as the main research instruments to gather data. This research puts its main focus on the association of peer interaction and language learning in the EFL context of speaking tasks from the lens of SCT. In addition, the research findings also help enhance the understanding of pair work for language development, especially in EFL contexts where EFL learners have few chances to practice the target language outside classrooms. Finally, the study reveals that not all types of peer interaction facilitate language learning equally and then highlights the role of peer interaction type in a learning context (Storch, 2002) of EFL like Vietnam.

Although the studies related to the issues of classroom interaction in EFL classes are quite numerous, there is a lack of empirical studies denoting the teachers' beliefs and practice of IAs on EFL learners' reading comprehension, particularly at the tertiary level in Vietnam. Furthermore, the recommendation of deploying IAs in reading classes has not been identified and evaluated in much research so far. Therefore, such studies like the present one are supposed to more or less narrow down the gap concerned, especially in the Vietnamese language teaching context.

### ***2.5.2 Gaps in the Literature***

As reviewed, most of the related studies either focuses on classroom interaction or scaffolding strategies in English reading classes rather than mentioning IAs used in EFL reading classes as this study intends to. Very few studies which aim to link reading with IAs from EFL teachers' perspectives in a single context of a local university in Vietnam have been conducted so far. Therefore, this study attempts to provide ample evidence for clarifying the usefulness of using IAs in reading classrooms through the lens of socio-cultural theory.

In addition, after a long time searching for the work studying issues relating to

teaching and learning this practical skill, the researcher could search a number of studies which have been done on such certain topics as reading strategies, reading difficulties, teacher's beliefs and practices of teaching reading. However, these studies fail to pay attention to a deep investigation into IAs which are employed by the teachers in reading classes in order to assist the students in the process of learning as well as helping them better at this skill. Furthermore, the research conducted so far is mostly for the sake of improving English reading skills for lower-level students in primary, lower secondary, or secondary education systems rather than for students with higher critical thinking at the tertiary level; which leaves uncharted land for the researcher. In addition, very few among these studies clearly show the congruence in the teachers' cognition and their use of IAs in their actual reading class, which arouses the researcher to conduct research to fill this gap (Miles, 2017). More than that, these above studies fail to identify the factors affecting the use of IAs in teaching EFL reading, which leaves unanswered in the Vietnamese teaching context. The above reasons urged the researcher to carry out the present study.

## **2.6 Theoretical framework of the study**

In this study, the researcher borrows Vygotsky's (1978) SCT theory on social interaction in combination with Mo's (2020) teachers' beliefs system as the theoretical framework.

Vygotsky's SCT which emphasizes the sociocultural context in teaching and learning process has a great impact on the study of teachers' beliefs in the field of language teaching and learning (Borg, 2003, Johnson, 2003; Johnson, 2009, Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Kubanyiova, 2012, Mo, 2020). They support the notion that "teachers might be engaged in meaning-based cognitive activity that is shaped by the social context of their classroom" (Burns et al., 2015, p. 586). From this theory, teachers' beliefs originate in and are fundamentally shaped by participation in specific social activities and sociocultural practices (Johnson, 2009, 2015, as cited in Mo, 2020).

Mo's (2020) model of teachers' belief system views teachers' beliefs as a mediational tool in which a teacher transforms external activities of social interactions into internal activities for teacher thinking. He affirms while the process of internalization happens independently or automatically depending upon a teacher's use of their beliefs and other internal tools to make sense of the environment, regulate their behaviors, and deal with social relations with others, the establishment of particular beliefs is "the result of a teacher's prolonged and sustained engagement with the social

activities in the school community” (p.52).

In this study, Mo’s (2020) belief system can firstly serve the purpose of investigating the teachers’ belief of IAs in teaching English reading subjects in a certain place in the Vietnamese tertiary setting, which has a lot of similarities with the research site he chooses to conduct his study. Secondly, his study investigates teachers’ beliefs about teaching reading skills for EFL tertiary students in China, and the present study, grounding on his study, aims to discover a more specific aspect, that is, IAs in teaching reading subjects. Thirdly, his study uses Vygotsky’s SCT as a theoretical foundation which is the same as the researcher’s intention to use this theory to explore the social interaction in reading class with IAs. Therefore, the present study is expected to give an insight into how EFL teachers perceive the potentiality of employing IAs in teaching reading subjects to EFL students in the university context.

The present study is concerned with investigating EFL teachers’ beliefs about IAs in EFL reading comprehension and their application of IAs to teach EFL students reading comprehension in the Vietnamese tertiary context. It is conceptualized as the theoretical framework to seek what teachers believe and what they really do in practice in order to find out whether what the teachers perceive about IAs in reading class matches or mismatches with what they perform in their actual teaching reading context.

## **2.7 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter has presented some of the key theoretical backgrounds relating to the present study. As the fundamental base of the study, the SCT framework with the key concepts of ZPD and scaffolding is synthesized. In addition, since this study aims to investigate the teachers’ beliefs and their actual practice of deploying IAs in teaching reading skills to EFL tertiary students, a review of such issues provides important background for collecting and analyzing the data relevant to the present study. In addition, synthesis and critical review of studies relating to the relationship of teachers’ beliefs and practices with the focus on interaction in reading class have shown the strengths and limitations of the previous studies in Vietnam and in the world. The chapter also points out the gap in the literature and emphasizes the need to conduct a study on IAs in the educational context of Vietnamese EFL classes at the tertiary level, especially IAs in teaching reading subjects. The research methodology will be presented in the next chapter with a detailed description of the research approach, design, research sites, participants, and instrumentation in accordance with the detailed demonstration of the whole procedure of data collection, and analysis for the sake of answering the research questions as posed in Chapter 1.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*This chapter justifies the methodology used to conduct this study. It first presents the research approach and research design employed. It explains why the qualitative approach and case study design are appropriate to address the research questions. It also describes, analyses, and justifies data collecting methods and then states how the collected data will be analyzed. In addition, the research setting, participants and the researcher's roles, data collection methods, and data analysis methods are described in detail. Issues of trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability as well as ethical issues are also mentioned in detail.*

#### **3.1. Research Approach and Research Design**

Schumacher and McMillan (1993) states that the research approach and research design played a very important part in a study since they are regarded as the foundation to build a strong study and guide the project so as to obtain the most valid, credible conclusions drawn from the answers to the research questions. In this section, the research approach and design adopted to carry out the current study are in turn described and justified.

##### ***3.1.1 Research Approach***

Foster and Ohta (2005, p. 403) emphasize that sociocultural perspectives prioritize qualitative research methodology and pay close attention to the settings and participants in interactions. Thus, in this study, the qualitative approach is regarded to be the best choice since it is appropriate with the overall research purpose, which aims to understand the selected EFL teachers' beliefs of employing IAs in reading classes and their practices within their teaching context. In addition, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to identify the issues of investigation in an inductive way, as suggested by Saunders et al. (2009).



**Table 3.1 Criteria for researcher's choosing qualitative research approach**

(Taken from Saunders et al. 2009)

<i>Qualitative/ inductive research approach emphasizes on...</i>	<i>This study focuses on...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Gaining an understanding of the meaning humans attached to events</li><li>○ A close understanding of the research context</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Gaining understanding of EFL teachers' beliefs and practices</li><li>○ A close understanding of an EFL teaching in a Vietnamese context, particularly in specific context of a local university in the north central Vietnam</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The collection of qualitative data</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The collection of qualitative data from the in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A flexible process of collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A realization that the researcher is part of the research process</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Researcher positions herself as the teacher participants' colleague with more than 18 years of teaching experience and participates in the research as a non-interfering interviewer and observer</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Less concern with the need to generalize</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Closely relate to the particular contexts, thus, the generalization is not intended in this study.</li></ul>

The qualitative approach is used in this study in order to investigate the issues relating to classroom interaction, specifically IAs employed in reading subjects by EFL teachers in a local university in Vietnam. There are three specific reasons to choose the qualitative approach for the present study. Firstly, in terms of its nature, qualitative research is holistic, descriptive, and interpretive (Bresler & Stake, 2017), so this approach is appropriate with the research questions arising in this study. These characteristics fit well with the objectives of the current study, that is, to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practice of using IAs in teaching reading subjects for EFL students. Secondly, as the issue of teachers' belief of IAs and how IAs are applied to real reading classes are rather subtly personalized, the qualitative research is suitable for achieving the objectives set for the study. That is, by employing the qualitative approach, the researcher could find out the most effective way to explore the matter of concern within a specific sociocultural context since participants have opportunities to show their real teaching as well as their viewpoint on the issue concerned. Thirdly, the

qualitative approach used in this study aims to provide more specific and greater empirical groundings for how teachers perceive IAs, and how they apply different types of activities in their teaching reading subjects. Identifying teachers' beliefs of different issues relating to the employment of IAs in teaching EFL reading subjects as well as specific factors associated with classroom interaction between teachers and students provides valuable significance to the language teaching and learning community.

In summary, qualitative research is chosen for the present study because it proves to be efficient in guiding the researcher in selecting the research method and setting the logical procedure for the interpretations of data and research findings.

### ***3.1.2 Research Design***

Grounding on the nature of the research in a naturalistic classroom environment, a case study is employed to conduct this study. The case study is chosen as the research design for the present study since it is expected “to provide the detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships” (Dooley, 2002, p.335), and reflect “real-life situations” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 235). The employment of a case study or this study is expected to facilitate a deep investigation into EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of deploying IAs in reading classes in the context of Vietnamese higher education. Within this teaching context, this study aims to seek answers to the key issues relating to the EFL teacher's beliefs, the relationship between the EFL teacher's beliefs and real practice, and the influential factors affecting the deployment of IAs in EFL reading classes which are posed as the research questions of the study.

Specifically, the researcher employs a case design for this study for four reasons. *Firstly*, it fits with the study's main objective which investigates how three EFL teachers in Vietnam perceive the IAs in reading classes, and how they employ the IAs in their real lessons to make their students involved in and get the most effectiveness in comprehending the reading texts. *Secondly*, within the scope of this research, this design provides deeper insights into the issue of how EFL reading comprehension is taught to university students using IAs set by the participating teachers. By employing the case study, the researcher can understand how EFL teachers think, believe, and know about IAs in regard to goals, principles, contexts, and teachers' roles, their actual performance to make their real reading class as interactive as possible, as well as the influencing factors that lead to the compatibility

and/or incompatibility between what the teachers believe and how they act in practice. *Thirdly*, the researcher conducts a case study by herself, and the findings from her study may be a good reference not only for her colleagues who are currently teaching reading subjects at the selected university but for other teachers and for researchers who are interested in the topic as well. *Finally*, as identified by Yin (2013), a case study is related to the extent to which the researcher would like to have no control over actual behavioral events. In this study, the researcher participates as a non-participating observer to record what was going on in every reading class without joining any activities initiated by the teachers or giving any comments, evaluations, or suggestions about the observed classes.

In brief, a case study design is believed to be the most appropriate because of its fitness for the purpose of the present study. It is expected to help clarify the understanding of the possible benefits of using IAs in reading classes in EFL tertiary Vietnamese teaching and learning context. By employing in-depth interviews before the actual teaching practice, classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews conducted right after the end of the lessons, the researcher desires to get sufficient data for this qualitative case study.

### **3.2 The Research Setting**

Within the scope of this study, the researcher does not intend to cover the beliefs and practices of all EFL teachers from different universities in Vietnam but only tries to focus on EFL teachers who are currently teaching EFL reading skills at a local university in north central Vietnam. This selection is based on the following criteria.

The first criterion is *geographical location*. The selected university is the unique university of the province which takes on the duty to train highly-qualified human resources for not only the whole province but the neighboring ones as well. It is located in a rather small province in northern central Vietnam where the socio-economic conditions are still at a medium level. Although a lot of changes have been made in all fields of development, the average standard of living of the local people is still low in comparison with some other provinces in the region and nationwide.

The second criterion is *the historical development process of the selected university* which makes it a distinctive institution in the province and the whole region. Established in 2006 on the basis of a vocational school of pedagogy, it is the only university in the province with multi-disciplinary, multi-level, and multi-field of training. With more than 60 years of its tradition, the university directs its aims of

providing highly qualified human resources mainly for the whole province, the neighboring provinces, and the others nationwide. In addition, this university is now in the process of renovating all aspects from the management team, lecturers, facilities, and teaching equipment for the strive to become a prestigious university in the region and nationwide, a center for training high-quality human resources of the Central region in particular and the country in general.

The third criterion is closely related to *the research design* of the present study. Accordingly, the chosen qualitative method design, which is expected to give reliable qualitative data, requires a setting with the allowance for the collection of not only representative and diversified but also deep and detailed data, which leads to the characteristic of case study research (Bodgan & Biken, 2007). A case study, as previously mentioned, was selected for the current study in an attempt to achieve a deep understanding of EFL teachers' beliefs, their real application of IAs in teaching reading comprehension for their EFL students, and the contextual factors affecting the relationship between their beliefs and practices as well.

The fourth criterion is *representativeness*. Different from national and regional universities that are often located in the big-centered cities and are directly governed by the MoET, the local ones are often situated in the province and are under the provincial authority's management. For the local universities like the selected university in this study, the local students and the local teachers are seen as the most important feature. The students studying in this university vary in terms of geographical location, social background, specialism and English proficiency. Their entrance examination result is at the lower range in comparison with the regional and national universities, and their background knowledge of the English language, as far as the researcher's understanding, is not good enough although English is one of their core subjects at high school. It is understandable because most of them come from rural areas where socio-economic development is still at a low level, and their focus on the English language is not sufficient enough.

Together with the above criteria, the general development trend of the higher education system in Vietnam is also seen as an important factor to influence the researcher's setting selection. In some recent years, while regional or national universities are actively improving in all aspects to be able to catch up with reputable universities in the world, local/ provincial universities like the selected one are facing many difficulties in order to survive despite their important role in training specialized human resources to meet the need of socio-economic development in accordance with local characteristics.

Last but not least, the typical characteristics of the Foreign Language Faculty of the university where the selected participants are working are seen as a typical criterion for the researcher to choose the research setting. As one of the oldest and the most potential faculties of the university, this faculty is responsible for teaching English, Chinese and French for all levels of training in the institution as well as other institutions of the university throughout the province. With the heavy workload in contrast with the limited number of English teaching staff, the lecturers are in charge of a rather large number of teaching hours per week, which significantly affects other activities such as self-study, professional training opportunities, seminars and even their preparation of lectures. Moreover, EFL teachers at the selected university also differ in origin, experience, qualifications, and expertise. The number of teachers gaining a PhD degree is still limited. Besides, since they are “local”, they are not granted many opportunities to update the newest teaching trends in the world, and they do not have many chances to integrate with the latest renovation in science and technology relating to their working field.

In brief, the selected university is believed to be representative of tertiary settings where the living condition is still limited, the investment for higher education is not sufficient enough, the student’s background knowledge is, in general, limited, and the teachers lack potential chances to update the teaching methodology. It is obvious that although its findings might not be convincing enough to be generalized for the whole system of tertiary education in Vietnam as it is expected, this study is absolutely possible to be conducted in a smaller scale with a desire to depict the picture of EFL teaching in some similar Vietnamese context. Considering those criteria, the researcher decides to carry out a case study at this university.

### **3.3 Participants of the study and the researcher’s roles**

#### ***3.3.1 Participants of the study***

##### *3.3.1.1. Some characteristics of Vietnamese EFL teachers*

Being aware of the important roles of the teachers in Vietnamese EFL teaching contexts, in 2008, the Decision No 1400/QĐ-TTg was signed by the Prime Minister, and the Vietnam’s National Foreign Language 2020 Project, the biggest project for improving the quality of English teaching and learning in Vietnam up to now has been approved with the aim of improving foreign language teaching and learning for the period 2008 - 2020. Basing on the assumption that teaching staff plays the key role in achieving this goal, increasing the number of qualified teachers has been one of the central focuses of the project (Dinh Thu Hien, 2019, p. 92).

Mullock (2003, cited in Dinh Thu Hien, 2019, p. 92) categorizes the characteristics of an EFL teacher into five qualities including pedagogical content knowledge and skills, attitudes and behaviors towards students, teacher's personal characteristics and attitudes, content knowledge, and broader educational goals and skills. In her study, Dinh Thu Hien (2009) advocates English competence, teaching skills, and socio-affective skills as the most referred features when referring to an ideal Vietnamese teacher of English. Her study is in line with Tran (2015) who views these characteristics as the main features of a desirable English teacher in Vietnamese teaching context.

Within the scope of the present study, the researcher does not expect to cover EFL teachers coming from different levels of education in different regions in Vietnam, but only focuses on EFL teachers who are currently teaching reading subjects in a local university in northern Vietnam which is closely related to the researcher's working place. In addition, as far as the researcher's understanding, seeking the cases which are easily accessible and are willing to share their beliefs and practices may provide her with more chances to collect reliable data and ensure a deep and detailed description of the investigated phenomenon. It is addressed as one of the criteria to select the participants for the study.

#### *3.3.1.2. Participants of the study*

In this study, the researcher invited three teachers coming from the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the selected university to be the participants. This number of selected participants satisfied Flyvberg's (2006) viewpoint that in order to achieve the great possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon for a case study, a representative case or a random sample "may not be the most appropriate strategy" for the fact that "the typical or average case is often not the richest in information" (p. 229). This researcher was also aware that it would be "more appropriate to select some few cases chosen for their validity" (p. 229). Bearing such criteria in mind, the researcher decided to conduct a small survey, on one hand, to have the right choice of participants for the study; on the other hand, to get sufficient and valuable information about the teachers' perception of the investigated issue and their actual practice in their particular teaching context.

To select the most potential participants for the study, a consent letter for inviting participation was designed in Vietnamese with information about the background of the researcher, the aims of the research, the description of the research procedure, a brief justification about the benefits, and confidentiality with the participants of the research. Then it was sent to ten out of twelve English teachers of

the Faculty of Foreign Languages, except for the researchers and the other teacher who was abroad. According to the collected response, half of the teachers agreed to participate in the research. However, due to subjective and objective constraints, the researcher was only able to select three out of five teachers as the main participants for this study. The three selected teachers are females due to the fact that in the faculty of Foreign Languages of this university, all of the English teachers are female, which can be addressed as a limitation of the study. These selected participants were introduced about the purposes of the project, what they would do in the interview and in their observed reading classes, especially the three - stage procedure of a reading lesson. Since a major part of this investigation focuses on the IAs used in reading classes, they were asked for a commitment to follow the teaching reading procedure during the intervention. The names of the participant teachers, as committed from the beginning, are not revealed but anonymously called as Lisa, Rosie and Maria for the ethical issues. With these pseudo names, the participants feel more secure and comfortable when taking part in the interviews or observation procedure conducted.

As described in Table 3.2, the youngest participant is 35 years old and the oldest is 42. This age rank is in the normal range for the teachers to accumulate enough experience for their teaching career (Borg, 2003; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2014). Therefore, in this study, the main focus was on three teachers as participants who had more than ten years of teaching experience and accumulated sufficient professional qualifications to meet the requirements that were indispensable in teaching tertiary students as regulated by the MoET of Vietnam.

**Table 3.2 Information of the teacher participants**

<b>Profiles</b>	<b>Participants</b>		
	<b>Lisa</b>	<b>Rosie</b>	<b>Maria</b>
Age	35	37	42
Gender	F	F	F
Qualification	MA in TESOL	MA in TESOL	MA in TESOL
Teaching experience	11	13	18
Majors	Reading, Writing, ESP	Reading, Writing, ESP	Reading, Writing, Business English

Lisa started her teaching career as a lecturer of English at the selected university a year after she graduated from the University of Pedagogy. Before that, she had one-year probation at a local high school. She got a Master degree in TESOL in 2015 with an excellent qualification. Since then, she has not frequently participated in professional

training courses due to some of the private matters, i.e., getting married and giving birth to children. Despite the fact that she has not had many opportunities to attend the ELT workshops, seminars or professional training classes, she still tries to upgrade updated teaching approaches by herself. To her colleagues' appreciation, she is a very dedicated teacher and always shows her enthusiasm in teaching English. She is in charge of teaching reading and writing as Basic English skills, and some ESP subjects for tertiary students. With nearly eleven years of experience, she is confident and positive enough to attract the students' attention and active participation in every class she is assigned to teach.

Rosie is a young teacher with high potential to develop herself in her teaching job. Before starting her teaching career at the university, she used to be a high school teacher of English for nearly two years. She got a master degree in TESOL in 2014. Since that time, she has been assigned to teach reading subjects to tertiary students. With the desire to renew herself to get the updated teaching approach, she always tries to seek opportunities to participate in seminars, webinars, workshops, conferences, or quick courses relating to professional development, renovation of teaching methodology and so on either in person or virtually. She says that although she is rather busy with her workload at the university and at home, she tries to arrange time suitably so that she can join the professional training or the quick courses about teaching methodology renovation. With more than thirteen years of teaching experience, this teacher possesses an academic qualification in teaching English for EFL tertiary students with full of confidence, dedication, and enthusiasm.

Maria is the oldest teacher selected as a participant for the present study. Her age and her teaching experience show her maturity in the teaching profession. Her highest qualification is a Master's degree in TESOL. Her teaching experience includes Reading, Writing, Practical Grammar, and Business English. As an experienced teacher of the faculty, she highly appreciates the participation in programs or quick courses to improve teachers' teaching competence. Similar to Rosie, Maria often makes use of the opportunities to attend seminars, conferences, or quick courses so as to accumulate more experience in teaching English to EFL students.

In spite of differences in age, teaching experiences, and positivity in adjusting new teaching approaches, they have the common viewpoint in adopting teaching approaches for their own. Firstly, they are currently teaching reading skills to EFL students. When talking to all participants about the project the researcher is going to conduct, all of them show their willingness to participate in the project and they really



want to search for the best way to help their EFL students improve their reading skills. In terms of qualification and experience, they are all professionally trained to serve in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. All three participants are masters in TESOL. Their qualifications in teaching English are highly evaluated; furthermore, their experience in teaching English to EFL students shows their quality in the teaching profession, which is convenient for the researcher to get sufficient data for the study. One more reason that three teachers in the university are chosen for the study is working desire. These teacher participants are colleagues of one another and they all have the same desire to contribute to the improvement of quality in teaching and learning English in general and reading skills for tertiary EFL students at their university. Therefore, this study is expected to be of significance for opening a new perspective on teaching the English language in general and reading skills in particular.

### ***3.3.2 Researcher's roles in the study***

Different from quantitative research where the “vantage point of total objectivity of the researcher is highlighted” (Le Thi Hong Duyen, 2017, p. 60), in qualitative research like the present one, the researcher is often seen as “as the primary instrument or medium through which the research is conducted” (Lofland et al. 2006, p.3). The problem of subjectivity in such kind of study is not considered as a thread but a crucial and inevitable issue to the qualitative researchers. Therefore, it is necessary that the researchers be aware of their own roles in order to minimize the biases when conducting the studies.

Firstly, as an EFL teacher, the researcher brings all of her knowledge, attitudes, and experiences to the study. She also experiences the challenges EFL teachers may face with the reading proficiency of EFL students. The research also observed that EFL teachers in her faculty delivered their Reading lessons as routine year after year without much adjustments or changes. The so-called stagnant situation should have been adjusted through each of the courses. So, in order to avoid biases that may exist in the study, the researcher tries to be as self-critical and objective as possible.

Secondly, regarding the issue of subjectivity in conducting the qualitative case research, although it is commonly understood as an inevitable thread, the researcher takes this issue into consideration since she is aware that in order to avoid this problem, she should try to minimize the inexplicit and non-transparent processing not only in the data collection stage but the whole research implementation procedure as well. Being aware of the issue of subjectivity, before carrying out the research, the researcher

briefly introduces the research topic, describes its major aims, who the participants are, what criteria are used to select the participants, and what they are required to do in order to help her fulfill the project. By doing so, the teacher participants are familiar with the research topic. On observing classes, playing the role of a researcher and a non-participating observer or outside observer, the researcher does not take part in any teaching procedure in reading lessons rather than observing and recording what is going on in the chosen classes.

Last but not least, the teacher's role as a PhD candidate at a university with full of tradition and advancement in central Vietnam may gain the respect and trust of the participating teachers. After explicitly understanding their important role in the present study, the selected teachers are willing to support the researcher in the data collection process. They all express their strong expectation that the study can do something good or favorable to make its contribution to the adjustment of the EFL teaching and learning situation as it is at present.

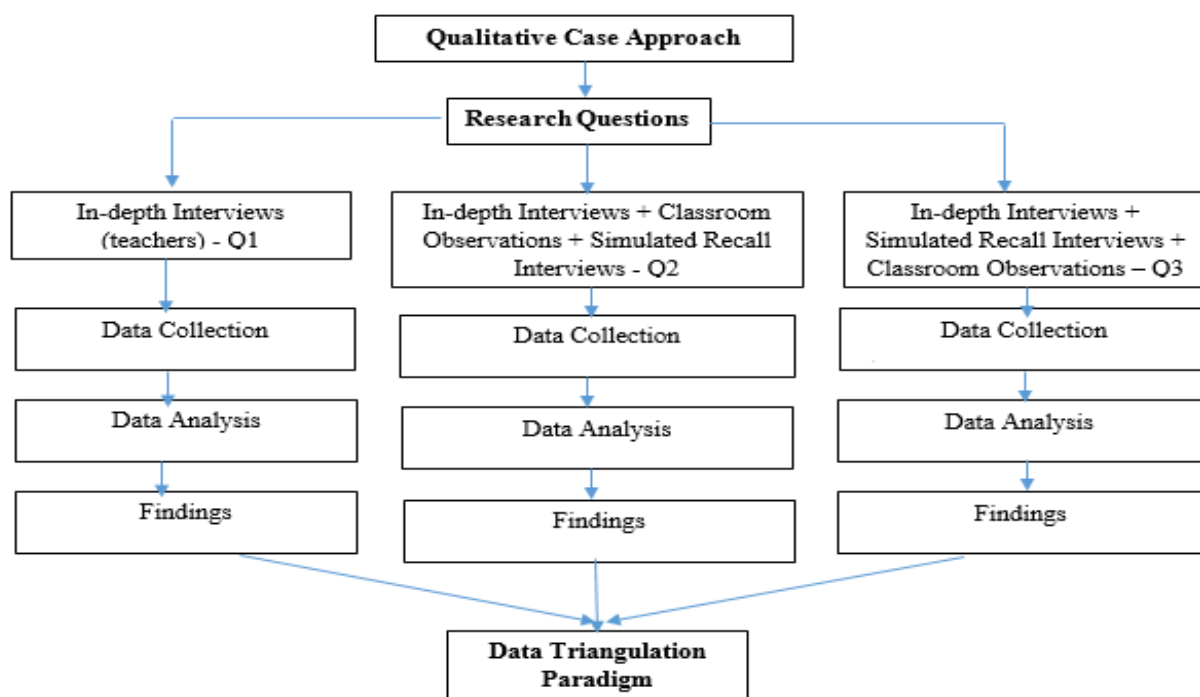
### **3.4 Data Collection methods and Procedures**

This section consists of three main parts: the research triangulation, the main research instruments, and the procedures to collect the necessary data for the study.

#### ***3.4.1 Research Triangulation***

Mackey and Gass (2015) confirm that the popular triangulation of data collection methods for interaction-based research includes interviews, observations, diaries, or journals. However, grounding on the distinctive features of the present study, diaries or journals are replaced by stimulated recall interviews for the sake of checking or reaffirming what EFL teachers actually do in their teaching procedure in comparison with what they think it should be. In this study, data triangulation including interviews with the teachers before their actual teaching, classroom observations to observe and record what IAs are organized in reading class to corroborate interview data, and stimulated recall interviews conducted after observing the process of a reading class is designed (Figure 3.1). While in-depth interview is used to collect data for the first research question, the combination of the three so-called instruments is used for the second and the third ones. The effectiveness of using this triangulation of the mentioned strategies in researching teachers' beliefs and practices about a certain topic is firmly verified by Le Van Canh (2011). He agreed with Burns's (1992) viewpoint stating that teachers can verbalize how their beliefs underpinned classroom practices. As the primary aim of the present study is to investigate EFL teachers'

beliefs and practices in a Vietnamese tertiary context, this triangulation of data collection methods is adopted.



**Figure 3.1 Data triangulation paradigm**

It seems that the choice of these data collection methods facilitates the researcher to obtain purely qualitative data, which satisfied the chosen research approach and design stated in the previous part. The results of this qualitative case study are expected to be practical in nature and include a description of common IAs frequently employed by the teachers that influence the learning environment as well as the effectiveness of the reading classes. In the next section, the rationales of the instrumentation choice and the detailed description of each type of instruments are clearly stated.

### **3.4.2 Research Instruments**

This session provides a rationale for the adoption of three main instruments that are chosen to collect data for the present study, namely: in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall interviews.

#### **3.4.2.1 In-depth Interviews**

In this qualitative case study, together with classroom observation, one-to-one in-depth interview was chosen as the main instrument. As explicated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.439):

The in-depth interview, as its name suggests, is conducted to explore issues, personal biographies, and what is meaningful to, or valued by, participants, how they feel about

particular issues, their attitudes, opinions and emotions. They tend to be semi-structured, to enable the course of the respondents' responses to dictate the direction of the interview, though the researcher also has an interview schedule to keep an interview on track, and may operate probes to inquire further into issues.

It is clear that one-to-one in-depth interviews, the chosen data collection tool, are relevant to the study for the following main reasons. *Firstly*, this instrument provides the researcher with more detailed information or a deep understanding of a subject from the individual participants without any distraction or intervention of others as in group interviews. By using this instrument, the problem of “group harmony, a characteristic of Vietnamese collectivist culture” (Canh, 2011, p. 94) can be avoided. With the interview questions designed, the researcher can elicit what the teacher participants experience with IAs and how they react emotionally to their experiences, which helps the researcher understand the feelings participants express through their real teaching process. *Secondly*, the interview questions can generate descriptions of what teacher participants share about the teaching and learning condition and atmosphere, which are very important for the researcher to understand more thoroughly the teaching context in which the teacher participants work. In addition, the mutual trust between the researcher and the teacher participants is more consolidated, which can make the participants feel more secure and comfortable when being observed later. *Thirdly*, the researcher can ask for clarification or for the details of issues that might not be fully comprehended when observing the participants' classes. By doing so, every endeavor is made to put the participants at ease, and a harmonious and amicable rapport between the researcher (as interviewer) and the teacher participants (as interviewees) is built with a view to encouraging them to reveal worthy and truthful information and avoiding negative or positive comments on their responses. Moreover, questions are sometimes paraphrased, the question order is slightly changed and unscripted questions are also used to fit with the talks.

#### *3.4.2.2 Classroom Observations*

Classroom observation is employed in this study because it is seen as a valuable way to provide evidence of what happens in the classrooms (Borg, 2006). It can also provide the opportunity to record information as it occurs in a setting and it is fruitful and workable to reveal the classroom teaching and learning strategies (Creswell, & Creswell, 2017). In this study, observation was conducted in real reading classrooms in order to give a real insight of the phenomenon to be investigated.

To serve the purpose of the study, classroom observations were carried out to record all activities in reading classrooms between teachers and students that could be seen as interactive ones. More specifically, its primary aim was to explore what kinds of IAs most and less frequently designed and used by EFL teachers in order to foster their students' engagement and comprehension at different reading stages. The classroom observation field note was prepared and informed to the observed teachers in advance. However, this did not either restrict the teachers from teaching naturally or prevent the researcher from conducting the observation with an open mind to try to explore the researching issue in a natural way. Being aware that any of her participations or interferences in the teaching process might interrupt classroom activities, the researcher chose non-participating classroom observations to collect data. This non-participating observation method allowed the researcher to gather data more naturally and reliably in a more direct way. According to Creswell (2009), a non-participant observer visits the site and records notes without involving herself or himself in the participants' activities. Therefore, in this study, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom to record the observable facts under study without any participation in the selected teachers' teaching procedure.

All of the activities organized for interaction in the reading classroom were recorded. Audio digital recording used while observing the reading classes is seen as the "live" and most reliable source of data for this study. On observing reading classes, the researcher put an MP3 player to record what the teachers instructed and led the students to the reading tasks for the sake of getting the most fruitful outcome. In order to minimize the intrusive impact on such observations, the researcher asked the teacher for her putting a cell phone under the teacher's desk to assist the recorder in case of unexpected failure. In this way, the researcher's participation did not cause much impact on the natural procedures of the teacher's actual performance. While observing, the researcher especially paid attention to the teachers' teaching procedure and the activities the teachers initiated or organized for the students to participate in so as to make their reading class interactive. In addition, the issues of "what the teachers use such activities for" was also noted because they were then used to compare with what the teacher participants responded to in the in-depth interviews.

#### *3.4.2.3 Stimulated Recall Interviews*

Together with in-depth interviews and classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews (or post-lesson discussions) were implemented to confirm and clarify

more information relating to the participants' behavior or actual practice taking place during the classroom observation session. In order to ensure the accuracy of the information collected from this type of interview, the researchers are often advised to be aware of the time lapse between the event and the recall. Regarding this criterion, Gass and Mackey (2013) suggest that the researchers should use this instrument within 48 hours after the events take place for the sake of achieving approximately 95% of accuracy.

In this study, the researcher's aim to employ stimulated recall interviews was, first and foremost, to discuss with the teacher participants about the issues taking place during the time they teach reading lessons with IAs that need to be more clarified. The related issues were the reading activities they used in the lesson, why they did that; how effective they felt about their lesson, what made them feel satisfactory and/or unsatisfactory about their class, and what they would do if they had a chance to teach the lesson again. Furthermore, it was to make a comparison between what they thought (as responded in the in-depth interviews) and what they actually did (as observed and recorded in classroom observations) to find out whether there were any matches or mismatches between the two channels of information.

Since all of the three participating teachers are the researcher's colleagues, the process of data collection seems to be favorable. At the end of the class, despite the heavy workload, the teachers tried their best to spend some time responding to the recalled questions posed by the researcher. Thanks to this favorable condition, most of these interviews were taken right after the classroom observations. In some cases, due to urgent tasks or personal work, some of the interviews were a little bit later than expected. However, none of the interviews were delayed until more than 2 or 3 days later, which means that all of the backup interviews were conducted within 48 hours after the observations. That is to say, the researcher followed strictly the time to conduct a stimulated recall interview as suggested by Gass and Mackey (2013).

### ***3.4.3 Data Collection Procedure***

#### ***3.4.3.1 Interview Procedure***

##### ***Question Design***

As planned, the interviews were designed in Vietnamese in order for the researcher to make sure that the teacher participants felt comfortable and responded exactly to what they wanted to say. Their full meaning response helped the researcher to collect data with high quality and ensure the validity and reliability of the data

collected. Most questions in the interviews were open-ended in order for the teacher participants to express their thought in an open manner, which could provide “depth, nuance, complexity and roundness of the data” (Mason, 2002, p.65), rather than “yes,” “no,” or one-word answers. This type of questions also aimed to develop the participants’ responses in the most natural way. Sometimes, in order to confirm the information from the participants’ responses, some close – ended questions were employed, particularly when their responses were unclear, lengthy or ambiguous.

More specifically, the questions in the pre-interview were designed based on the items established in the framework. The flows of questions asked during the interview were grounded on the interview guide created by the researcher. Topics and issues to be covered were specified in advance in outline form. All the questions were divided into sub-categories related to the theoretical framework of the study. In this study, the interview questions were designed to collect the participant teachers’ responses in terms of their beliefs about goals, principles, contexts, and teachers’ roles relating to IAs in teaching reading subjects. This source of data is of importance for the researcher to decode the need-to-be-uncovered issue in the research questions of the current study.

#### *Interview Procedure*

Initially, the teacher participants were informed of the purposes and the procedures of the interviews. The researcher reminded them about the consent form sent to them via email before for confirming their volunteer participation in the research. They were also informed that the interviews would be voice recorded and selectively transcribed for later analysis. In addition, as clearly stated in the consent form, since the participation was voluntary, participants could withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable for joining or due to some unexpected reason.

Every interview lasted from 25 to 30 minutes, but some of them were longer than scheduled because the teacher participants were full of willingness to share what they wanted. All interviews were voice recorded by an MP3 device and transcribed according to the interviewer and interviewee turns of speech. These data were used to compare and combine with the data obtained from the classroom observation in order to seek an insight into EFL teachers’ beliefs of IAs and their actual practice in EFL reading class.

The stimulated recall interviews did not take as much time as the in-depth interview which took place before the observations. In this case, each of the interviews lasted from 7 to 10 minutes. For the interview which took place right after the

classroom observations, the researcher used field notes when discussing with the participating teachers since the teaching procedure of the observed lesson was still in their mind, and their memories were still fresh enough to recall what they had already done. Meanwhile, for the delayed interviews within 48 hours, field notes and the transcription of the classroom observations were simultaneously used in order to recall the teachers' thoughts about their actions. As mentioned, the stimulated recall interviews were to confirm and elicit what had been going on in the actual teaching of reading lessons mainly including reading activities deployed, the reason for their employment of such activities in their classes, their feeling about the effectiveness of the lessons, the reasons making them satisfied or dissatisfied with the activities they deployed. In addition, this back-up discussion helped the researcher, on one hand, understand the compatibility and incompatibility between what the participating teachers thought and what they truly did in their teaching process, on the other hand, identify the influential factors affecting the teachers' beliefs and practice relationship.

After the in-depth interviews and stimulated recall ones, the recorded responses were re-listened, transcribed, translated and selected for data analysis. The data collected from the interviews, in combination with those collected in classroom observations from three participants were then analyzed collectively and selectively to figure out their cognition of the issue investigated.

In short, the process of collecting data started by interviewing teachers before class time, and stimulated recalls followed after the classroom observations. The participants were interviewed individually grounded on the interview guide. The whole interview guideline was shown to the participants to read before the interview took place since, as far as the researcher's understanding, by knowing the questions in advance the participants would get a good understanding and focus their attention on the points of the questions so that they could give the information needed more efficiently and accurately.

#### *3.4.3.2 Observational procedure*

In this study, twelve out of thirty periods of the whole course were observed by the researcher. Each period lasted 50 minutes. The reading classes were allocated with four teacher-instructed periods per week, which meant that the researcher spent three weeks observing each of the selected teacher participants. At first, the researcher intended to observe half of the total allocated periods of the reading course, but unluckily, due to the breakout of the COVID 19 pandemic, the teaching-learning



process was implemented online. Being afraid of the invalid data collected from observing online reading classes via Zoom or Google Meet system, the researcher decided to shorten the number of observed classes into twelve periods. Although the duration of observing the participants took up one-third of the total course time, the research could collect the data adequately to identify the interactive activities EFL teachers often employed to motivate their students in reading classes.

The observation process was conducted as the timetable set for the course of each class. During the observation, the researcher sat at the back of the class to observe and record the participant's teaching with an audio recorder and took notes on the observation sheet (Appendix G) without any participation in the lesson. The researcher also recorded the whole teaching procedure of the teacher in chronological order instead of merely focusing on the IAs designed by them, which might help to minimize the researcher's own bias on the observed data. After finishing the observational task, all of the details observed were transcribed. The data collected from classroom observation were analyzed in accordance with the participant's responses in the interview.

In brief, in this study, classroom observation was one of the three main instruments to collect data concerning the activities designed by the teachers in their actual reading classes and how these activities are organized to foster the students' participation and to make their activities more interactive and effective. The data collected from this channel in collaboration with the data collected from the interviews strengthen the reliability of this study.

#### ***3.4.4 Pilot study***

A pilot study is necessarily conducted to prevent the occurrence of a fatal flaw in a study that is costly in time and money and it is seen as the indispensable step for the researcher to identify potential problems and to revise the questions before the commencement of the data collection (Polit & Beck, 2017). In this study, before officially conducting in-depth interviews with the teacher participants, a qualitative pilot study was conducted through discussions with two teachers who were not selected to be the participants of the main study. These teachers were chosen since they were satisfied with the criteria of selecting research participants, and had similar characteristics with the participants of the present study. This pilot round aimed to check if the questions designed for the main official study were clear, concise, and understandable.

Before conducting the pilot interviews, the two selected participants were asked if they would like to be interviewed in Vietnamese or English. Interestingly, both of them preferred to use Vietnamese as it was easier for them to share their thoughts and feeling about the subject matter. Thus, the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese language and recorded for the purpose of checking the clarity of the interview questions and the quality of the voice recorder. Each piloted participant was interviewed once, and the interviews were arranged in the Teachers' self - study room 1 in the Learning Resource Centre of the university. After the first interview which lasted 27 minutes, the researcher considered the revision of the interview protocol and audio recording to check the quality of recording and the whole process of interviewing. This piloting round allowed the researcher to rephrase and modify interview questions to obtain richer data for the study. In addition, the piloting phase helped the researcher to self-assess her ability to employ this instrument effectively. Specifically, the researcher improved her ability to encourage interviewees to share what they thought as frankly and thoroughly as possible. Also, through the first pilot study, the researcher realized that she spent too much time explaining the questions. Similarly, while conducting the second pilot interview (26 minutes), she found out that a list with umbrella and probing questions was seen as a useful tool, since sometimes the researcher and participant was engrossed in the conversation, and they might forget to ask some key points prepared. After two pilot interviews, the researcher's skill of interviewing was much improved, especially the skill of asking for further information regarding unanticipated themes that were meaningful and relevant for the study. More significantly, this pilot phase helped the researcher realize the importance and necessity of the interview questions, which not only put the teacher participants at ease but also check the researcher's understanding of the participants' responses to ensure that their opinions were fully captured and understood.

Grounding on the pilot round, the researcher decided to adjust some points in the proposed questions for an in-depth pre-interview. For example, at first, the researcher intended to include questions about the personal information of the participants in the question list, which made it rather lengthy and took a certain amount of time for the interview. However, after piloting, these questions were separately prepared in the form of a personal profile and sent to the participants via email. In that way, the researcher could collect enough related information from the participating teachers without spending too much time on the interviews on this part. Besides,

observation via audio-recording was tested with one class to make sure that the equipment obtained clear sounds of the reading activities in the classroom and that the oral exchanges were clear enough for transcription. When all the tools were able to collect answers from the respondents and revised as mentioned above, the main study was carried out with high certainty and safety.

### **3.5 Data Transcription**

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate IAs taking place in reading classes, the audio-recording technique was employed, for it is more convenient for the researcher to both observe what is going on in the reading class and record the activities for later analysis. Accordingly, all of the raw data collected from the interviews and classroom observations were verbally transcribed, translated, and checked again with the original recordings to ensure the accuracy of the data. Then, the transcriptions of the interviews and classroom observations of each teacher were neatly kept in a separate folder for data analysis procedures. As for the guarantee of the collected data, in order not to confront the unexpected loss of the data due to technical failure, the researcher copied all of the data sources into several files. A removable hard disc was also used to save the data in case the researchers' laptop was out of order.

As mentioned above, all of the interviews were carried out in Vietnamese, so the excerpts for reference in the presentation of the finding analysis were firstly extracted in Vietnamese to ensure the accuracy of the participants' responses, and then they were translated into English by the researcher. Then, in order to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the translation versions, both Vietnamese and English versions of the transcription were sent back to the participants for double checking before the rechecking steps were done by an accredited translator. To ensure the accuracy of the translated versions, the researcher tried to keep the teacher participants' responses in the correct format in English. By doing so, the researcher aimed to make her translation and the back-translation versions as similar as possible before using them as illustrations of the findings in the data analysis process.

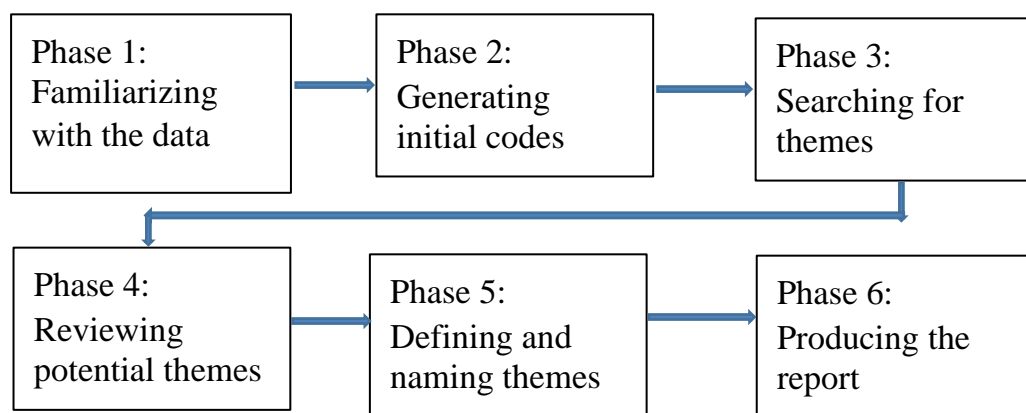
### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

In this study, two main types of data were collected, i.e., interview data and classroom observational data. The researcher employed the thematic analysis method to analyze the data collected.

#### ***3.6.1 Interview Data Analysis***

Among different approaches to qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was

considered a foundational method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for the following reasons. Since it is not only “a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset” but also “offer a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research career” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.81). In addition, thematic analysis is flexible in nature. Its flexibility and usefulness can “potentially provide rich and detailed, yet complex accounts of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5). They also developed a six-phase approach to thematic analysis to serve the purpose of those who want to use thematic analysis for their research (Figure 3.1). Because of its flexibility and accessibility, such guideline was employed to analyze the data in this present study



**Figure 3.2. Thematic analysis Guideline (Braun & Clarke, 2006)**

*Phase 1: Familiarizing with the data*

In this phase, the researcher read and reread the data in an active manner to search for some initial meanings. She was aware that the more time she spent on reading the database, the deeper she could understand the information supplied by the participants. Thus, after transcribing data as stated above, she printed all data as a hard copy and read them carefully. Then, all data were noted down with some initial ideas. Although this phase is time-consuming, she tried to read the data several times because it “provides the bedrock for the rest of the analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2022. p.87).

*Phase 2: Generating initial codes*

As defined by Boyatzis (1998, p. 63), code “is the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon”. In the present study, manual coding was employed in order to maximize the researcher’s reflection on the data and facilitate the tracking of the coded data for subsequent phases of analysis. After transcribing the data from the

interviews with the teacher participants, the researcher read the transcript as carefully as possible to identify and underline important phrases or ideas and code them accordingly with the corresponding extracts included. Then, all of the codes and the extracts were put together in a file for later checking and sorting.

#### *Phase 3: Searching for the themes*

In this phase, the researcher was required to concentrate on the analysis at a higher level, i.e., to sort different codes identified in Phase 2 into potential themes so as to match the aim of the study, and the three research questions posed. It is important for the researcher to identify which codes were significant, and could be used as the main themes and which ones would be supporting codes.

#### *Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes*

In order to have the most potential themes fitted with the research questions addressed for the present study, the researcher was aware of the necessity of revisiting the research questions before deciding which themes to be used. The process of selecting themes follows six criteria suggested by Strauss and Corbin, 1998, (cited by Braun & Clarke, 2009).

1. It must be central; that is, all other major categories can relate to it.
2. It must appear frequently in the data, which means that within all or almost all cases, there are indicators pointing to that concept.
3. The explanation that evolves by relating the categories is logical and consistent. There is no forcing of data.
4. The name or phrase used to describe the central category should be sufficiently abstract.
5. As the concept is refined, the theory grows in depth and explanatory power.
6. When conditions vary, the explanation still holds, although the way in which a phenomenon is expressed might look somewhat different.

#### *Phase 5. Defining and naming themes*

In this phase, the researcher refined the themes by naming them with the more suitable labels for the sake of making the findings in the study become “a complete story” with different volumes, and a volume portrayed main themes named for the readers to read and evaluate. For this purpose, the researcher kept in mind two questions, one with “What” and the other with “How” as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 121). The questions were “*what story does this theme tell?*” and “*how does*

*this theme fit to the overall story about the data?” Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 121).*

#### *Phase 6. Producing the report*

In this final stage, producing the report, the arguments for each of the themes were developed. In addition, the vivid extracts to support such arguments were selected, which provided a comprehensive description for each theme. The analysis of interview data was always in the combination with the observational data for the research finding to be fully written up.

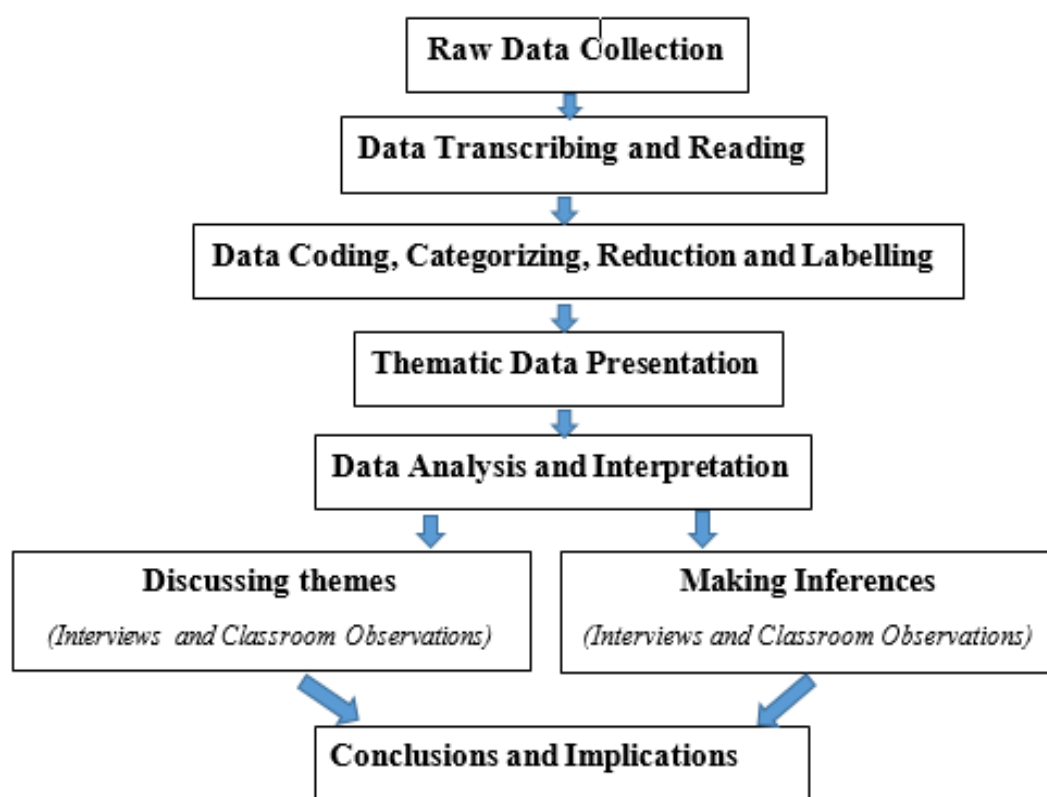
Based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guideline, the overall category in this study was identified as “EFL teachers’ beliefs and their practices of employing IAs in reading classes”. Then, the sub-themes were related to three research questions of the study, namely: (1) EFL teachers’ beliefs of IAs in teaching reading subjects, (2) EFL teachers’ actual practices of IAs in teaching reading, and (3) The factors affecting the teachers’ employment of IAs in teaching reading. Accordingly, the potential themes included in each of the sub-themes were categorized grounding on the analytical framework of the study. As in the following example of an in-depth interview with Maria:

<b>Transcription</b>	<b>Code/sub-theme</b>	<b>Categories /Potential theme</b>
<i>In your opinion, do interactive activities in the reading comprehension class help students increase their language use?</i>		
<u>Yes, IAs help my students increase their practical use of language by interacting with me and their friends in an appropriate way.</u> When students are encouraged to <u>express or share their ideas with their group, their partners or the whole class</u> as much as they can, they feel more encouraged and confident to join, and they <u>reduce passiveness and anxiety</u> by themselves or by their friends’ support. (Maria)	Confirming about the benefit of IAs  A teacher’s way to help students use oral language  Encouraging Ss to interact  Specific benefit of IAs	IAs for increasing oral language

### **3.6.2 Observational Data Analysis**

If interview data were mainly used for the sake of investigating the first main theme “*EFL teachers’ beliefs of IAs in reading class*”, the data collected and

transcribed from classroom observations were of great importance for the researcher to explore what would be in the second main theme “*EFL teachers’ employment of IAs in an actual reading class*”. The phases of analyzing observational data were generally the same as the ones applied for the interview data. Accordingly, all recordings of classroom observations were also carefully transcribed for manual coding. After finishing this stage, the researcher spent a certain amount of time reading the transcripts in order to become intimately familiar with the data. Important excerpts in the transcripts will also be noted. The observational data were then used to compare with the interview data in order to examine whether what the teachers perceive is compatible with what they actually do. Data collected from different channels, transcripts from classroom observation, recordings from interviews with teachers will be carefully processed to identify EFL teachers’ beliefs of IAs and their application into their actual teaching reading comprehension. From the detailed description of data collection and data analysis above, a diagram of collecting, transcribing, coding data for the present research finding analysis is as follows,



**Figure 3.3. Data Transcription and Analysis Procedure**

### **3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study**

Regarding the issue of trustworthiness, four criteria that qualitative researchers should consider to ensure the validity and reliability of their studies including (1) Credibility, (2) Transferability, (3) Dependability, and (4) Confirmability which is addressed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are adopted.

#### **3.7.1 Credibility**

In qualitative studies, credibility is considered the construct of truth value which refers to the extent that the findings of the research can be trusted and credited (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, in order to ensure the credibility of the present study, some techniques were used during the process of conducting the research.

Firstly, as stated, in this study, a triangulation of instruments including classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and stimulated recall ones is used to collect the data. By employing various tools, the researcher can collect sufficient data for analyzing processes. The multiple sources of data gathered provide the researcher with worthy data to analyze the teachers' beliefs and their enactments of IAs in their actual teaching reading process, and give an insight description of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices of employing IAs to find out the consistency and/or inconsistencies of this relationship as well. Data from classroom observation in combination with the data from the stimulated recalled interview sessions are used to analyze the factors affecting this relationship. This source of data allows the researcher to gather information which might not be mentioned in the interviews. Audio recordings are made during class hours in order to avoid missing crucial observational information.

Secondly, the researcher tried to build a "prolonged engagement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.65) between the researcher and the participating teachers right from the beginning time conducting the study. In this study, the relationships between the researcher and three participants tended to be caring rather than empowering. In addition, this relationship was also assumed to be more culturally mental in nature. It was shaped by the Vietnamese culture in which people tended to be willing to share their knowledge and experience with each other. The researcher highly expects and appreciates the enthusiasm and great cooperation and contribution of all three participants.

Another technique that was used to gain credibility of the study was frequent



debriefing with peers as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.67). During the data analysis stage, the collected data and analytical segments were presented with the consultancy of the researcher's supervisor. Because the direct meetings were prevented by COVID 19 pandemics spreading all over the world, and Vietnam was not an exception, the researcher and her supervisor had regular online meetings to discuss the interpretation of the data in the study. The supervisor's critical feedback was valuable and helpful in not only directing the researcher to the right way in the process of arranging and analyzing the data, but also helping the researcher widen her perspectives on the issue which is being investigated.

Finally, since the present study uses only qualitative design the researcher's background, qualifications, and experience surely influence the observations and conclusions of the research. Therefore, her educational background, her academic qualification and her personal teaching experience were added as an indispensable technique to make the study credible. With the background knowledge, professional qualifications in the research field as well as experiences accumulated in nearly eighteen years teaching English at the university, the researcher expected to contribute herself to the credibility of the study.

### ***3.7.2 Transferability***

Referred as the criterion to verify the possibility of applying the study findings into other settings outside the boundaries of the study, transferability is one of the indispensable requirements in any qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, apart from classroom observations and in-depth interviews, validation of translations from Vietnamese to English is employed. In addition, the transcription from audio recording, or the process of transferability is done to modify the data collected from the major sources. Moreover, all of the steps and stages in the data collection and data analysis process are explicitly and concisely described and explained. With the thick and detailed description and explanation, the transferability of the study to the relating field or other similar contexts is strongly facilitated, and the readers of the study are provided with a clear view of the study investigated.

### ***3.7.3 Dependability***

Compared to the reliability in quantitative studies, the notion of dependability in qualitative ones emphasizes the consistency and repetition that the results of the findings bring to the research. In the current study, in order to maintain consistency,

all three chosen participating teachers underwent the same procedure of data collection and analysis. Specifically, the same interview guidelines and classroom observation techniques were used to explore the teachers' beliefs and their actual practices of deploying IAs in their teaching reading skills, and by cross-comparing three participants, the researcher could seek for the dependability standard of the study. Finally, the details about the methodology applied allowed the study to be repeated (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 71).

#### **3.7.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is, to a certain extent, similar to the criterion of objectivity in quantitative research. This criterion requires the researchers to guarantee that the findings of the study are drawn from the researcher's informants and inquiry itself, not from the researcher's biases or preferences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, confirmability is achieved by triangulation of multiple sources of data taken from pre-interview, classroom observation, and stimulated recalls. Besides, the important stages of the research process such as data collection, data interpretation, and data analysis are in turn explicitly described. One more important element to ensure the confirmability of this study is the transcript rechecking with the informants. By doing so, the researcher is more confident in using the sources of data collected without any hesitation about its accuracy. Finally, yet importantly, when the thesis is completely done, the appendices of sample raw data of interviews and observations as well as the illustration of instruments used to collect data are also attached for reference.

#### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Permission to conduct this study is accepted and supported by Hue University and under the direct administrative guidance of University of Foreign Languages and International Studies. All of the three teacher participants were volunteers and their anonymity was maintained throughout the research process. That is, to ensure the participants' identities in this current study not to be revealed and their ideas not to be jeopardized, at the very beginning of the study, the researcher asked for the participating teachers' permission in advance and discussed with them about the contents and the duration of the study. Furthermore, the researcher informed the participants carefully of the purposes of the study and confirmed with them that no names or any information about them would be disclosed. The participants' names used in the thesis are also pseudo names. Besides, all of their participation in teaching

real classes for the researcher's observations, their answering to the interview, and audio recordings were based on a voluntary basis. In addition, in order not to make students feel unnatural being observed when they learned the reading lessons, the researcher spent a little amount of time telling them about the purpose of the classroom observations and promised not to interfere in their learning process as well as their end-of-term scores.

In order to maintain the guarantee of the ethical issues, on one hand, all data was treated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the participants involved in the study. From the beginning, participants were assured that any information provided would be held in the strictest confidence. The information from interviews and observations collected, selected and used in the research was coded. The information is stored securely according to the university policies. On the other hand, the researcher tried to make the participants feel comfortable and free from the fear of being judged or evaluated from the beginning to the end of the research implementation process. The researcher was aware that if the participants did not feel comfortable and safe, the findings of the study would be affected. Therefore, big efforts to maintain the good relationship and the respect for the participants of the study were the researcher's concerns.

### **3.9. Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, the selection of methodology for the study was discussed together with the presentation of the study setting. Based on the purpose of the study, it justified why the qualitative case approach was the most relevantly used in the current study. Grounding on its nature, a qualitative case study was seen to be the most appropriate choice since it helped provide more insights into EFL teachers' beliefs about using IAs in reading class and their employment of IAs in their actual teaching procedure. This chapter also presented the design of the study and described in detail the research participants. Three instruments of collecting data including two interviews (in-depth interviews and stimulated recall ones) and classroom observations with audio recordings were reported. Last but not least, measures taken to enhance research trustworthiness were described, the criteria contributed to the trustworthiness of the study, and some ethical considerations were also mentioned to assure that the present study would be carried out in the most reliable condition. The next chapter discusses the findings of the current study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS OF INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN READING CLASSES**

*This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research question 1 in regard to the EFL teachers' beliefs of using interactive activities (IAs) in their reading classes. The data collected from the in-depth interviews with three teacher participants of this study are analyzed in the following main parts (1) Teacher's beliefs of goals in using IAs in EFL reading classes; (2) Teacher's beliefs of principles in using IAs in EFL reading classes; (3) Teacher's beliefs of contexts in using IAs in EFL reading classes; and (4) Teacher's beliefs of their roles in using IAs in EFL reading classes. The findings of teachers' view about their conception of IAs are briefly provided before teachers' beliefs of the above categories are in turn presented. Detailed discussions of the findings are followed.*

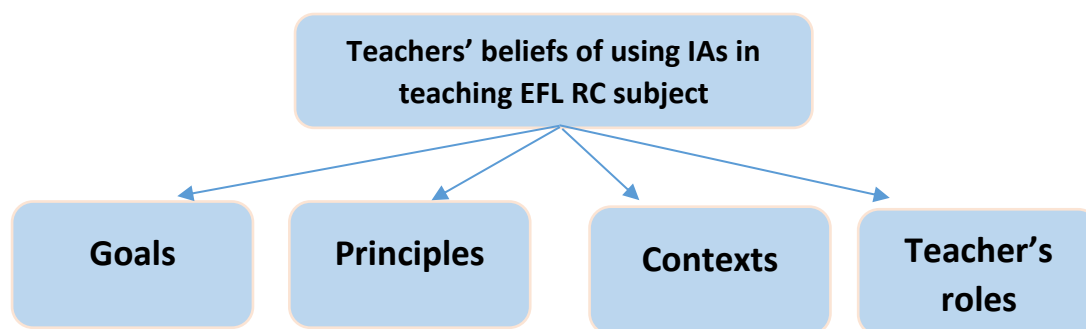
#### **4.1 Findings about teachers' beliefs**

##### ***4.1.1 Teachers' perception about interactive activities***

For the sake of making agreement regarding the working definition of the study, the participating teachers were asked how they perceived about IAs before the main questions were discussed. From the participants' responses, it was found out that the term "IAs" was understood in nearly the same ways. Lisa shared her idea that IAs were classroom activities that needed the collaborative participation of the students with the support and guidance of the teacher. Rosie viewed IAs as the communicative activity between two or more people or groups of people to exchange ideas in the process of teaching and learning. Similarly, according to Maria, IAs could be understood as activities to exchange information in classroom settings between teacher and students, or among students themselves. Their conception of IAs showed that *interactive* means acting together, and the actions were in the form of verbal communication with the aim of exchanging ideas in classroom settings. Their viewpoints were consistent with the researcher's definition of the key term of the present study as clarified in Chapter 2.

In this study, EFL teachers' beliefs of IAs in EFL reading classes were identified on the basis of their responses to the interview questions. From the interview data gathered, the following themes emerged: (1) the main goals teachers set in order to make use of the benefits of IAs in teaching reading skills; (2) the principles teachers follow during the process of teach reading skills with IAs; (3) the contexts in which

possible advantages and obstacles the teachers often get when organizing IAs in reading classes; and (4) the teachers' roles in reading classes when IAs are facilitated. These were illustrated in the Figure 4.1:



**Figure 4.1. Analysis of Teachers' beliefs of using IAs in teaching EFL Reading Comprehension skills**

#### ***4.1.2 Teachers' beliefs of goals in using interactive activities in teaching EFL reading skills***

Regarding teachers' goals of applying IAs into reading classes, all participants were aware of setting the goals for each of the IAs applied in their class although their responses were different.

##### ***4.1.2.1 Motivating students' participation***

Three participants thought that applying IAs in reading classes was really necessary since it might get students more involved in the lesson.

Lisa said:

I think setting goals for each of the activities to make reading class interactive is necessary. The general goal of using interactive activities in my reading class is motivating students and providing them with more opportunities to discuss different tasks so as to comprehend the reading text more deeply.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q2.1)**

This teacher highly appreciated setting goals for organizing IAs in every reading class. She believed that when students were motivated and given chances to participate in the reading activities assigned by the teacher, they would be more interested in interacting and discussing with other students so as to fulfill the reading task quickly and effectively.

Also sharing the same idea with Lisa, Rosie's primary goal of using IAs in her reading class was encouraging her students to participate in the reading activities and work collaboratively rather than asking them to work individually. She said:

In my reading class, I use interactive activities to motivate the student's collaborative participation in different reading activities rather than ask them to work individually. I think interactive activities serve the purpose of activating students' involvement in the reading text, and provide the students with more positive attitudes toward learning.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q2.1)**

Rosie's response revealed that her main goals were motivating the collaborative participation of the first-year students who started to learn English in a completely new learning environment. She also emphasized the purpose of using IAs to activate the students' involvement in reading classes because she wanted to provide them with opportunities to have "*more positive attitudes toward learning*" at the university.

Maria aimed to engage her students into a collaborative atmosphere where they could work actively with their friends to improve their reading skill and comprehend the meaning of the reading text. For her, the classroom was a good environment where her students could be actively involved.

She said:

Setting the goals of applying interactive activities in teaching reading is very important since it directs me to the highest points of the target I set for the single lesson or for the whole course.

And she added:

Interactive activities can be seen as a technique which aims to engage students into a collaborative atmosphere as a social environment where they can work actively with their teacher and friends to improve their reading knowledge, and comprehend the meaning that the reading text is conveyed.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q2.1)**

In contrast, three participants' responses showed that the teacher's infrequent employment of IAs may have negative impact on the students' reading comprehension. According to Lisa, using IAs frequently helps boost the students' engagement and active interaction with peers.

I don't think a reading lesson is interesting and highly effective without interactive activities. Frequent use of collaborative reading activities in a reading class may boost students' active engagement and give them more chances to share their ideas/thoughts with teacher and other students.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q2.1)**

Rosie reckoned that:

It is really boring if students only read silently and work individually in the reading class. The quiet atmosphere may affect the reading outcomes; therefore, fostering students to participate in interactive reading activities are preferred to be designed and employed.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q2.1)**

And Maria shared:

By frequently asking the students to engage in reading activities, we can raise the interest in reading lessons among them, make them more actively engaged, from which enhance their reading skill.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q2.1)**

All of the teachers in this study shared their common view on the necessity of employing IAs in teaching EFL reading because they found out that IAs could bring

them an interesting teaching and learning atmosphere as well as a high level of comprehension. Therefore, “*giving students more chances to express their ideas*” (Lisa), “*fostering student to participate in interactive activities*” (Rosie) or “*asking students to engage in reading activities*” (Maria) were regarded as goals set for each of the reading lessons so as to achieve the overall goals of improving students’ reading skills set for the whole reading B1.1 course.

#### *4.1.2.2. Increasing students’ communicative competence*

When asked whether IAs in the reading class helped students increase the frequency and amount of language use, all of the teacher participants showed their agreement that increasing students’ use of communicative language was also a goal that they set for their reading course.

Lisa said:

Interactive activities make good classroom interaction, and maximize the amount of students’ language use.

And she explained:

Instead of reading individually, students are instructed and encouraged to join in activities and be active in using language. By that way, students will be encouraged to share what they know or comprehend the reading text as much as they can.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q2.2)**

Rosie shared the same idea with Lisa by responding that IAs helped create good opportunities for her students to “maximize their language use”, especially for those who were often “shy, unconfident, and passive in the lesson” **(Int.1. Rosie. Q2.2)**. This evidence showed the so-called goal set by the teacher in increasing students’ language use for the purpose of discussion, sharing and comprehension, which was probably equivalent to the achievement of communicative competence. With the IAs, the students could play their part in learning interactively and enthusiastically. In the case of reading class, teachers’ aim of increasing students’ use of target language in reading activities probably made the students think and analyze the assigned tasks in an active way. Maria’s response also showed her support for the importance of maximizing students’ use of English language in reading class.

Interactive activities help my students increase their practical use of language by interacting with me and their friends in an appropriate way. When students are encouraged to express or share their ideas with their group, their partners or the whole class, they feel more encouraged and confident to join, and they can reduce passiveness and anxiety by themselves or by their friends’ support.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q2.2)**

According to her, through IAs, students were encouraged to interact orally with their friends not only in group but also the whole class activities. This evidence showed a good strategy that this teacher might use to scaffold the students' comprehension, and helped the students overcome shyness, passiveness, anxiety or lack of confidence when participating in collaborative activities.

#### *4.1.2.3 Improving students' social interaction skills*

Concerning whether IAs used in reading classes could help improve students' social interaction skills or not, teacher participants also shared the same responses.

Lisa said:

I create chances for the students to interact with me (as teacher) and their partners in different activities such as negotiating, arguing, reviewing, summarizing, and so on with collaborative activities. Through these activities, my students' social interaction in reading class can be improved.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q2.3)**

It seemed that the more chances students were given to work collaboratively in a reading classroom environment, the more communicative skills such as discussing, negotiating, sharing, arguing, etc. were fostered and enhanced.

Rosie added:

Interactive activities make the reading classes more socially collaborative and arouse students' high order thinking skills which can be seen as a contributory factor to the students' success in reading comprehension.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q2.3)**

These two responses showed that IAs not only helped students understand and remember what was conveyed in the reading text, or apply what they know to the new contexts or unfamiliar contexts, but also encouraged them to be active with higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, discussing, etc. Maria's response also supported her colleagues, she said:

Classroom is seen as a small social environment, so interactive activities not only help the students be positive in their learning process but improve their social interaction as well.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q2.3)**

#### *4.1.3 Teachers' principles of teaching EFL reading skills with interactive activities*

In order to achieve the goals setting for the application of IAs in teaching EFL reading skills, the teacher participants followed the principles that were generated from the participants' responses.

##### *4.1.3.1 Establishing students' active engagement*

That making students see themselves as positive members of the reading



activities was seen as a principle in teaching EFL reading with IAs.

One of the principles I apply when teaching reading with interactive activities is building an interactive working manner for my students. That maximizing collaborative work in reading activities may lead the students to the sense of being closely engaged into their group.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q3.1)**

She also stated the reasons for her applying IAs in her reading class:

Through interactive activities, I can encourage, sometimes require my students to participate in reading activities and open their mouths as much as they can although I know that some of them are still passive and unconfident.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q3.1)**

It was clear that Lisa did not want her students to be passive in her classes but as interactive as possible. Therefore, instead of asking her students to read and handle the reading tasks individually, she boosted their interaction through engaging them in sharing activities. She confessed that although she knew that some of her students were still passive and unconfident, she tried to encourage, even require them to “open their mouths” as much as possible for the sake of improving their comprehension of the reading text in the most interactive way.

It seems to be a boring class if the students concentrate less on the reading texts and engage in reading activities. They should be encouraged to share what they are reading actively and enthusiastically.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q3.1)**

That the teacher tries to engage the students into reading activities as much as possible is necessary. Rosie did not want her students to be passive in the reading classes or lack concentration on the reading texts; therefore, she believed that when the teacher encouraged the students to get involved in such sharing activities, these problems could be solved. Her belief was similar with Maria's:

Being boosted to engage in the reading process, students are more motivated to share their opinions, more confident and creative in the learning process which may enhance their reading skill.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q3.1)**

Maria agreed that IAs might boost students to participate in the reading lessons, and help students improve their confidence and creativeness in the learning process. Her opinion, once again, clarified the teachers' positive awareness of the importance of IAs in English language teaching and learning in general and in reading classes in particular. From the participants' opinions, it can be concluded that engaging students into the reading activities is one of the principles that should be followed to teach reading skills.

#### *4.1.3.2 Fostering interactive activities in reading classes with collaborative work*

Teacher participants also emphasized collaborative work as a good way to foster interactive reading.

Lisa said:

In group, students not only have chances to share their ideas but also learn from each other as well as the teacher. They may also feel safer and more encouraged rather than competitive.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q3.2)**

Lisa's response showed that she did not support the traditional ways of teaching reading skills which mainly followed the structure: teacher's initiation - students' response - teacher's evaluation and feedback. She highly appreciated group work/ team work as an effective collaborative way to foster students' participation in the reading lessons.

Rosie's and Maria's responses were similar with Lisa's in the point that they supported interactive ways of teaching reading rather than traditional ways. They also regarded reading classrooms as a social environment where the students could join to improve their skills of communication, team work and group work. Thus, the students should be encouraged to collaborate to share ideas, discuss, negotiate, evaluate or debate reading tasks in English as the target language even though their language competence was not good enough. Rosie said:

One of the principles I follow in teaching reading comprehension is creating opportunities for my students to share their ideas, discuss the reading tasks in English in collaboration with their classmates.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q3.2)**

Rosie's idea was the same with Maria's stating that collaborative working was of significance in improving the students' reading skills.

I do not like to see my students to sit-still all the time. So, instead of asking the students to work individually, I often set the collaborative activities/ tasks for them to work in a group or in a team.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q3.2)**

From Rosie and Maria's response, it could be seen that student-centered activities such as group work or team work, which forced students to talk to each other spontaneously, asked each other questions, and showed their opinions in a natural way were examples of IAs that were worth being applied in reading classes.

#### *4.1.3.3 Facilitating students in building collaborative learning community*

One principle contributing to the success of a language class is the students'

opportunity to work in the collaborative environment. The interview data revealed that all participants had positive sharing about the benefits of collaborative learning community, which are proven through their responses.

Lisa said:

The students' positivity, enthusiasm and creativity in a collaborative working community determine their level of comprehension in reading classes as well as in the process of developing foreign language reading ability.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q3.3)**

Rosie shared:

Through collaborative classroom activities, students can form habits of mutual sharing and collaborative working manners to improve their own reading skills.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q3.3)**

Their responses advocated the collaborative working community in helping students better at comprehending the assigned reading texts. For example, in her response, Rosie believed that forming a habit of mutual sharing was also beneficial in providing students with opportunities to interact and share ideas with others.

Maria also supported the necessity of building collaborative environment in reading classes. She said:

Establishing a strong sense of community in the students' awareness can help them have a sense of belongingness to their groups and the class in different activities.

And she added:

One of the principles I apply when teaching reading is to help the students with as many opportunities to work in a collaborative environment as possible. That's why I always encourage, sometimes require my students to participate in all reading activities organized.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q3.3)**

It can be summarized from the interviews that building students' habit of collaborative working is a principle in teaching reading comprehension. Forming this habit from the beginning of the reading course, as revealed by the participants, was very necessary since it helped the students be familiar with the activities organized for them to work collaboratively in reading classes.

#### *4.1.3.4 Building good rapport with students*

As revealed by Lisa, when she interacted with students or provided students chances to interact with each other, the relationship between teacher and students was more promoted, which made students more positive in her lessons.

My interaction with students makes the reading classes more active. IAs make the teacher-students relationship more promoted, and the students have more

positive attitudes toward learning. Through reading activities, my students have a lot of chances to interact with me as well as their friends.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q3.4)**

Together with viewing collaboration as a principle in teaching reading subjects, Rosie highly appreciated teacher - student rapport in reading classes. For her, this relationship not only facilitated the teaching and learning process but also mediated students' confidence and eagerness in dealing with all reading tasks required.

I know that the students may act passively if they lack the necessary concern from the teacher. Therefore, building a good teacher – student relationship can encourage my students to share ideas, give responses, guess something new based on the content presented in the reading text in a natural and appropriate way.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q3.4)**

Maria also regarded the teacher – student relationship as one of the major principles in teaching reading subjects with IAs. The friendly atmosphere in reading class was created by the good rapport between the members involving in it.

Good relationship between the teacher and students creates friendliness in the reading classroom. Students are motivated to share their opinions, more confident and positive.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q3.4)**

Findings taken from the in-depth interviews showed that teachers who were in charge of teaching EFL reading for tertiary students have been trying to build a good relationship with their students in the classes. Apart from creating motivation for developing students' eagerness and confidence in dealing with assigned tasks, this relationship also facilitates students to maximize their strength of using language with others: their peers or their teacher. All of the IAs organized by the teachers in reading class serve the general goal: helping students improve their deep comprehension of the reading texts in the reading course.

#### ***4.1.4 Teachers' beliefs of context in teaching EFL reading with interactive activities***

The issues of advantages and disadvantages teachers may get during the process of teaching EFL reading in their university are what the participants concerned. Findings from the interviews with three participating teachers revealed that the advantages include the supports of the university, the main textbook and the students' efficacy of collaborative work. Meanwhile, time limitation, students' background knowledge and language proficiency, and classroom management are obstacles that may hinder their teaching reading with IAs.

#### *4.1.4.1 Teaching contexts and IAs: Teachers' beliefs of advantages*

- *The University supports*

All of the three selected teachers regarded their university support as an advantage for them in teaching English for students, which affected their performances in teaching practices. The institute's support made both teachers and students more active, enthusiastic in teaching and learning English in general and reading subjects in particular.

Lisa said:

The university management board are aware of the necessity to provide enough teaching and learning facilities to create the collaborative classroom environment in teaching English skills in general and reading in particular, which makes both teachers and the students more active and enthusiastic in organizing and participating in the reading activities.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.1)**

Rosie responded:

Innovating English teaching methods in interactive ways is a matter of the management board's and Foreign Language Department's concern. With the on-going support of the university, we are encouraged to change our teaching style so as to meet the teaching and learning requirement.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q4.1)**

The interview results revealed that three teachers showed their happiness and satisfaction towards the university and the department's concerns. As they shared, although their institute was currently in a rather financially difficult condition, necessary facilities such as spacious classrooms with wireless internet connection, single movable chairs, projectors, lab rooms, etc., were sufficiently equipped for teaching and learning. This support brought a lot of benefits to both teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning this subject. They all had a positive attitude towards the benefits that IAs bring to reading subjects, since "IAs make the students more autonomous in learning". **(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.1)**

Maria also shared her positive viewpoint about the university supports in English language teaching and the responsibility of the management board of both university and department in building up an interactive teaching approach for teachers of English.

Not only the university and the department are highly aware that the traditional teaching method where teacher is the central element teaching is no longer appropriate to the reading classes.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q4.1)**

As responded by Maria, her university and her department highly appreciated the necessity of renovating teaching methodology in developing English reading skills for the students. Therefore, the traditional teaching method, in which the teacher is the central element in the class, is no longer appropriate to the reading classes. Instead, the teachers in charge of teaching reading subjects tried to update the new teaching approaches which are more student-centered, and the collaborative working has been a good alternation.

- *The main textbooks*

Regarding the main textbooks used to teach reading for the first-year students at the university, three teacher participants revealed that they were partly satisfied with the textbooks selected for the reading courses. “The textbooks has a clear format and suitable content for the first-year students of English” (**Int.1. Lisa. Q4.3**). Since the reading texts contained in the book were all based on CEFR format, “it is easy for the teacher to use without worrying about the level of difficulty” (**Int.1. Rosie. Q4.3**) and more importantly, Maria said:

The tasks for each of the reading texts are clearly instructed, so the teachers can take the reading activities or tasks in the textbook for students to do together and do not waste much time designing activities by themselves.

(**Int.1. Maria. Q4.3**)

- *The students' eagerness in collaborative work*

The last perceived advantage in the implementation of IAs is the students' efficacy of collaborative work in reading classes.

My students feel eager and excited whenever I ask them to work in pairs, in groups or in teams. They discuss and understand the reading text more effectively and efficiently by cooperating with their friends or their teacher.

(**Int.1. Lisa. Q4.5**)

I like the way my students work. That they are interested in every activity I ask them to do makes me feel more enthusiastic and conscientious with my job.

(**Int.1. Rosie. Q4.5**)

Although the students are in their first year at the university, some of them show their eagerness in learning reading skills, a rather complicated and monotonous subject. I am impressed with their active participation in the collaborative reading activities I give them.

(**Int.1. Maria. Q4.5**)

All three participants' responses reckoned that the students' activeness and creativity in the process of learning reading subject right at the first year at the university were an encouragement for them. Although the students' comprehension can be individually achieved, their comprehension process is better-achieved when

they participate in the collaborative or IAs with their teacher and friends. Discussing or sharing with each other helps comprehend the reading text more easily.

#### *4.1.4.2 Teaching contexts and IAs: Teachers' beliefs of disadvantages*

Regarding the obstacles faced by the teachers in designing and deploying IAs for their reading classes, all three participants acknowledged existing difficulties they may face in the classroom. They are (i) time limitation, (ii) students' background knowledge and language proficiency, and (iii) classroom management.

- *Time limitation*

The data from interviews showed the teachers' dissatisfaction with the limited number of in-class lessons assigned to the reading course. The phrase "time limitation" appeared repeatedly in the teachers' responses.

The findings indicated that time limitation was one of the common difficulties teachers often encountered in employing IAs for their students' reading. They all revealed that the time spent on such IAs was insufficient, which was seen as an external factor that the teachers cannot avoid. As Lisa explained:

Since the reading texts are rather long with a number of unknown words, it takes my students much time to read and find out the correct answers to the assigned tasks, which makes it difficult for them to arrange enough time for collaborative working.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.7)**

Time limitation was a disadvantage that the teacher had to confront in their process of teaching reading with IAs since, according to Rosie (*Int.1. Rosie. Q4.7*), the teachers' performance may be better in the unlimited time than in the limited time condition.

In fact, the total duration allocated for Reading skill (the name of the subject) from B1.1 to C1.2 for the English major students at the university is 30 in-class periods. This amount of time was too limited for the teachers to provide adequate knowledge and organize IAs for students to improve their language skills.

We need an adequate amount of time to provide students with reading strategies and activities in order to facilitate their engagement in reading and help them comprehend the reading text more deeply. However, time allocated for this course is too limited to do so.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q4.7)**

Due to the limitation of the time set for the reading course, there are only from 3 to 4 periods of reading with teacher instruction per week, and the whole course often lasts 8-10 weeks on average. The credit-based program requires students to self-study more; however, since the students are in their first year at the university, they need

more instructions from the teacher.

- *Students' background knowledge and language proficiency*

As responded by the teacher participants, the various levels of students' background knowledge of English appeared to be an obstacle when designing IAs.

Lisa said:

Some students are proficient, but some others are not. Those who have good background knowledge of language participate in the activities eagerly and positively, in contrast, those with poor language competence often keep silent or show their passiveness collaborative work.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.8)**

In addition, it was revealed from the participants' responses that some EFL students seemed not to understand accurately the meaning of unknown words and their knowledge of the English language was not substantial enough to understand the whole content of the reading texts, as shared by a participant:

For some of the students whose background knowledge of English is poorly obtained, they may often get stuck when dealing with the reading text. Once they get stuck in understanding the intended meaning of the reading text, they lose interest in collaborative work.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q4.8)**

Maria found the matter of students' diversity of English background knowledge and language proficiency problematic and needed to be adjusted and upgraded. She said:

The current background knowledge and language proficiency of the students are at a low level. There is a big gap between the level that students are required to achieve and the actual English language competency they have.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q4.8)**

Although the problem of students' low-level background knowledge and language proficiency were not the fault of the university, the faculty or the teachers currently teaching reading, it had a negative effect on the quality of teaching and learning reading subjects, particularly when teachers took the student-centered approach into their account. From the participant's viewpoint, there was an asymmetry between students' levels of English background knowledge, their language proficiency and the output competency they were required to achieve, which made it difficult for the teachers in teaching reading subjects with IAs.

- *Classroom management*

Together with the above difficulties, the problem relating to classroom management was also the challenge commonly faced by the teachers when teaching



reading comprehension with IAs.

When I ask the students to work in groups to discuss questions relating to the reading passage, some of the groups or members in the groups do not work very well; especially some students do their individual work or ignore their task, sometimes the classroom management is not easy to deal with.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.10)**

In addition, when students participated in group work/ team work, the noise and the chaos were unavoidable, which might cause troubles to the teacher.

I sometimes have difficulties in monitoring the whole class, and pay attention to all pairs or groups when they are asked to deal with a certain reading task. It is difficult to control students' chaos and maintain good classroom management.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q4.10)**

All of the participants were aware that an interactive classroom management helped create a collaborative environment for students that allows them to learn without distractions. Good classroom management could facilitate social and emotional development, promote positive interactions between peers and give students more time and space to focus on improving their comprehension of the reading text assigned. However, Maria confessed that sometimes she did not manage the class well, which led to "the ignorance of some students in some IAs organized." **(Int.1. Maria. Q4.10)**

#### ***4.1.4 Beliefs about teacher's roles in teaching EFL reading with interactive activities***

The interview results with three participants indicated that the teachers themselves played an important role in the teaching reading process and could impact positively or negatively on their students' learning reading subject.

Although the language teaching approach is currently more student – centered, without teachers' instruction, facilitation and motivation in every stage of reading, it is difficult for the students to increase the students' interaction so as to comprehend the reading text and do the assigned tasks quickly and effectively.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q5.1)**

Although Lisa highly appreciated the student-centered approach in her reading class, she emphasized the main roles of teacher, i.e., instructing, facilitating and motivating the students in every stage of the reading lesson with the aim of helping them "comprehend the reading text and do the assigned tasks quickly and effectively".

Rosie added:

In reading classes, we play the role of motivators for the students, rather than restrict them and control them in a boring atmosphere as the teachers often do in traditional teaching approaches. That is, the teacher assigns a reading text,

students read, translate and answer questions in their own understanding without any exchange or discussion.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q5.1)**

Rosie's response revealed that the teacher was the person who not only motivated students to participate in different IAs organized at different stages of the reading process, but created a friendly environment that boosted students' collaboration as well.

Together with regarding motivating students' participation as the role that teachers play in reading classes with IAs, Maria shared her viewpoint that *facilitating students to work in classroom environment* and *arousing their responsibility in participating in IAs* are two other possible roles that she focused on. **(Int.1. Maria. Q5.1)**

Regarding the teachers' self-evaluation about their professional competence, the participants' responses revealed that they either used their teaching experience or teaching interest to carry out an interactive reading class rather than applying what they were equipped with in the professional training courses before.

Maria, a senior teacher with more than 20 years of teaching experience reported:

Although I was equipped with theoretical knowledge about interactive teaching in some professional training courses, I often base on my teaching experience to organize IAs in my reading comprehension class since I lack a systematic understanding about interactive teaching approach.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q5.2).**

Maria's response revealed that she lacked a systematic understanding about interactive teaching approach since she learnt it in a teaching methodology a long time ago and she did not remember much about it. However, with the teaching experience she had, she was confident enough to design an interactive learning environment with different IAs for her students to engage in.

Lisa viewed the irrelevance between her apprehension in the theory and practice of interactive teaching approach as the explanation for the reason that she took advantage of her teaching experience to teach reading subject with IAs. She explained:

As far as I know, what presented in the guide book about interactive teaching approach is a general theoretical base, but what we apply in the teaching process is not always the same. It depends on a lot of elements that exist in the actual teaching context. Therefore, my teaching experience and my teaching interest guide me to choose the most interactive activities for my students in each of the reading lessons.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q5.2)**

Being aware of impact of the teachers' role on the students' participation and performance in reading class with IAs, Rosie shared her idea that:

Apart from instructing the students how to deal with different kinds of tasks attached in the reading text, I find my teaching experience useful in facilitating the students to work collaboratively. They interact together in any activities I organize for them. And I feel happy with that.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q5.2)**

Maria viewed teaching experience that she accumulated as well as her interest in teaching job was of usefulness in teaching reading with IAs.

My teaching experience and interest in my job support my confidence and readiness to create an interactive reading class.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q5.2)**

The participants' responses confirmed that teachers were regarded as the crucial factor to decide whether reading class is interactive or not. Together with designing or initiating activities for the students to participate in, the teacher also facilitated and encouraged the students' active participation. Whether the students' comprehension improved or not depended largely on the teacher's support and guidance, since it was generally difficult for them to comprehend the reading text and do the comprehension tasks without teachers' instruction and support.

## **4.2. Discussion**

As shown in the findings, motivating students' participation was one of the most remarkable concerns of the participants when they used IAs in a reading lesson. All of them understood that it was important and necessary to foster interaction in their classes to achieve the overall objectives of the whole course, i.e., bettering students' comprehension in the reading texts. Participants' responses indicated that reading activities should not be done internally and individually but in interactive ways instead. It seemed that the teacher participants tended to direct their students to interpersonal learning styles rather than intrapersonal ones, where their students could develop their language competence through social interactions with teacher and peers rather than did it by themselves. The socially interactional aspect was more emphasized when the teachers tried to engage their students into the activities they employed. The atmosphere in reading class is more socio-culturally-oriented than cognitively-oriented, since the process of comprehending a reading text is not restricted in individual work but the process of collaboration through certain activities. Once given chances to work cooperatively, students felt a socially interactive atmosphere in their class, which made them more facilitated and excited. This finding added more supports to Barber and Klauda's (2020) and Rahaman's (2014) studies who identified that the reading comprehension process might be better achieved by sharing, exchanging and

socializing, which means that interacting with the teacher and/or peers in reading is a good way to improve students' reading ability. More interestingly, it can be seen from the findings that the interactional process helps foster student-centered approach in classroom environment where the teacher can employ a variety of activities for the student to join, and they can identify their own improvement within a friendly and collaborative environment.

Although teaching reading skill was somewhat different from other basic skills of English in the way that reading classes were often quieter than the others, IAs were beneficial and should be used. The viewpoint that collaborative activities can bring interactivity in reading classes (Rahaman, 2014) is represented in the response of the teacher participants in this study confirming that setting activities to make reading class interactive is very important. In some recent related studies, Natsir and Anisati (2016) and Rahaman (2014) found out that in the case of the reading classroom, teachers' sharing the information or ideas with their students, eliciting the questions, challenging them with higher-order thinking activities or providing clear and appropriate feedback had a positive effect on how well students can develop their reading ability. In other words, different types of teachers' scaffolding should be used collaboratively to activate students' active participation and collaboration in reading classes to develop independent thinking and language competence.

Although comprehending a reading task can be individually achieved, this process is better gained by collaborative work, which is proved by the teacher participants affirming that in their teaching process, they tried to motivate their students' involvement into the reading text by setting up activities for them to join. That teachers regularly encourage collaboration among students for reading activities helps satisfy the need for social connection and might not just promote shared reading but deeper reading. The present finding interestingly added more evidence to support Miller's (2009) study claiming that by giving students opportunities to show their ideas or their choices, the teachers create an effective way to give students ownership of their own learning, which helps increase students' confidence and ensure their interest and engagement. In addition, this study finding is also supportive to the viewpoint about social interaction resulting from the teachers' motivation in reading class as stated by Guthrie & Humenick (2004):

[...] Many students are intrinsically motivated when being able to socialize with their peers. Providing students with more social opportunities to discuss texts they are reading independently may increase reading motivations. (p.36)

Regarding the teachers' goal of increasing students' communicative competence, the findings appreciated interactive reading classrooms which facilitated face-to-face conversations taking place in the classroom environment. According to the teachers, engaging students through interactive reading activities could foster students to use target language orally. To maximize the use of language in reading class, students should be actively involved in the activities which are organized for collaborative work such as discussing, questioning, enquiring, negotiating, responding, and critically analyzing a variety of questions and situations. This finding may be seen as evidence to support García and Wei's (2014) study which indicated that students' verbal communication would be increased if collaborative activities were appropriately applied. Drawing on SCT perspective which emphasized the important role of language used, especially L1 in EFL/ ESL learning in variety of aspects in the contexts of foreign language classrooms (Antón & DiCamilla, 1999; Brooks & Donato 1994) due to its role as a mediating tool in all forms of higher mental processing, this study finding revealed that fostering the use of communicative language is not only beneficial with such productive skills as speaking and writing but the receptive ones as reading. In addition, interaction could be highly beneficial, especially for lower proficiency learners dealing with cognitively challenging tasks and content.

It is indicative that social environment of the classroom is the place where teachers can interact with an individual student, a group of students or the whole class, and students can also interact with each other. IAs such as discussing, negotiating, arguing, role-playing under pair, group, team or whole-class activities are organized with the aim of encouraging the students to be more active and engaged in dealing with tasks from the lower levels of thinking to the higher ones. All of these activities can not only be carried out in classes with the guidance and assistance of the teachers but also in extra activities outside classes with the collaboration with their peers. Through these activities, teachers can make their students more self-confident and positive in doing collaborative work and joining problem-solving situations.

Improving students' social interaction skills in reading classes with IAs is very necessary since it creates a good social environment for the students to learn from each other. They can better their comprehension skills by activating prior or background knowledge, making connections, and consolidating new ideas. Besides, social interaction creates a positive teaching - learning environment; and provides a means for the students to have as deep understanding about the assigned reading topics and

enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This finding was strongly supported by Almasi and Gambrell (1997) who believed that “participation in peer discussions improves students’ ability to monitor their understanding of text, to verbalize their thoughts, to consider alternative perspectives, and to assume responsibility for their own learning” (p. 152), and Lantolf (2000) who viewed classroom as a small social environment where teachers and students are the members of that “society”, and the more interactive the classroom was, the more the students were motivated, positive and less anxious with their learning.

It is reported that with IAs, the students are motivated to share their opinions, and they are also more confident and positive in the process of learning this basic practical skill. In addition, when the students are motivated to join in reading activities from the lower levels to the higher level of understanding, they were able to not only remember vocabulary, understand the main content of the reading text, but also discuss, negotiate, debate, argue, guess, evaluate, analyze, create, and so on, which are much more complicated. This finding provided a clearer evidence for Long and Porter’s (1985) study identifying that when language learners worked in collaboration with others, they were more motivated, took more initiative, and were less anxious concerning their learning, and it shared the same idea with Zhao and Zhu (2012) who found out that collaborative activities can help the students increase their communication skill, and added that students who are actively involved in playing games such as guessing, debating, jigsaw, role-play, mimes, fact-finding games, and so on, can arouse and maintain their interest in learning, promote their motivation of study, and at the same time get lots of opportunities to have their basic skills of English language practiced.

It is undeniable that reading can be well-achieved with individual efforts, but it may be more effective if the reading process is implemented in pairs or in groups through IAs. From the findings, it is probable that IAs employed in teaching EFL reading skills may help facilitate classroom interaction between the teacher and student(s), and promote students to use the target language in communication. In addition, the process of teaching and learning reading should be fostered by collaborative work rather than fully dominated by the teacher because the students also actively participate in this process. Here, a student-centered teaching and learning approach which relied heavily on hands-on activities, group work, pair work, projects, and discussion to engage students and encourage active participation was emphasized.

This finding of the present study added more evidence to support Meng and Wang's (2011) viewpoint asserting that "group work activity is a good way to change the traditional teacher talk that dominates the class" (p. 102). More than that, it supported Jones and Jones' (2004) findings stating that when students work together in English, they talk more, share more their ideas, learn more from each other, get more involved, felt more secure and less anxious, and enjoy using more English to communicate. This result of finding also highlighted Brown's (2000) definition of interaction that "interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other" (p. 165).

The finding about building students' working community in a collaborative environment and building teacher – student rapport in interactive reading classes emphasized that establishing a collaborative working community was seen as a mediation to increase students' positivity in learning. Frequent collaboration gives chances to the students in communicating meaningful ideas one another and being active learners. In addition, the findings indicated the importance of building a good relationship between the teachers and their students which contributed to the development of the teacher- students' interaction in reading classes.

What was reported about teachers' beliefs of context in teaching EFL reading with IAs revealed that besides major advantages that could be made use of in reading teaching process such as the management policies, the main textbook and the students' efficacy of collaborative work, there still existed some typical disadvantages that may hinder the employment of IAs in teaching reading: time limitation, students' background knowledge and language proficiency, and classroom managements.

The data collected from the three teacher participants proved that all of them felt satisfied with the management policies of the university and the Faculty of Foreign Languages. That the management board has recognized properly the necessity of teaching English basic skills in interactive ways created favorable conditions for the teachers to renew and innovate their teaching style and increase the use of IAs in their teaching process. In addition, the textbook that follows the criteria descriptors of CEFR is seen as a noteworthy advantage since it makes the teachers free from taking too much time and effort to select the suitable reading texts for both the curriculum requirement and the students' language levels. As previously mentioned, different from other basic English skills, reading can be individual work and can also be well-achieved individually, but it is probably more effective if the reading process is implemented with IAs. Therefore, proper selection of textbooks in combination with

the concerns about innovating teaching methods on this subject is considered as the potential advantages that can bring the positive result for the reading teaching process.

Together with the management policies and the main textbook used, students' efficacy in collaborative work in EFL reading class was also regarded as a beneficial factor that may have a positive effect on the students' outcomes. It is probable that IAs create chances for the students to show their positivity, enthusiasm and creativeness in their learning process (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). In addition, it is the collaborative work that helps release the teachers' anxiety about their lessons, and foster the social interaction in the classroom environment. With IAs, students are facilitated to work with assigned tasks more than when they do individually without any collaboration since almost all the students pay more attention to their learning (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). The present finding consolidated Abidin and Riswanto's (2012) and Mohseni Takaloo and Ahmadi's (2017) studies which emphasize collaborative work in facilitating students to engage in a small group cooperatively. It also adds more support to Morgan and Fuchs' (2007) study which points out that there is a strong relationship between motivation and proficiency, Cox and Guthrie (2001) who states that students' motivation positively affects their readings, which means that students with stronger reading motivation can be expected to read more in a wider range, and Schutte and Malouff (2007) who discover that motivation is an important factor which supports students to read more, and it has a significant relationship with reading and understanding texts.

Three main obstacles confronted by the teacher participants reported in the findings were time limitation, students' background knowledge and language proficiency, and classroom management.

*Firstly*, inadequate time was the biggest obstacle that EFL teachers at the university had to deal with. The pressure of completing one unit of reading lesson in 2 periods somewhat prevented the teacher from employing IAs they prepared for their students to join. The insufficient allocated time is often seen as a challenge for the teachers, and makes negative impact on students' reading performance (Nguyen, 2012). However, the finding of this study showed the teachers' dissatisfaction about the limitation of time frame allocated for the reading course which deterred them from organizing as many IAs as they planned for their students to participate, it was inconsistent with Chang (2010), Cushing and Jensen (1996) who found that students' reading ability was enhanced under the impact of time limitation.

*Secondly*, the students' background knowledge and proficiency of the English



language in general and in English reading skills in particular, as shared by the teacher participants, were still limited, which might hinder the application of IAs in reading class. That a majority of the first-year students at the selected university had lower level of background knowledge and proficiency of the English language was previously described in the previous chapter, and it was seen as the typical feature that distinguished this selected university with other universities in the region and the whole country. Although IAs are expected to engage the students' active participation into the reading tasks/ activities for the sake of helping them understand the meaning that the reading texts intended, the imbalance in the level of the students' background knowledge and language proficiency might hinder the IAs application. It is probably true that background knowledge and language proficiency play a key role in students' reading ability, and good reading ability is seen as an attribute to a student's intelligence level; therefore, normally, when a student builds on existing information they already know, they're better able to understand and remember the material. They also help students draw inferences, which develops critical thinking skills and makes reading more enjoyable.

*Thirdly*, regarding classroom management, all the teacher participants agreed that classroom, a small social group and the smallest social subsystem in the education system, is a place where interaction between teacher and students take place, so it needed a well- organized management. Drawing on SCT which views classroom as a social environment where students acquire their knowledge by interacting with their teachers and their more capable peers, classroom management in language class was necessary since it "requires intensive interaction and communication between the students and also between the teacher and the students" (Moradi, 2020, p.29). However, as shown from the participants' responses, there still existed some of the students who were not willing to participate in IAs or were reluctant to what was going on in class. Their passiveness in learning more or less affected the learning motivation of other students, and, to some extent, made it difficult for the teacher to carry out IAs with the reading tasks.

Finding in regard to the beliefs about the teachers' roles is also the teachers' concern. Changes in the field of foreign language teaching and learning have made a significant influence on the role of the teacher. Instead of playing the role of controllers who always dominated the talking time in class, teachers played the roles of proficient experts in their pedagogical field and should know how effectively they can use their

material to transmit knowledge to their learners. Smith and Johnson (2017), cited by Thomas, Crossfield and Peterkin (2019) regarded the teacher as one of the greatest factors in the teaching of reading. According to them, teachers are firstly a motivator or a facilitator. The teacher's motivation makes the greatest difference in students' achievement. In the case of present study, with the IAs implemented in reading classes, the selected teachers' role of motivating their students seems to be clearly shown.

It is probable that teaching experience is one of the most valuable assets gradually accumulated during a whole life devoted to the teaching job of a teacher. It makes the teachers more and more confident in handling their teaching in a most appropriate way. In addition, the level of teachers' interest in their teaching affects students' motivation to learn. Teachers who are energetic and enthusiastic about their subject generally attach their positive feelings and are more eager and ready to create an interactive environment for the students to learn. It can also be seen from this finding that the participant teachers were, to some extent, aware of the teachers' roles of scaffolding and the mediating in terms of language for the students as described in sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **4.3 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter presented the findings and discussion of the first research question which aimed to identify EFL teachers' beliefs about using IAs in teaching EFL reading comprehension. The findings showed positive beliefs about the IAs and its importance in teaching reading subjects to English-major students as reckoned by the teachers' participants. In their responses, the teachers tried to set the potential goals and principles for their application of IAs in the reading teaching process. Regarding the goals, the finding showed that motivating students' participation, increasing students' communicative competence, and improving students' social interaction skills are the main goals they set for the reading course with IAs. As for the principles, the teachers when applying IAs to their reading teaching process follow four main principles: Establishing students' active engagement; Fostering the use of IAs in reading classes with collaborative work; Maximize opportunities for students' collaborative learning community and scaffold the collaborative working process; and Building good rapport with students. These principles directed them to the enthusiasm and positivity in designing and organizing IAs for their students to participate in reading lessons. The finding also revealed that teachers were well aware of the advantages and challenges during the process of IAs implementation. The obstacles that were identified in the

findings were time limitation, students' background knowledge and language proficiency, classroom management, and the textbook currently used to teach EFL reading comprehension. Furthermore, the teachers' beliefs about their roles in teaching reading subjects with IAs proved that teachers played multiple roles in their teaching job; however, they tried to put aside the role of controlling their students with assigned tasks, instead of this, the teachers might function as an instructor, an organizer, a facilitator, a motivator, a corrector, an evaluator, and an encourager. Each of the roles was functioned with high responsibility by the teachers' teaching experience and interest in the teaching job.

In brief, the discussion of the finding about the teachers' beliefs of using IAs in tertiary reading classes showed the teacher participants' cognition in all four main themes presented. That teachers shared the same viewpoints in all sub-criteria in the main themes proved that they highly appreciated the application of IAs in teaching English reading skills. The next chapter presents the key findings about what teacher participants acted in actual reading classroom practice.

## CHAPTER 5

### EFL TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF EMPLOYING INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN READING CLASSES

*This chapter presents the findings and discussion of research question 2. The data collected are analyzed to uncover the issues of how the teachers' actual practices of employing IAs in teaching EFL reading skills take place, and how teachers' practices correspond their beliefs regarding to IAs employment. The factors which the participants think might affect the teachers' employment of IAs in teaching EFL reading skills are also pointed out.*

#### **5.1 Findings about teachers' practices of employing interactive activities in teaching EFL reading subjects**

This section presents data from classroom observations with three participants in combination with those collected from in-depth interviews, and the stimulated recall interviews. Data from classroom observations firstly clarify typical issues of reading teaching practice with IAs among the teachers participating in this study. Then, teachers' application of IAs in their actual reading class are compared with teachers' beliefs as described in the previous chapter to clarify the consistency and/or inconsistency between the ways teachers thought in mind and did in practice.

##### **5.1.1 Lisa's classes**

###### **5.1.1.1 Using interactive activities for motivating students' comprehension**

Observational data showed that Lisa tried to motivate students' participation right from the beginning stage of the reading lessons. For example, she stimulated her students' interest in the text by introducing a set of different kinds of messages on the slide and asking them some simple questions, as in as in Extract 1 below:

###### ***Extract #1***

*T. Do you often write messages?*

*Ss. Yes.*

*T. Good. What do you often write in these messages?*

*S. Thanking*

*S. Asking for information*

*S. Greeting*

*T. Great. Now read three messages A, B and C and answer the question from one to eight.*

That teacher's motivation with IAs fosters students in reading class was also expressed in the following Extract:

###### ***Extract #2***

*T. So, which one will match with notice number 10?*

*S1: I think it is A - giving you information about what facilities are available.*  
*T: Do you think a map can do this?*  
*S1. Ah....no...C. giving you simple information, for example where and when.*  
*T. Ok (S1), it is right. How about number 9?*  
*S2: I think it is "A - giving you information about what facilities are available*  
*T: Are you sure?*  
*S2: Because it's have reception.*  
*T. Yes, it has reception. But what service?*  
*S2. Photocopying.*  
*T. That's right.*

Lisa let her students take turn to give their responses with explanation. By doing so, she could minimize the quiet atmosphere in her class, and motivated the students' positivity and confidence, which is often regarded as the weakness of most of the freshmen. In addition, Lisa aimed to foster her students' independence and autonomy in learning rather than relying heavily on the teachers' instruction and explanation.

In her class, she often spent about fifteen minutes to lead her students to the lessons. She said that students were in their first year at the university, they were not familiar with the teaching speech at the university level. And when they were at high school, the reading lesson was organized quite differently, so she spent more them on such activities to engage the students into the reading lesson with a friendly and natural classroom environment rather than forcing them to focus on the reading text immediately.

Lisa provided her students with meticulous instructions before asking them to handle the attached exercises. This teacher instructed the students what they had to do in the assigned activity, then gave her students a certain amount of time to read the notices one by one and decide the best option for each of the statements before checking with their friends' answers. In this activity, the teacher not only instructed her students as explicitly as possible but also reminded them about the hints when choosing the correct answer. With her scaffolding as an IAs, the students felt more encouraged and facilitated to do the reading task.

However, instead of giving students a chance to work in group, or shared ideas with their classmates, Lisa asked them to do the reading task by themselves. While they were doing the task, she went around with the aim of controlling and assisting her students if necessary. Here, as observed by the researcher, the classroom interaction seemed less facilitated.

#### *5.1.1.2 Facilitating students' oral language use with interactive activities*

In the following extract, while dealing with the reading texts about "interesting

people” at p 27 in the coursebook, Lisa showed a photo of a boy on the screen and asked her students to describe the photo with some of the guiding questions about his age and appearance. Students were given three minutes to prepare the description and then were invited to describe it.

**Extract #3**

*T. Can you describe the boy in the photo?*

*S1. (a little bit shy) He is.....seven....(uhm)....six years old. He (is) handsome.*

*T. What else?*

*S1. Short hair, blue eyes, (uhm).....round face.*

*T. Good. Another one, can you? (Lisa called a student at the back).*

*S2. He is about seven years old..... short and brown hair. He wears glasses.*

*T. Yes, he has short brown hair, and he wear glasses. Is he cute?*

*S2. Yes.*

*T. What is more about this boy, the whole class?*

*S3. Intelligent*

*S4. Hard-working*

*S5. Short*

....

This evidence showed that by giving the students few minutes to describe the photo, Lisa could not only provide them with more opportunities to increase their communicative ability but also activate their knowledge about the reading topic, which may help foster their comprehending of the meaning conveyed in the reading text, and make the reading class more interactive.

Or in this extract:

**Extract #4**

*T. Ok, vì sao chúng ta có thể nhận ra được note thứ nhất ở trong hiệu sách còn note thứ hai ở trong thư viện?*

*Ss. [...no reply....]*

*T. Các em xem cái note thứ 2 nha: ‘Please respect all books in your case’ -Hãy tôn trọng những quyển sách có trên giá của bạn.*

*Heavy fines for any damage to borrowed books. Sẽ phạt rất nặng cho những hành động làm hư hỏng những cuốn sách được mượn. Where do you often see this notice?*

*S1. In the library.*

In this situation, Lisa tried to provide students with an explanation to help them understand the meaning conveyed in the reading texts and do the attached tasks. When asked why she did not let the students check the new words by themselves, Lisa explained that:

Although they can look up the word meaning in the dictionary or exchange with their friends, some of them are not familiar with paraphrasing word meaning in context, so they can’t understand the whole meaning of the reading text. That’s the reason why sometimes I should help them.

**(Int. 2. Lisa)**

Lisa also spent a little time boosting her students’ oral language use by

designing a communicative task as an integrated activity in the post-reading stage, as shown in the following extract:

***Extract #5***

*T. (read the model sentence) "I like reading romance book because I am romantic person and I like stories with happy endings".*

*Now share what type of book you like reading and explain why you like it with each other.*

*[two and a half minutes for students' preparing]*

*T. Xong chưa các em? (Finish already?) Who can, please? V, can you?*

*S1 (V). I like reading comic because it (is) funny.*

*T. Good, and you?*

*S2. I like reading .....mystery book because it is .... exciting.*

After introducing the model sentence, Lisa asked her students to share about the type of book they like reading best by adding their preferences into the model. This activity was also beneficial in facilitating the students' use of oral language. When joining this activity, the students could both express their idea about the given topic and concentrated on listening to others do it. When their mind was activated, they could not only strengthen their speaking and listening skills but also better their comprehension about the relating topic. It is appeared that at this point, Lisa's beliefs and her practices were completely consistent together. What she thought about the necessity of motivating students to maximize their use of language in reading lessons was compatible with what she did in her actual classes.

***5.1.1.3 Establishing students' collaborative working community with interactive activities***

As observed, after a short pause for the students to write a few sentences to describe a kind of book they like best, Lisa asked them to share their writing to the whole class. A student read her writing out loud about her favorite book and explained why she liked it. Some other students also shared their paragraphs telling their classmates about the kinds of books they like reading with a most proper explanation for their choice. Having listened to their friends' sharing, the students could add interesting ideas that they were missing into their own products.

***Extract #6***

*T. What is your group doing?*

*SS. Benefits of reading books.*

*T. Good. When we read a book that we love, we can relieve the stress of studying and working. Is that right?*

*Ss Yes.*

*T. Anything else?*

*S1. I think we can get more energy.*

*T. Excellent. We get load more energy.*

In this activity, Lisa went around to support students' group work. Together with sharing ideas, she also used her students' responses as a way to facilitate their sharing of ideas. This extract showed that the teacher tried to encourage her students to share their thoughts or ideas with other group members, and she used their response as an indication of forming a collaborative community in her reading classroom.

Or as in this example:

***Extract #7***

*T. Open your book, p 19. We are going to read a passage about an adventure holiday. Would you like to go on an adventure holiday?*

*Ss. Yes*

*T. Why do you like it?*

*S1. I like strong feelings.*

*S2. I like discovering new things.*

*S3. I like challenging myself.*

*T. Oh, a lot of reasons. Now work in pair to answer my question "Why should people go to Galapagos Island?"*

By asking questions to get information about the students' interest in traveling, this teacher aimed to encourage her students to share their ideas and enable them to be more engaged in the reading lesson.

***5.1.1.4 Forming teacher - student rapports with interactive activities***

Lisa also tried to build the teacher - student rapport through interactive reading activities. Right at the time entering the class, she greeted her students with a very bright smile. Then an open conversation was made. This type of greeting was quite normal in any English class; however, it should also be seen as an indication of classroom interaction since there was not any boundary in the relationship between Lisa and her students, which made the students feel safer to interact with their teacher and classmates.

***Extract #8***

*T. Good morning! Is everybody present, monitor*

*S (monitor). Yes, Ms.*

*T. Do you feel sleepy with this type of weather?*

*Ss. Yes.*

*T. Oh no, guys. Be awake to enjoy "snow falls in the summer".*

In her class, Lisa regarded the students as friends. That she called them "guys", a very close term to communicate with someone in daily life proved that she had a very close relationship with her students although they have just entered the university for a few months.

I want to be younger in my students' eyes. And I think that a good teacher –



student rapport may create a safe and sound environment for my students to maximize their strength in learning.

*(Int. 2. Lisa. Q4.)*

What Lisa said in the post-class interview revealed that the relationship between teacher and students was of importance in her reading class. She tried to establish this relationship as close as possible so that her students felt safe and sound to take part in any IAs she organized for them.

In reading class 3, Lisa led her students to the lesson in an interactive way, too. She divided the class into groups of 4 (or 5) students before starting the lesson. Then she asked them to look at the reading passage about “An adventure holiday in Galapagos Island (textbook p.19). Lisa asked her students to preview the text. The “previewing task” included three different activities. Firstly, she introduced the passage topic and asked some questions about it; students were asked to brainstorm what they already knew about the topic, and predict what they thought they would learn from the reading passage. After “guessing” activity, students started “reading-out-loud” activity. This teacher suggested that the group leader read the first paragraph of the text, then the other members took turns to read the passage aloud before working collaboratively and discussing the meaning conveyed in the reading text. Instead of explaining the unknown words to her students as she previously did, she let them base on key elements or clues in the reading passage and background knowledge to find the meaning of the word in the context of the reading text. During the time students dealt with these activities, Lisa moved around to support them.

The observation revealed that with the teacher’s support and guidance, students were not only more attentive in the collaborative work but also felt motivated right from the pre-reading stage. The teacher - student rapport was accordingly improved. However, from the classroom observations with Lisa, it seemed that this teacher spent a very small amount of time on post-reading activities. While pre-reading and while-reading stages were explicitly implemented with a wide variety of interactive activities, post- reading stage was either minor integrated speaking/writing activities or “out-class” activities in the form of homework due to the fact that “the reading tasks assigned in each reading text were overwhelmed in comparison with the teaching hours allocated for this subject”, as shared by Lisa.

#### *5.1.1.5 Summary of Lisa's practices of teaching reading with interactive activities*

In general, what Lisa presented in her actual reading classes showed that she tried to motivate her students' engagement, participation and interaction in her reading lessons right from the pre-reading stage with different types of IAs. These activities were not only beneficial in attracting students' engagement into the lessons but also providing them with the initial understanding about the reading topics they are going to do in their reading class. In while-reading stage, Lisa emphasized collaborative working environment in teaching reading skills, directed her concern into building the good habit of co-working to her students with the aims of facilitating them to actively and creatively participate in different reading activities. With various interactive reading activities (Table 5.1), this teacher seemed to be successful in helping her students comprehend the reading texts provided in the textbook. Different types of collaborative reading techniques like working in pair, in group or in team were used in a flexible way. When the students discuss or collaborate to find out the answers, Lisa moved around to control, encourage and support if necessary. By doing so, she could create a very friendly and cozy classroom environment and a good rapport between her and the students. Lisa's observed reading lessons may depict a vivid picture of an interactive reading class which used to be regarded as a passive receptive skill among the four basic practical skills of English.

**Table 5.1 A Summary of main interactive reading activities used in Lisa's  
observed reading classes**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Reading Stages</b>	<b>Interactive Activities used</b>
1	Pre-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking and Answering questions to lead in</li> <li>- Checking students' answers</li> <li>- Practicing the dialogue</li> <li>- Reading – out – loud</li> <li>- Students' sharing answers</li> <li>- Previewing the reading titles</li> </ul>
2	While-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary check</li> <li>- Pair/ Group discussion</li> <li>- Giving instructions</li> <li>- Giving hints</li> <li>- Controlling and assisting students' discussions</li> <li>- Asking students to share/ exchange ideas</li> <li>- Provide students with difficult words</li> <li>- Asking students to read the text loudly</li> <li>- Guessing</li> <li>- Jig-saw reading</li> </ul>
3	Post-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking as teachers' model</li> <li>- Integrated writing</li> <li>- Assigning homework</li> </ul>

### **5.1.2 Rosie's classes**

#### *5.1.2.1 Using interactive activities for motivating students' comprehension*

Rosie also spent a certain time on leading-in activities to get her students to interact naturally from the beginning of her reading classes. She showed a file on the projector screen and asked the students about the title of the reading text. By asking the question “*What do you think about personal space?*”, this teacher aimed to both activate her students' background knowledge about the private room and motivate her students' involvement in the lesson. Therefore, instead of dominating some students to share their answers with the class, she encouraged them to share their ideas voluntarily.

#### **Extract #9**

*T. Does anybody have to share your own space with another one?*

*S. ... me.*

*T. Ah, yes. What do you feel?*

*S. Uhm, sometimes okay, but sometimes not.*

*T. Yes. Why do we need personal space?*

*S. Study, ..... relax, .....keep personal things.*

*T. Good, now move your chair to sit in groups of four.*

*Read the text “Personal space” at page 45 and discuss the question: What is the writer trying to do in the text?*

In about five minutes, the teacher led her students to the reading text in a very interactional and natural way. She attracted her students' attention and participation from the general questions to more specific ones to activate students' prior knowledge

and check their understanding about the current reading topic, and then asked them to interact in groups to deal with a certain task. During brainstorming activity, findings from the observation showed that by giving such pre-reading questions, the teacher could motivate the students to apply their background knowledge as well as establish an interactive learning environment from the starting point, and Rosie called it “the guidance before reading”.

Together with using an IA to arouse students’ prior knowledge and interest in pre-reading stage, Rosie also organized other IAs during the time dealing with main reading tasks included in the passage, as illustrated in the following extract:

***Extract #10***

*T. Okay, that’s right. So... what has changed about Class 5’s party - the time, the place or the refreshments?*

*S1. The time*

*T. No, sorry. Another idea?*

*S2: The place*

*T: it’s the place, right? Why so*

*T. Because ... bad weather.*

Extract 10 was an illustration for using IAs to motivate the students’ participation into the reading activities. The teacher kept leading her students from this option to another. This situation can be seen as an illustration for SCT perspectives viewing cognitive process comes from interpersonal level first, and then from intrapersonal level. Even when a student gave an incorrect answer, she did not show dissatisfaction; instead, she explained why the answer was wrong, and encouraged another student to share her choice. The teacher’s praising expressions also helped to motivate the students’ confidence and enthusiasm in handling the reading texts. She tried to avoid criticizing her students as little as possible, as she explained:

Criticizing students is not regarded as a good and positive way to attract students’ interactions since it can make the students confused, or even embarrassed.

**(Int. 2. Rosie. Q1)**

In this case, Rosie seemed to be very careful when showing her dissatisfaction with any students’ wrong answers. Although she was not pleased with the students’ answers, she kept her judging manner in a positive way for students not to feel hurt.

***5.1.2.2 Facilitating students’ oral language use with interactive activities***

The observational data showed that this teacher had the same way to increase students’ amount of language use as the first teacher did. She asked students to read the short reading passages out loud and assist them with difficult words with the IAs as follows:

### ***Extract #11***

*T. NN. (S1), Can you read the first notice?*

*S1 (read the notice)*

*T. Good. TM. (S2) Notice two, please.*

*S2 (read the notice)*

*T. Who can read the third notice? LH. (S3) Can you?*

*S3. (read the notice)*

The observational extract above showed clearly what the teacher did to assist her students to maximize their oral language use by “reading-out-loud” activity. This teacher thought that the reading-out-loud activity not only served the aim of checking and correcting students’ pronunciation of the target words, but also helped to engage the other students to self-check in case they pronounced the words incorrectly. She explained:

I think my students were not encouraged to practice reading and pronouncing at the lower level of education. I find a lot of mistakes in their pronunciation. Therefore, I often spend a little amount of time helping them with pronunciation and increasing their reading speech and fluency.

**(Int. 2. Rosie. Q2.)**

In terms of the explanation of the difficult words appearing in the reading text, she shared the same idea with Lisa.

At the lower level of education, my students did not accumulate much vocabulary, they did not know the way to learn new words by themselves, either. So, I try to help them with this problem, and gradually set up self-check of vocabulary for them.

**(Int. 2. Rosie. Q3.)**

From the observational data collected, the researcher found out that in order to facilitate the students to use English as the main language in reading class, the teacher tried to instruct all the attached tasks very carefully and clearly in English, as illustrated in the following extract:

### ***Extract #12***

*T. So which one do you choose? MP?*

*S1 (MP): I choose C.*

*T: Where in the notice tell you that?*

*S2: .....uhm.... he's off sick and ... cannot attend lesson today*

*T. Okay, that's right. So his class has to move to Room Two D, next to the Lab for students to do the test.*

It is indicated from the observational data that Rosie gave her students a chance to join in class work. More interestingly, by continuously putting questions to explicate the main question, this teacher seemed to succeed in leading her students to the correct answer in a natural and interactive way.

On observing Rosie’s class, the researcher also found out that this teacher sometimes repeated student’s response verbatim. This finding showed the opposition with the traditional viewpoint which viewed reading as a receptive skill and regarded

the students as passive listeners. In this case, students were very active to give their responses to the teacher's questions during the learning process, and their precise and accurate responses were repeated by the teacher, as in Extract #13

***Extract #13***

*T. Look at the notice "Because of the bad weather, tomorrow's party will now be in the school hall." So, what is the change here?*

*S1. A. Time*

*T. Why do you think so?*

*S1. [...]*

*S2. B. Place*

*T. Why?*

*S2. The party will be in the school hall because of the bad weather.*

*T. Yes, that right. So, the change here is B, Place.*

That the teacher tried to repeat the students' response completely without any changes showed that her students could give the correct answers and she should use it to reconfirm the answer and praise students for what they shared. By doing such activities, the teacher aimed to appreciate the students' interactions, which makes them more engaged and active to give their responses to the next questions.

In brief, Rosie tried to employ IAs as a means to increase the students' language use in her classes. What this teacher actually performed in the observed classes revealed that she was highly aware of the necessity of IAs in helping students improve their language competence in the process of learning this subject.

*5.1.2.3 Establishing students' collaborative working community with interactive activities*

In the three observed classes with Rosie, the researcher could find out that this teacher made her effort to help the students form the habit of co-working, which was shown in the extract below:

***Extract #14***

*(In a post-reading activity)*

*T. Now, it's time for exchanging your ideas about how to protect our environment.*

*S. In group. Ms?*

*T. No, in team – Two teams, ok?*

*S. Yes.*

*T. Good. Now, who is ONE, stand on the left; and who is TWO, stand on the right, Ok?*

*Ss. (quickly form the team)*

*T. What should we do to protect our environment? Team One?*

*Ss (team One). Use public transportation*

*T. Good, team Two*

*Ss. Plant more trees.*

*T. Yes, go on, team One...*

As shown in this observational data, the teacher encouraged her students to take part in the team work by going around the divided teams, and assisted them in exchanging the answers. Right after the teacher's instruction, the students quickly formed team "One" and team "Two" and stood in two rows. Then a member in team One shared his/her ideas. With this activity, students had a chance to interact and collaborate with one another.

This teacher explained:

I know that team work always makes noise, but it's interesting. I not only teach my students language, but also try to form their positivity in collaborative work.

**(Int. 2. Rosie. Q4.)**

Rosie used different IAs to facilitate the students' collaboration. Those activities included games with competitive elements, role-playing, retelling, sharing completed ideas, matching, sorting, information exchanging, and so on, which were mostly organized under the form of pair work, group work or team work. She also tried to make her students be familiar with a collaborative working environment, as she thought that individual work could help students do the tasks faster, but collaborative work would help them go farther in their knowledge acquisition.

#### *5.1.2.4 Forming teacher - student rapports with interactive activities*

On observing Rosie's reading classes, it seemed that using students' ideas is one of her preferred ways to establish the teacher - student rapport.

Using ideas of students in reading class is to encourage the students to be more confident and to show them that their ideas are valuable. In such observations, it could be seen that the teacher paid their attention to the students' contribution in different ways such as repeating what students say, modifying the students' ideas, comparing the student's ideas, summarizing what students described, and reaching the conclusion before moving to the next step. By doing so, this teacher not only helped the students to gain their goal of comprehension but also encouraged their independent thinking, as well as setting up a good rapport with them. The utterances below showed the teacher's utterances in using ideas of students.

#### ***Extract #15***

*T. Do you agree with H's idea?*

*S. Yes, but I think people's awareness should be a possible solution.*

*T. Yeah, I agree. People should raise their awareness in protecting their living environment.*

### ***Extract #16***

*(After checking the answers)*

*T. Ai đúng cả mười câu này (nào)?*

*(Who has ten correct answers?)*

*S. me.*

*T. Excellent! Who has nine?*

*S. Dạ em. (Me, Ms).*

In this case, using students' ideas was one of the good ways to make the teacher-student relationship closer. In addition, clarifying, using, interpreting the ideas of students, and giving praises were common activities that this teacher did to increase the teacher – student rapport in her reading class. In Rosie's class, teacher and students could start a discussion grounding on student's ideas. As she said that by rephrasing the students' ideas, she could not only catch up with what they shared but appreciated their contribution and promoted the teacher – student relationship as well. **(Int. 2. Rosie. Q5).**

#### *5.1.2.5 Summary of Rosie's practices of teaching reading with interactive activities*

From the findings grounded on the data collected from classroom observation and stimulated recall interview with Rosie, it could be summarized that the observed classes were well - organized with smooth teacher - student interactions. By using IAs in different stages of reading lessons, this teacher participant could arouse the students' interest in the subject. Students were facilitated to be engaged in the reading activities or tasks with the support and guidance of the teachers. In addition, students' participation in collaborative work also indicated that they were more positive in their learning reading subject, which used to be seen as a complex receptive skill (Nunan, 1999). In addition, that this teacher employed different activities for the students to participate in the reading classes could facilitate students' comprehension from the lower levels to the higher levels of cognition since the cognitive process was mostly implemented through interactional activities rather than individual ones.



**Table 5.2 A Summary of main interactive reading activities used in Rosie's observed reading classes**

No.	Reading Stages	Interactive Activities used
1	Pre-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guessing (the title of the reading text)</li> <li>- Sharing ideas voluntarily</li> <li>- Warm-up questions</li> <li>- Pair/ Group discussions</li> <li>- Asking students to share their thoughts</li> </ul>
2	While-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pair/ Group discussions</li> <li>- Asking students to share ideas</li> <li>- Reading-out-loud</li> <li>- Checking students' pronunciation</li> <li>- Explaining new words</li> <li>- Giving instructions</li> <li>- Repeating students' response verbatim</li> <li>- Team work</li> <li>- Information exchanging</li> <li>- Modifying students' ideas</li> <li>- Comparing students' answers</li> </ul>
3	Post-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrated speaking</li> </ul>

### **5.1.3 Maria's classes**

#### **5.1.3.1 Using interactive activities for motivating students' comprehension**

As observed, unlike Lisa and Rosie who spent a certain amount of time giving students IAs as pre-reading activities before they dealt with the reading text, Maria did not pay much attention to the pre-reading stage. She only gave her students a couple of minutes to guess the reading topic or asked them some pre-reading questions or brainstorm what they might know about the reading topics, and then she went straight to the reading texts. For example, before asking the students to interact with the reading passage in the textbook, Maria asked her students if they often went to those places, and what they often did there. This activity was not only beneficial in stimulating students' interest into the lesson, but provided them with the focus of the reading text and activate their prior knowledge about the reading topic as well. Right after pre-reading activities, Maria asked her students to read ten different notices and matched with five places: A. Museum, B. Sports Center, C. Hotel, D. Gift Shop, and D. Post Office. Instead of dividing the students into pairs or groups to discuss the question, she worked directly with them. By asking the students questions as well as giving them some hints or suggestions to complete the reading activity assigned, this teacher tried to attract the students' attention to the lesson and motivate them to participate actively in the learning process right from the beginning of the lessons, as in the following Extract:

### ***Extract #17***

*T. Now look at part 1, you have 10 different notices, from 1 to 10. Which one can you find in these places? (p.30 – textbook)*

*T. Look at notice 1, “last collection”, “17:30 - Monday to Friday”. So where do you think the notice is?*

*S1. A museum.*

*T. “Collection”, what do you collect in a museum? Think up another one. I think it goes with another place.*

*S2. A gift shop.*

*T. Yeah, what can you collect in a gift shop?*

*S3. Notice 1 belongs to the post office.*

*T. Why do you think so?*

*S4. Notice 5 also belongs to the post office.*

*T: Yes. That’s right! That means you need to go to window 7 to weigh the items.*

As shown in this extract, this teacher tried to motivate her students to the reading text by asking a lot of questions and giving hints to guide them to do the matching activities quickly. Although she did not divide the class into smaller groups or teams and chose to interact directly with all students, this teacher could still attract the students’ attention and engagement into the questioning-responding, matching, evaluating and arguing activities. In addition, she combined explaining some difficult words right in the students’ doing the reading task, which, according to her, “could save time and be more effective”. (**Int. 2. Maria. Q1**). As also observed, although Maria did not spend much time on warming-up activities, it seemed that this teacher proceeded the reading texts smoothly and logically, and her students were very engaged with the activities she employed, as shown in the following Extract:

### ***Extract #17***

*T. Listen to my question, please.*

*T. Generally, how old are people when they first learn how to read? Who knows?*

*S. I think when they are six.*

*T. Yes, normally six.*

*T. And how old is a normal person when he or she goes to university?*

*S. Eighteen*

*T. Normally eighteen, right?*

*S. Yes.*

*T. In fact, some are seventeen, and some are twenty or twenty-two.*

*T. The boy Shaun Rogers in this reading text is strange. What makes him strange?*

*S1. He....could read at two years old.*

*T. Good. What else?*

*S2. He went to the university when he was six.*

*T. That’s right. He is the youngest-ever university student.*

This extract showed Maria’s experience in motivating and activating students into the reading passage by relating the reading task to students’ culture and general knowledge. The questions seemed simple but the students’ sharing of the responses might provide each other with sufficient understanding about the main contents of the

reading text. By putting questions from general to detail, she could not only activate the students' prior understanding about the related reading text but help activate the curiosity of the students about the reading passage and motivate them to be engaged in the reading process as well.

#### *5.1.3.2. Facilitating students' oral language use with interactive activities*

Maria often used "guessing" and "take-turn reading" as IAs to increase students' communicative competence in her reading classes. For example, she asked each of the students to read each paragraph in the reading text "The Florida Keys" before they did the related reading activities.

##### ***Extract #18***

*T. The reading passage today is "The Florida Keys". Have you ever heard about Florida?*

*S1. It's a state of the United States.*

*T. Yes, that's right.*

*T. Look at the title "The Florida Keys". What do you think the reading text talks about?*

*S2. A tourism destination*

*S3. A beach resort.*

This teacher tried to encourage the students' use of oral language by asking students questions to lead them into the reading passage. Such questions as "*Have you ever heard about Florida?*", or "*What do you think the reading text talks about?*" not only aimed to facilitate students' ability of guessing but also fostered their communicative competence. It seemed that this teacher did not always ask the students to form groups, pairs or teams to discuss the reading tasks. Instead, she asked them to reread the text, check the new words by themselves and do the "True/False" task individually first, then exchange their ideas with friends on the left or on the right. While the students were dealing with the reading tasks, she went around and helped them if necessary.

When asked why she did not ask the students to work cooperatively but individually in this reading task, Maria explained:

Interactive activities can arouse students' interaction and foster their use of English in class, but it's not all. Interactive reading atmosphere does not depend much on what the activities are, but on the ways that teachers organize them. [...] if any students (in the group) are lazy, unconfident and passive, the whole group may be affected.

**(Int. 2. Maria. Q2).**

It was, to some extent, true for Maria's situation. In her classes, the researcher could see that students worked hard all the time because they were attached with a lot of questions and always in the mood of being dominated by the teacher. More interestingly,

when students' answers were not acceptable, this teacher kept asking questions explicitly and guided students to the correct answers that she was looking for.

***Extract #19***

*T. Mallory Dock is popular with local people and tourists, is that true?*

*Ss. Yes.*

*T. That's right. How about statement number eight?*

*S. It's correct.*

*T. Where did you get that?*

*S. "You can see most of the Florida Keys in a short holiday".*

*T. No, read the next line, "you should stay far longer" to see if it is correct.*

This extract showed evidence for what Maria did to guide her students. In this situation, when the students' answers were not what she expected, she asked them read another line to find the alternation. By doing so, she could assist and guide her students to the right answer as stated in the text in a more interactive way rather than providing them the correct one immediately.

***5.1.3.3. Establishing students' collaborative working community with interactive activities***

Unlike two younger teachers who always emphasized collaborative working with peers in reading classes, Maria did very little. Most of the class time the teacher and the students exchange interactions directly. She did not usually organize group work or team work, apart from some pair work activities for the students to share or check their answers before showing to the teacher.

***Extract #20***

*T. Look at the reading text - Florida Keys, page thirty-two.*

*Can you get where Florida is?*

*Ss. America.....the US.....*

*T. Yes, it is a stage in the US. How about Florida Keys. Can you guess?*

*Ss. A place of interest.*

*T. Good, a place of interest, or a tourist destination.*

*Now the text and decide if each of the ten given statements is correct or incorrect.*

*Ss. {do the reading task individually}*

*.....*

*T. Now, move your chair closer to your friend and check the answers.*

In classroom observation 2, Maria sometimes let her students exchange the answers to another student, but just for confirming multiple choice (true/false) options. Regarding this point, Maria said:

As I said before, pair work, group work or team work are not the only way to create collaboration and interaction. Students can improve their collaborative working habits through other activities I give them.

**(Int. 2. Maria. Q3).**

The data from her responses in the interview 2 and her performance in the actual teaching practice indicated that although what she thought and what she did in actual

teaching were somewhat different, this difference did not show the inconsistency. Although she did not tell her students the way to form and improve the habit of collaborative working in language class, they could learn those from her demonstration and interaction with them through all activities she employed.

She also added that time limitation and students' low level of language proficiency were also two hindrances that not only her but a lot of teachers had to face with in the reading classes. She said that sometimes she prepared activities for group discussion; however, due to the shortage of time, and students' lack of language proficiency, she had to change intention. **(Int. 2. Maria. Q4).**

#### *5.1.3.4. Forming teacher - student rapports with interactive activities*

Among different ways to build good teacher - student rapport, Maria frequently praised her students in every reading activity they performed well. Praise is necessary in language classes since it not only helps to manage the class but also improve engagement, motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and success among the students. More importantly, teacher's appreciation to his/her students' performance may create an effective interpersonal interaction with them (Strachan, 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). As found in the observed reading classes, Maria praised the students' answers by saying "very good", "excellent", "well-done", or "great" which aimed to appreciate the students' answers on the general behavior, and made them feel more motivated in their learning process.

#### ***Extract #21***

*T. Is statement number five correct or incorrect?*

*S. Incorrect, a good way to see is to take a flight from Miami to Key-west.*

*T. Wow, good job!*

*And next, statement number 6?*

*S. Correct. It is a home to all sorts of people...*

*T. Great! How about number seven?*

*S. It's correct. "Mallody Dock is popular with local people and tourists."*

*T. Well – done.*

In her class, Maria also often encouraged her students with a very friendly manner and soft voice. For example, instead of using long utterances to boost her students work, she used very short but encouraging phrases such as "Go on", "Great", "Wow, good job", "Correct", "Well-done" to encourage, appreciate, and praise her students on what they did in each of the reading activities. Her compliment and encouragement showed that she wanted to build a friendly and close relationship with her students, so that they could be more confident in participating and sharing their ideas. Even when any of the students could not give the right answers, her response did not show her dissatisfaction or criticism,

but encouraged them to try more. As observed, the researcher found out that the students seemed not to be shy or passive in the reading activities assigned by the teacher.

#### 5.1.3.5. *Summary of Maria's practices of teaching reading with interactive activities*

Findings from classroom observations and stimulated recalls with Maria revealed that this teacher participant mostly used questioning technique as a means of scaffolding the students in her classes. By putting direct questions, Maria led her students to different text types in a natural way. She also tried to use some other IAs such as guessing, reading-out-loud, praising, repeating, suggesting, explaining to assist the students in different stages of a reading lesson. The findings also showed that this teacher used fewer collaborative activities than Lisa and Rosie did, and she spent only a little time on pre-reading stage, and very little on post-reading stages. Most of the collaboration took place after individual work since not many collaborative activities/ tasks were employed.

**Table 5.3 A Summary of main interactive reading activities used in Maria's observed reading classes**

No.	Reading Stages	Interactive Activities used
1	Pre-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guessing</li> <li>- Pre-reading question</li> <li>- Brainstorming</li> </ul>
2	While-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving hints</li> <li>- Giving instructions</li> <li>- Teacher Questioning – Student Responding</li> <li>- Individual thinking and sharing</li> <li>- Evaluating</li> <li>- Arguing</li> <li>- Explaining</li> <li>- Take-turn reading</li> <li>- Silent reading</li> <li>- Pair work</li> <li>- Confirming selected options</li> <li>- Giving compliment</li> </ul>
3	Post-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assigning homework</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Discussions

In this section, the researcher presents the discussion of the study findings about teachers' practices of employing IAs in teaching EFL reading skills at tertiary education context in relation to research question 2 of the present study. The first focus in this discussion is about the EFL teachers' practices of employing IAs in their teaching reading subject, and the second focus is about the correspondence of the teachers' practices of using IAs in teaching reading subjects with their beliefs which has been mentioned in Chapter 4. The summary where the researcher sums up what has been discussed from the findings is followed.

### ***5.2.1 Discussion about teachers' practices of employing interactive activities in teaching EFL reading subjects***

*Firstly*, the findings of this study showed that all of the teachers more or less tried to organize IAs with the aim of motivating their students' engagement in the reading texts, and maximizing their use of English in reading classes as an interactive social environment with different kinds of IAs. Such activities as sharing ideas, checking responses, discussing, role-playing, turn-taking talk found out in the findings were seen as the means to make students more motivated and engaged in the reading texts. Students tend to read more if they are motivated to read from other more capable peers, who are seen as scaffolders in the teaching and learning process. Drawing on the SCT perspectives which emphasize the co-construction of knowledge through collaboration and mutual assistance in classroom environment, it can be understood that students may not only learn more about their language but also sharpen their skills through different types of interaction with different types of activities. In the case of the present study, through IAs employed in reading classes, students were provided interactive learning contexts where they had favorable chances to work collaboratively with their peers to deal with and complete the reading tasks assigned in the most appropriate way.

*Secondly*, it is necessary to use IAs to increase students' communicative competence in reading class. It appeared that when students were scaffolded and facilitated by the teachers, they were likely to be more active and confident in sharing their opinions in the learning process. In addition, IAs also helped to "ensure regular and active participation of students in the lessons" and "develop the student's ability to work independently with various sources of information" (Alimjanova, 2021. p. 21). Therefore, it should be noted by the teachers that in reading lessons, providing opportunities for students to increase their communicative language competence are vital to the language learning process since it not only broke the silent and monotonous atmosphere as when students were asked to solve the reading activities individually without sharing, discussing or negotiating with their teacher and other students, but also helped facilitate the interaction among the three triangular components in reading comprehension, i.e. *reader – text - activity* as suggested by Snow (2002).

*Thirdly*, using IAs in reading classes helps create a collaborative working community. Being aware of this advantage of IAs in reading classes, all three selected teachers attempted to employ IAs to develop the students' collaborative skills. By providing the students with different types of IAs for their collaboration such as idea –

sharing, problem-solving, role-playing, question asking-answering and so on, the participating teachers could create a friendly and supportive learning environment, which emphasizes the collaborative community of learning by the construction of knowledge through social negotiation. Findings of the present study add an interesting support in terms of the ways teacher organize their reading classes so that both teachers and students can play untraditional roles when they collaborate with each other. In other words, it emphasizes Vygotsky's theories which stress the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978), and strongly affirms that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning" as presented by Vygotsky. It also advocates Khairunissa, Sumarsono and Sumarni's (2019) study emphasizing the role of collaborative environment in making the students "socialize better with their peers" when they "work together to achieve a certain goal in learning" (p. 119). This finding suits the SCT perspective confirming that "learning is social and occurs in social context" (Vygotsky, 1978), "learning is mediated by language" (Vygotsky, 1986), and "learning or the development of concepts and higher mental functioning takes place within a student's zone of proximal development" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Gallmore & Tharp, 1990, cited in Antonacci, 2000, p.22). These perspectives highly appreciated the social environment in reading classes since what an individual could accomplish when working in a social environment in collaboration with others was better than what he or she could have accomplished without any collaboration (Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

Regarding using IAs to build the teacher - student relationship in reading classes, the finding of this study revealed that all of the participating teachers shared the same viewpoints that this relationship was of great importance in creating an interactive and friendly learning atmosphere for both teachers and students, which contributed to bettering students' reading outcomes. This finding supports Zhang's (2020) study which emphasizes the importance of the teacher-student relationship as it "plays a pivotal role in students' engagement and success in an EFL context" (p.1). This finding is also supported by Pishghadam et al., (2021b) who claimed that a positive relationship with a teacher can lead to a high level of class participation and arouse positive academic motivation, learners' self-confidence (Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020), a feeling of empathy and mutual understanding between teacher and student (Zhang, 2020), and more efficient instructional task designs (Lambert & Zhang, 2019). When observing the participants' classes, the researcher found out an interesting point that in some of the reading lessons, the IAs used with high frequency



were on the basis of teacher – student interaction or teacher - whole class interaction. Just a few collaborative activities were employed for students in the form of peer scaffolding, which may be seen as the restriction in applying IAs in teaching reading subjects of the teacher participants in the selected university.

Since all classroom activities were organized or created by the teachers, the relationships in the observed classes were mostly teacher- dominated, in other words, they were the center of students’ attention. These teacher participants taught, assigned activities, and supervised the classes and asked the students to participate in classroom interaction. In these cases, lectured-based teaching and text-based teaching were frequently employed. During class, teachers explained the instructions for each reading text clearly and the students were required to do the assigned tasks under the supervision and the facilitation of the teachers. The most frequently used IAs in the observed reading classes followed the traditional sequences of interaction: Initiation – Responses – Evaluation, or Initiation – Responses – Feedback, which mainly focuses on the interpersonal level of classroom interaction. It can be seen from the observed reading classes that although the observed teachers tried to engage the students to participate in the reading tasks by asking them questions and create a supportive learning environment for students to involve in, the students seemed not to be very active or self-autonomous. Some of them did not actively participate in the class and had little self-confidence. Rather, they were humble, shy, and quiet, which, to some extent, had a negative effect on the teacher – student rapports in reading classes.

The findings about teacher’s practice of using IAs in teaching reading subject reported in this chapter is partly compatible with what Snow (2002) addressed as variables to make up interactive reading class on the ground of sociocultural theory. Among three relating factors in the triangulation suggested by Snow (2002), interaction in the observed reading classes primarily refers to interaction between the teacher and students, between or among students participating in this subject. All of the participating teachers more or less gave their attempts in fostering interaction between them and students through different types of scaffolding activities: questioning, instructing, giving hints, modelling, explaining and giving feedback, which are seen as the core reading activities to support students’ comprehension. Such students’ cognitive process is achieved from outside interference (intrapersonal) rather than the individual students’ (interpersonal) cognition. In this case, the teachers function multiple roles when they not only support, orient, lead, evaluate, feedback, but motivate, stimulate, and promote students to reach their ZPD as well.

Secondly, the interaction in observed reading classes refers to the interaction between the students and the activities, which are also seen as the main interactants in classroom interaction. Through different reading activities assigned by the teachers, the students can interact not only with one another but also with the reading texts, a variable that affects students' reading performance under the sociocultural perspective as suggested by Snow (2002). Regarding the texts, as previously mentioned, all of the reading texts in this Reading B1.1 course were taken from Ready for PET, a course book following CEFR standards in combination with a series of supplementary material particularly compiled for the students of pre-intermediate language level. Therefore, the tasks including the comprehending questions coming along with the texts in each of the observed reading classes seemed to be suitably designed for the pre-intermediate students in terms of the complexity of lexis, grammatical structures, the familiarity of the reading texts and the familiarity of the topic. These features of the reading texts made it quite favorable for the students to interact with themselves to make sense of the text and do the reading tasks included as effectively as they can. Therefore, it can be briefly summarized that in order for the IAs to really work for the development of the students in reading classes, it is necessary that there should be the combination of different external factors (sociocultural variables) and the movement of the students themselves (intra-variables). The next section presents the congruence or incongruence of the teachers' practice of deploying IAs in comparison with how they perceived this issue as presented in Chapter 4.

### ***5.2.2 Discussion about the correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching EFL reading skills with interactive activities***

It can be seen from the findings of the study that while Lisa and Rosie's beliefs were more consistent with what they acted in reality in all four items in comparison with Maria's. From the findings, the researcher found out that there was less inconsistency or lower frequency of consistency between Maria's beliefs and practice in comparison with Lisa' and Rosie's. Typically, this teacher focused on guiding and explaining the reading texts and asked her students to read and did the attached reading tasks individually instead of organizing pair, group or team activities for the students to join. For example, Maria set the overall goal for deploying IAs in reading class which emphasized the collaborative learning environment for the students to be engaged in. However, in her teaching practice, she did not organize many activities for her students to do as in Lisa and Rosie's. This teacher mainly provided her students with new words, reading techniques and asked them to work individually to seek the

answers for every reading task in the text/lesson before interacting with her and the whole class. Interaction between teacher and students was dominated in most of the activities while very few student(s) – student(s) interactions were implemented. In mind, she wanted to motivate her students in reading lessons as she thought that *applying IAs in teaching reading skills was very important*, and IAs aimed to *engage the students into a collaborative atmosphere* in reading classroom (**Int.1. Maria. Q2.1**) She also thought that working in collaborative community such as pair work, group work, team work or class discussion could help raise the interest in reading lesson among students, make them more engaged, encouraged and confident, increase their practical use of communicative language, reduce passiveness and anxiety, etc. However, in actual teaching context, she did differently to some extent.

In addition, in Maria's belief, IAs should be used to facilitate students' positivity and confidence; yet, in practice, the teacher kept guiding the class most of the time. As observed, the teacher-talk frequency overwhelmed the total class time of the lesson. Instead of discussing, sharing ideas with others, the students mostly followed the teacher's guidance or instruction, listened to the teacher with little minimal interruptions. and the student-centered approach turned into teacher-centered approach. More than that, chances for students to correct misunderstandings or mistakes were not routinely provided by the teacher. For example, in an observed situation, Maria raised questions and gave hints continuously to help her students have the correct answer, and when there was a wrong answer, she helped correct it directly. This finding showed a contrast with Swain and Lapkin's (1986, cited in Sharma, 2018) stating that when learners were listening most of the time, they would only gain a general understanding of the language, and affirming that putting the learners in conversational situations to learn the language specifics would develop their communicative competence.

However, what Maria thought about using IAs to promote the teacher – student rapport was consistent with what she did in her teaching practice. Although she did not organize many IAs for students to work collaboratively, what she did in her lesson such as praising students' performance, providing support whenever students needed right away, using students' responses, evaluating and feeding back with very slight criticism were proofs for their intimated and close rapports. In fact, a friendly relationship between teacher and students might not only contribute to the enhancement of students' comprehension in the reading class but also create a non-threatening learning environment for students to improve themselves. Interestingly, at this point, three

teacher participants showed the consistency between their beliefs and practices. This finding was consistent with the study of Abrahamson (2011) pointing out that teacher should apply some practical strategies such as appreciating each student's effort in the class with positive compliments, creating tasks that enable them to share their own stories and feelings, and motivate them to be enthusiastic with the activity were the good ways of developing teacher – student rapports in language classes.

Another inconsistency which was found out from the findings was the time allocation for each stage of the reading lessons. Normally, the leading-in or warming-up activities often take a little amount of time in the whole reading lesson. Yet, in Lisa's reading classes, the teacher spent about ten to fifteen minutes out of 50 minutes allocated for a reading lesson on the leading-in activities, which somewhat conflicted with her response in the interview 1 that she did not have enough time to organize IAs for her students. When asked about this mismatch, she said that since her students were in their first year at the university, they were not familiar with the teaching speech at the university level. And when they were at high school, the reading lesson was organized quite differently, so she spent more time on such activities to engage the students into the reading lesson with a friendly and natural classroom environment rather than forcing them to focus on the reading text immediately (*Int. 2. Lisa, Q1*). Teaching hours and students' familiarity with learning styles at the university can be addressed as the hindrance resulting in the inconsistencies between teachers' perceptions and their practices of using IAs in their reading classes. Drawing on Vygotsky's SCT, in this case, the students are novices and they need guidance and assistance from the teachers who are much more skillful in order to make sense of the reading texts and the relating tasks or activities coming along with the texts. In other words, they need the teachers' scaffolding to develop their reading skills, gradually withdraw their dependence on the teachers. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that teachers should use cooperative learning exercises where the novice can interact more with the teachers, and the less competent students can interact with more capable peers to develop their skills within their ZPD. However, due to the limited teaching hours, it seems not easy for the teachers to mediate them as they should do.

### **5.3. Summary of the second research question findings**

The chapter reported main findings and provided discussion about what teachers actually did in their observed reading classes. As shown in the findings and discussion, all of the three teachers used a wide variety of IAs at different reading stages with the aim of providing their students with motivation to participate in activities/tasks to

comprehend the reading texts assigned. IAs used for while-reading stage were outnumbered in comparison with the two other stages of reading, i.e., pre-reading and post-reading. IAs were also used for facilitating students' oral language use, establishing students' collaborative working community, forming and strengthening teacher - student rapports in reading classes.

The results also showed consistencies and inconsistencies in teachers' beliefs and practices of using IAs for teaching EFL reading skills which was reported from interview and classroom observation data, specifically:

All interviewed participants set the goals and the principles for their reading class. They tried to use IAs in the most flexible ways at different stages of teaching reading so that the students could be motivated and facilitated to participate in different activities organized for the sake of bettering their comprehension of the reading texts assigned. However, since students have just entered the university for a few months, most of them lacked both background knowledge and language proficiency, and were not familiar with learning reading skills as a separate subject. Besides, they had difficulties in using the language, possessing vocabulary, and knowing how to classify reading texts. More than that, they were passive, unconfident in exchanging ideas in collaboration with their teachers and classmates.

In brief, these findings and discussion gave a described and analyzed the congruence in how teachers' actual teaching practices corresponded to what they perceive about the employment of IAs in teaching EFL reading subject in their teaching context, which contributed to reaffirming the teachers' positive awareness of IAs in English language teaching and learning in general and in reading classes in particular although the levels of consistency were somewhat different. The fact that the application of IAs in reading classes was facilitated or hindered depended much social and cultural factors, as revealed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FACTORS AFFECTING EFL TEACHERS' EMPLOYMENT OF INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN READING CLASSES**

*This chapter presents the findings and discussion relating to the third research question of the current study “What factors do participants think may affect their employment of interactive activities in EFL tertiary reading comprehension classes?” The data collected from the in-depth interviews, classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews with three teacher participants of this study were used to help the researcher find out the potential factors that may affect the teachers on employing IAs in their reading classes from their perspectives.*

#### **6.1 Findings about factors affecting EFL teachers' application of interactive activities in tertiary reading classes**

From the data collection, some potential factors that may affect teachers' employment of IAs in teaching reading subjects to EFL students including teachers' professional training; Teachers' access to updated pedagogical theories from experts; Students' background knowledge and language proficiency; Authentic teaching and learning materials, Exam-oriented teaching approach; Teaching and learning facilities, Time allocation for reading classes; and some other relating factors are presented in detail as follow:

##### **6.1.1 Teachers' professional training**

All the three interviewees view teachers' professional training as an important factor since it helps them understand the theoretical bases of language teaching in general and apply IAs appropriately in their teaching practices, particularly promote the application of IAs in teaching reading skills. That they sometimes receive quick courses of professional training sponsored by the National Foreign Language Project of the MoET and Programs of non-governmental programs is of great significance to help them improve their teaching. As responded by three teachers in the participant profiles, they were officially trained to become teachers of English, their post-graduation degrees were Master in TESOL, which meant they were introduced different approaches or methods to teach reading; however, all of them confessed that they somewhat forgot what they had learned, or did not remember the nature of interactive teaching approaches. In addition, they admitted that they were not sure what parts of the course they could apply in their current reading class. As Lisa said:

I am a little bit afraid when mentioning the English pedagogical methodology since I learned this subject a very long time ago. Moreover, most of what I learned in my bachelor and master course relating to English teaching methodology was rather theoretical.

**(Int.1 Lisa. Q5.3)**

Rosie shared a slightly different idea on this issue. When interviewed, she said that she got some knowledge about communicative language teaching (CLT), and classroom interaction as well as interactive teaching approaches (*Rosie, Int.1*). Such knowledge was useful for her current teaching job.

I am not sure whether I am successful in applying interactive teaching in my classes; however, when I design games, team work, group work or pair work in the reading class, my students are often eager to join.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q5.3)**

It seems that this teacher more or less remembered what she learnt from her course, she was aware of the typical activities designed for reading class such as games, text – picture/ text- comparing/ matching; picture sequence ordering, article – headline matching/ diagram building, and so on. She was also aware of the necessity of interactive reading activities in scaffolding the students' reading skill; however, as this teacher said, she was not certain whether these strategies were interactive, and whether she successfully employed these IAs in her reading class or not.

The other teacher participant, Maria, also believed that she somewhat understood classroom interaction. However, like the two other participants, she sometimes was not confident in applying IAs into her reading class, as shown in her words.

I remember being taught about theory of ELT methodology but spend very little time on demonstrative teaching; therefore, I apply interactive teaching in my class in my own way.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q5.3)**

Although Maria said that what she learned about ELT theory had brought her some basic knowledge and understanding about classroom interaction, she seemed not to be sure about what aspects from such knowledge that she could employ in her actual teaching reading process. More noticeably, she regarded her teaching as something related to “instinct” or “inborn” therefore, she did not pay attention to whether she was using IAs or not. From this point, it can be seen that although three selected participants had opportunities to learn theory of ELT approach in their B.A or M.A courses, they did not feel confident when adopting such techniques to their own teaching reading due to either their memory or limited training.

Two out of the three participants complained about the lack of professional development activities, for example, the opportunities to develop knowledge and skills which were related to teaching EFL reading comprehension. As revealed from the interview data, the teachers seemed dissatisfied with their lack of opportunities to share their teaching experiences. Lisa said she had very little opportunities for such activities as seminars, conferences or training courses to gain or exchange experience about interactive teaching and classroom interaction in teaching reading skills since she taught this subject.

In my faculty, most teachers of English are very busy, we do not have time to do the self-training or peer-training, for example, we do not have time to observe each other's classes. And each of us has our own way of teaching so we only share what we experience with each other when somebody asks or when we join a professional seminar.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q5.4)**

Rosy shared a very interesting idea that a couple of years ago, they used to be given chances to observe other teachers' demonstration teaching in some special occasions like in the International Women's Day, Vietnamese Women's Day, Vietnamese Teacher's Day.

We do not usually have workshops seminars or conference for the English teachers to sit together and discuss what we should do to upgrade our teaching methods, however, in some special occasions such as Vietnamese Women Day, International Women Day and Vietnamese Teacher Day, we often have a demonstrative lesson for our colleagues to observe and evaluate. Normally the more experienced teachers do first for the younger and less experienced ones to learn; sometimes the younger teachers (usually newly recruited teachers) teach for the other teachers in the faculty to observe and give comment.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q5.4)**

Peer learning from colleagues is seen as a good way to share teaching experiences and adjust the teaching styles of individual teachers. In other words, the teachers usually accumulate good teaching ideas by conferring or sharing teaching experience with other teachers in the field. However, this limited amount of demonstrative teaching was not enough for the teachers to share their need or what they should do to make their teaching as interactive and effective as they expected. Besides, in the demonstrative class, the teacher dominated to teach often spent an amount of time preparing carefully for the lesson. They tried to choose the best ways to teach in order to minimize critical comments or feedback from other teachers in the faculty.



Maria gave a very honest response:

Sometimes, I was asked to teach for other teachers' observations, and I really had to find the best way to elicit the lesson, which is time-consuming. As you know, reading classes are not often as exciting as speaking class, it is very difficult for me to design my lesson".

**(Int.1. Maria. Q5.4)**

What Maria confessed was not her own problem, but other teachers as well. Although they were experienced teachers, they sometimes felt nervous when asked to teach for demonstration. She confessed that she had to try her best to prepare for the lesson, which was time-consuming.

From this finding, it could be seen that despite being officially and professionally trained and accumulating much teaching experience, the teacher participants still needed more training courses on this topic. Teaching is a "need-to-be-updated" job, so that the teachers need frequent professional training is quite comprehensible.

#### ***6.1.2 Teachers' access to updated pedagogical theories from experts***

Together with the teacher's lack of professional development activities, the participants also mentioned the limited access to experts' pedagogical theories as an influential factor affecting their application of interactive teaching in reading classes. In the interviews, the teachers stated that they did not have many opportunities and channels to access updated trends of interactive teaching worldwide, apart from what they got from the textbooks, their own experience or some international conferences they participated in, as responded by Lisa.

Honestly speaking, I do not have much material about ELT methodology, and I haven't got much free time to study it deeply. The interactive activities applied in my reading classes are mainly based on the textbooks, partly on my teaching experience, or the international conferences I have chances to attend.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q5.5)**

Rosie also added that she had heard about interaction and interactive teaching as a trend in ELT several times, but she honestly said that she had read some of books and research relating to this issue, sometimes she and her colleagues talked about this topic, but they did not pay much attention on IAs in a certain subject like reading.

From the above extracts, it was not difficult to see why the teacher participants did not forget mentioning the "time consumption" for such activities. More noticeably, none of them showed their interest in searching for the updated interactive teaching

theories. They themselves are aware of the popularity of the interactive teaching trend in ELT in general and in reading in particular; however, they seemed not to find it necessary to get a thorough understanding about this issue. They tended to apply IAs in their own way rather than adopting any theories they learned.

In fact, there are certainly a lot of different reference sources where I can find information about interaction and interactive teaching methods of four basic skills of English. However, honestly speaking, I do not pay much attention to them, as I myself think that these theories do not help me as much as my experiences I have accumulated during the past few years.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q5.5)**

This finding revealed one important point that these teacher participants, on one hand, lacked opportunities to access to expert theories related to classroom interaction, IAs in language teaching, and IAs in teaching reading; on the other hand, they showed their cursory or unenthusiastic attitude towards these theories, and they did not show much about their need to seek for such channels, either.

In short, that teachers had limited access to professional activities and expert theories more or less affected their own ways of applying IAs in their real teaching of EFL reading skills. Consequently, teachers had to make an effort to resort to other sources to find their best ways of teaching. IAs are varied, but due to their limited or insufficient access to theoretical updates, teachers had to base on this experience to handle all of the teaching activities on their own.

### ***6.1.3 Students' background knowledge and language proficiency***

The research setting chosen for this study, as stated in the previous chapter, was a local university in a central province of Vietnam. Since it was “local”, students studying here mainly come from rural or far-remoted areas where English seemed not to be their favorite subject; or they even do not pay their attention to this subject, either. That students' knowledge of English is at low level does not meet the requirement of their learning at the University, as shared by Lisa:

My student's background knowledge of English is at the lower level in comparison with other bigger universities in the region even they had had more than seven years studying English at lower levels of education. For that reason, they had to depend on the teacher's guidance in class.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.8)**

Lisa blamed the main constraints in applying IAs in her reading classes on the students' background knowledge and their low-level proficiency. Due to this point, sometimes she could not carry out the lessons as planned. This situation was repeated

with Rosie who admitted that her students' language competence was not good enough, which made it difficult for her to implement IAs in the reading classes as she expected

Maria also shared the situation in her class.

Sometimes we work together in order to understand all difficult terms and understand the whole reading text, but some students seem not to be eager to do anything apart from listening passively.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q4.8)**

Data from Maria revealed the inconsistency in applying interactive technique in her classes with what she thought it should be. At this point it can be understood that this teacher seemed to employ the student' passiveness in learning reading as an excuse for this mismatch.

It is possible that interaction is achieved from the IAs taking place in class between teachers and students, students and students. The learning habits, the student's background knowledge and the students' English proficiency were the factors affecting the use of IAs in reading classes. Even though the teachers tried to apply as many as IAs in their teaching process, their students' passiveness, and their lack of eagerness to participate surely made the teachers' goals unreachable.

#### ***6.1.4 Authentic teaching and learning materials***

As previously mentioned, the textbook used for this reading course, Ready for Pet published by Macmillan Exams was selected among the wide variety of textbooks designed for level three out of six levels of language proficiency set by CEFR. In addition, Cambridge Preliminary English Test (books 1, 2, 3) was chosen as supplementary materials for the course.

The textbook had a clear format with four separated parts, i.e., listening, reading, writing and speaking. The content presented in each unit was basically suitable for the knowledge level of the first-year students, the activities were varied so the teacher did not need to design the activities by themselves. However, "activities in each part are not logically arranged, in other words, they do not follow the order of the sections presented in the standardized test" (Lisa). "Some activities need to be modified to meet with the students' language proficiency" (Maria). And Rosie added, "some parts should be extended while some others should be simplified or even omitted to make it compatible with the current language level of students' and the requirement of the assessment test". Therefore, in the teaching process, they did not adhere to the assigned textbooks and teaching materials. Instead, some of the omission, reduction, or addition have been made for the selected textbook.

Regarding the supplementary materials for the course, four books with four reading tests for each were chosen. The total ten tests for the whole course put the teachers under the pressure of time arrangement to complete the assigned reading texts in the textbook and instruct students to deal with the reading tests contained in the supplementary materials. This load of tasks is also a factor to affect the teacher in organizing IAs in their teaching practice.

#### ***6.1.5 Exam-oriented teaching approach***

One of the barriers to the application of IAs in reading classes, as reckoned by the teacher participants, was the testing regulation in the chosen university. In general, in Vietnamese tertiary context, the awareness of studying for exams was deeply imbued in both teachers and students' minds. The desire for a successful exam with high scores led teachers to put the objective to plan their lessons in the form of testing-oriented style into their priority, and then giving students chances to improve their language proficiencies. This reality was due to the causal relationship, as shared by participants, that exam success was regarded as the most important aim for the majority of students, and since the reading B1.1 tests followed the requirement of CEFR standardized tests which were rather complicated, their students tended to focus on studying for exam rather than communicative competence.

Lisa (Int.1. Q4.11) said:

I think they (students) are more concerned much on the test score rather than what they should gain from the course.

Rosie (Int.1. Q4.11) shared:

The pressure of the end-of-term tests on reading may make them more focused on the testing techniques than the activities in learning this subject.

Maria (Int.1. Q4.11) emphasized:

It is common that English teaching and learning in Vietnam is generally testing-oriented, so students' primary concern is how to pass the exam successfully.

Participants' sharing indicated that they were highly aware of the incompatibility in teaching, learning and testing in Vietnam in general and in their institute in particular, which needed to be adjusted.

#### ***6.1.6 Teaching and learning facilities***

As observed, every language classroom was furnished with a wireless internet system, a projector with a large screen, and single movable chairs. However, as shared by the teacher participants, only the single movable chairs could maximize their roles. They all said that single movable chairs could make students more comfortable. Since

it was easy to move and arrange, this kind of chair provided them with space to sit or perform in collaborative learning activities.

Regarding wireless internet systems, the teachers shared that this system was equipped a long time ago to serve the aim of providing conveniences for teaching and learning; however, it was not always in stable status. In some situations, it did not work properly which affected the teachers' plans, as shared by Rosie:

Sometimes I prepare back-up activities, for example, on Kahoot! for my students to join, but due to rather low quality of the internet system, I sometimes cannot reach the thing I want.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q4.2).**

Maria added that she often asked her students to check the new words. The instability of the school wireless network might prevent her students from using an online dictionary to look up the word's meaning. Besides, although the projector was equipped, little did the teacher use in their reading classes, since "all of the activities are in the textbook, students can use their textbooks in the process of learning" (Lisa), and "preparing PowerPoint files takes time and is sometimes not really necessary in teaching reading skills" (Maria).

#### **6.1.7 Time allocation for reading class**

Limited time allocation for reading skill was also a factor that might affect the application of IAs in their reading teaching.

Lisa said:

I really want to break the silent atmosphere in my class with some activities for student' engagement and collaboration, but due to the limited time allocated for the subject I can only help my students with vocabulary and let them read the text in order to find the answer to different tasks assigned. If there is more time, the activities will be varied.

**(Int.1. Lisa. Q4.7)**

This teacher referred to limited time allocation as a hindrance for their practice as they could not do anything rather than equipping students with the difficult words in the text and let them read the text for understanding the contents and doing the reading tasks followed. This teacher also reckoned that such limited time prevented her from integrating communicative teaching approaches and IAs into the current reading course.

Rosie added:

Actually, I think with the amount of time allocated for the reading course, it is not sufficient because we both want to provide our student with knowledge to understand the reading text and improve our student's communicative skills with different integrated activities.

**(Int.1. Rosie. Q4.7)**

According to Maria, preparing the students for interactive reading tasks and involving them in pair or group discussions often takes time. In addition, the pressure for the load of reading lessons to be covered in the B1.1 reading course is seen as a hindrance for her employing IAs. More importantly, limited time allocated for the reading course may affect the result of the students' learning since, as Maria shared, sometimes she was afraid that her students did not have enough time to understand this lesson before moving to the next one.

Interactive activities are usually time-consuming. I am afraid of falling behind the schedule when I organize interactive activities in my class. I have to cover the content and provide the students with enough knowledge for mid-term tests and final exams.

**(Int.1. Maria. Q4.7)**

From the interviews with three teachers regarding time frame for the reading course, all of the responses revealed that 30 periods for each of the reading courses, with total 50 minutes for each was not enough for the teachers to both provide the students with a large amount of knowledge and IAs for the students to participate in. Therefore, the time of the course, according to them, should be extended to 45 teacher-in-class periods so that they could be able to provide more knowledge to their students in interactive ways rather than traditional ways as they were doing at present.

#### ***6.1.8 Other relating factors***

Apart from such mentioned factors directly affecting the implementation of IAs in teaching English reading skills for EFL tertiary students at the chosen university of the study, the teacher participants also addressed some other related factors that may either positively or negatively affect the employment of IAs in teaching English reading skills. As Lisa's sharing, sometimes the complexity of the reading texts may influence her use of IAs since these factors can make her students gain or lose interest and motivation in reading a text or participating in reading activities. She also explained that the more familiar the reading topics are, the quicker it is for the students to catch the ideas and decode meanings, and the easier for the teachers to employ interactive reading activities. Rosie mentioned interest and motivation in reading classes as an influencing factor that should be considered when applying IAs. Furthermore, she stated that the environmental conditions such as class size and the noise from outside may affect the application of IAs in reading classes. She said:

Large classes and noise from outside may distract students from joining reading activities, which may make them lose their concentration in understanding a text.

**(Int.1. Rosie)**

Rosie's response mentioned that it is challenging to use interactive reading activities in the classroom with more than forty, even fifty students because it is difficult for her to give every student opportunity to practice communicative English. Besides, it is more difficult to monitor and facilitate classroom activities in large classes than small classes. She added that in large classes, it is not easy for her to monitor all the students and offer advice to each of them during communicative and collaborative activities.

In the class with forty or even fifty students, the class is probably often divided into more than ten groups, it surely takes me more time to walk around to monitor and support all groups in just a few minutes.

**(Int.1. Rosie)**

Rosie also confessed that sometimes heavy workload such as faculty and institution meetings, overwhelming lecture hours and administrative duty put pressure on her preparation of activities for her reading classes. This teacher's response in the in-depth interview was similar to Maria's who responded that besides teaching English to different types of the learners in the university such as regular students, in-service students, English of for Special Purposes (ESP), English for the local Tourism staff, and quick courses of communicative English for officers in some departments in the province, and so on, the English teachers in her university have to take over a lot of different administrative work.

She said:

Administrative work is always time-consuming, which makes me rather busy, and lack time to prepare lessons for my lecturing.

**(Maria, Int.1)**

Regarding this factor, Lisa and Rosie shared the same comments that the major duty of a teacher is to provide knowledge to students, develop students' skills as well as scaffold, motivate and inspire students in different learning activities. However, due to the overwhelming administrative tasks such as staff meeting, exams preparation and marking, preparing lesson plans, designing PowerPoint slides, and their involvement in various extracurricular activities, they are unable to devote their time and energy to teaching activities. As reckoned by a participant, this heavy workload actually consumes her energy and distract her from their core role as a teacher.

## **6.2 Discussion**

From the participants' responses, the researcher found out that although they were aware of the important role of English reading subjects in developing English reading skills for EFL tertiary students at their university, these teachers had limited

access to professional development activities and expertise theories relating to interactive teaching and guidance to apply IAs in teaching reading comprehension to EFL tertiary students. Such findings added more evidence to the lack of professional training of English teachers in Vietnamese teaching context as stated in Loi (2020). The same situation could also be seen in other contexts such as USA (Wang, Shuttlesworth & France-Morris, 2016; Didion, Toste, & Filderman, 2020), Uzbekistan (Yuldashevna, 2019), Indonesia (Jayanti, 2016) and Norway (Solheim & Dalhaug Berg, 2018).

Together with very few chances to take part in professional development activities which makes the teachers have to ground much on their own experiences to teach reading subjects with IAs, the findings of this study also revealed teachers' lack of expert theories as one of the factors affecting their employment of IAs in teaching reading subjects. Such kind of limitation explained why the participating teachers mostly took available sources in their university and faculty as the main source of references, as well as their ignorance and unenthusiastic attitude towards the updated trends of ELT in the world. This finding is supported by Novozhenina and López Pinzón (2018) who found out that since EFL teachers often paid attention to their English language level and qualifications required to their teaching profession, they "might become less interested in improving their practice and feel no need to continue their professional development" (p.114), and they asserted that lack of continuing professional development may result in serious issues such as being outdated in teaching, being conservative in using traditional teaching method, and being reluctant to change the teaching approaches, and so on. After all, Novozhenina & López Pinzón (2018) recommended:

[...] in order to keep up with the modern pace, teachers need to be continuously learning new things, polishing and adjusting their skills according to the needs of the world. Professional development thus becomes the bridge that may connect the point where they are now to the point where they need to be (p.114).

That students' background knowledge may support or hinder the quality of interactive reading class was identified by Jayanti (2016) and Nguyen (2012). In this study, together with the students' low background knowledge, the teacher participants also mentioned students' low language proficiency and traditional learning habits as an element affecting the use of IAs in the reading lessons. The participants' responses revealed that, from the lower level of education, students mostly depended on the teachers' guidance in class. They followed what the teachers said passively without any reactions



and were actively involved in classroom activity. As revealed in the in-depth interviews with the three teacher participants, the students mainly came from rural areas in the province and neighboring provinces where the necessary conditions for serving English teaching and learning is still inadequate, so their English language level was still low. Although the teachers were very eager to apply the interactive teaching methods, the application of IAs in teaching English in general and reading skills in particular was still limited due to the students' low language level and ability. It is probable that, on one hand, the students were unwilling to participate in class; on the other hand, had no need to use English for communication to increase their communicative competence. At this point, this study adds evidence for Chang, Jones and Kunnemeyer's (2002) viewpoint that "the students without enough background knowledge did not know what they should do in the assigned activities and thus failed to learn by themselves or by IAs" (p.74).

When referring to the students' learning style, the teachers mentioned the educational system in Vietnam as the main reason affecting the students, passive learning habit, the culture of learning-for-test and their low English proficiency. For example, as mentioned above, the passive habit of learning was formed from the lower level of education, which made the student heavily depend on their teachers. The first-year students are not familiar with the learning style at the university level where students should be aware of self-study and collaborative learning. Such a traditional learning style at high schools might affect negatively their learning at the university level when students are often asked to work positively and independently. In addition, the culture of "learning for test" or "running for exam scores" as reckoned by the teachers made both teachers and students focus too much on the test rather than developing students' collaborative and interactional ability. For this reason, although the participating teachers are capable of implementing IAs in their teaching reading, they sometimes cannot apply IAs in the most appropriate way as they planned. Specifically, IAs have not been applied diversely to help students have more opportunities to interact with English reading materials in practice, providing students with the active and interactive habit of handling the assigned reading texts. The most common IAs employed in these observed reading classes are Questions-Answers, Teacher's instruction - Students' implementation, Teacher's initiation - Students' responses - Teacher's feedback and correction, traditional pair/group/team work activities. Activities which facilitate more interactions such as games, role-playing, discussion, negotiation, argument, or situations that encourage students' creativity and

active learning interest have not been frequently exploited and put into regular use.

Given that the exam - oriented teaching approach was addressed as a factor that might affect the teachers' beliefs and practices in the investigated issue, the findings added more evidences for the previous study by Bock (2000, cited in Nguyen Thi Nguyet Minh, 2016) reporting that "most students seem to be concerned with passing exams, most of which do not test for communicative competence" (p. 25), and another study by Vuong (1976, p. 69, cited in Nguyen Thi Nguyet Minh, 2016) pointing out that "in Vietnamese society, learning success is conventionally equated to exam scores" (p. 91). That is to say, students' and teachers' performance were evaluated on the basis of whether students passed certain exams or not, and if they did, the score was also a matter of concern. This reality was coupled with the culture of taking exams as a measure to assess learners' improvement.

Regarding the time allocation to reading subjects in general and reading B1.1 subjects in particular, the researcher found out that time duration allocated for this subject is not sufficient for the participating teachers to both provide students with enough knowledge and organize reading activities to make reading classes more interactive. With such allocated time, it is difficult for teachers to employ as many IAs for their students to join, although teachers have tried very hard to arrange time and be flexible in teaching. All of three interviewed teachers suggested that the total time of every reading course should be extended to 45 periods instead of 30 periods as present. One of them also added, in case the time extension was not feasible, extensive reading modules should be added into the course program in order for both teachers and students to have more time for interaction and comprehension.

The time limitation issue is, therefore, seen as a factor that affects the teaching and learning English in general and in reading skills by some of the researchers in the field of English teaching in Vietnam such as Tran (2013), Le (2017), Nguyen, (2012) and in the world (Alshammari, 2013, Martina, Syafryadin, Rakhmanina, & Juwita, 2020, Wutthisingchai & Stopps, 2018). This study finding added to the picture of time issue in the aspect of the hindrance of deploying IAs in teaching reading skills due to time limitation. All three teachers reported that the inadequate class hours reduced teacher - student interactions in the classroom but aimed to emphasize the importance of students' self-learning. The shift to credit-based learning at university level forced to decrease teacher-instructed hours and increase the students' self-learning. Therefore, with the time-frame allocated for the reading class at present, students' achievement

depended much more on their autonomy, rather than the support of their teachers.

The reading curriculum including textbook and supplementary materials was responded as a factor which affected the teacher's application of IAs in teaching reading for EFL tertiary students at the selected university. Responses from three participants revealed that developing an appropriate reading curriculum for the students at the selected university so as to assist both teachers and students in collaborative practice is essential. As shared by Maria, more than ten years ago when Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was not popular in the system of higher education in Vietnam, it was the teachers who had to collect, select, compile and arrange the reading texts to make them fit with their students' language competence. These types of textbooks were, to some extent, suitable for their students' language levels; however, they did not meet the standard of knowledge that undergraduates had to acquire. Since CEFR was widely applied in teaching English for different levels of education in Vietnam, standardized textbooks for different skills of English have been published together with the supplementary sources for self-learning and testing. It is appeared that although the participating teachers showed their contentment with the format of the selected textbook for Reading B1.1 subject (as stated in the previous section), they still revealed some dissatisfaction about the illogical arrangement of the reading sections, as well as the contents of the reading texts which their deployment of IAs in their actual teaching practice. All the three teachers perceived the current assigned textbook, to some extent, incompatible with their desire. Some of the reading activities needed to be modified to fit the students' language level and the time frame allocated for the reading course. They confessed that in order to fulfill the goals set before their real reading teaching practice, they had to reduce, add, or even omit some unnecessary or unsuitable parts in the reading lesson designed in the selected textbook to make it both simplified and concise.

The supplementary materials including four books (1, 2 3, 4) in the series of eight books designed for PET level testing were chosen as the main reading test source. Each book consists of four tests with four skills equally presented in each test. The totality of sixteen reading tests in four supplementary books together with ten lessons in the main textbook designed for the course, in fact, put an enormous pressure on the teachers, since it is difficult for them to carry out their teaching with such a limited amount of time and the students' level. Thus, instead of completely adopting the reading texts presented in each unit, the participating teachers took time to rearrange and modify each lesson so as

to match with the actual situation. This factor partly resulted from the mismatch between the goals set for the course and the requirement of the standardized tests that the students have to deal with at the end of the semester. The pressure of this type of tests urged the participating teachers to keep their own traditional teaching techniques i.e., lecture-based teaching and a teacher-centered approach where the teachers are often involved as dominant members in classroom activities rather than applying collaborative activities where student – centered approach is recommended. Thus, together with the teachers' blames for the time limitation framed for the reading courses, it was revealed in those teachers' responses that the issue of selected textbook and supplementary sources was the factor affecting the application of IAs for the reading tasks in “in-class” hours.

Although the issue of teaching and learning facilities equipped for the reading classes by the university was not deeply focused, the interviewed teachers stated it as a factor influencing the employment of IAs in teaching reading subjects. On observing reading classes, the researcher found out that the technical facilities equipped for language classes are comparatively sufficient; however, they are not frequently and properly used. The university has equipped a computer system connected to the wireless network to help teachers and learners easily find materials for reading and understanding the assigned reading texts; nonetheless, as revealed by the teachers, the Internet connection was usually in low capacity, sometimes it was in “not-connected” mood, which made it problematic for the teachers and students to use the network. In addition, since all of the reading texts and the related exercises were all presented in the textbook, as observed, the teachers preferred using the textbook in their reading classes rather than designing the activities on the PowerPoint and showed them to the students. Apart from Maria's response stating that PowerPoint file was not really needed in reading classes since everything was included in the textbooks, two younger teacher participants Lisa and Rosie confessed that they really wanted to prepare some interesting activities for their students to do on PowerPoint files or Software Application, but due to their heavy workload at the university, they did not have enough time to do such things. As for the students' self- learning, the teacher participants confessed that right from the beginning of the course, they introduced some relevant and reliable websites taken from the British Councils, Cambridge, CEFR-aligned sample reading practice tests and encouraged their students to visit those websites regularly. However, due to the heavy workload that they had to deal with, they had no time to supervise or check students' participation. Such activities

were mainly dependent on teachers' encouragement and students' self-awareness. If the students were self-aware of their own learning duty, and their self – learning was fostered, their reading ability would be more fruitful. Together with the current textbook and supplementary testing materials, there were a number of reference books on reading skills available at the learning resource center of the university; yet, both the teachers and students had yet fully exploited this resource. According to the participating teachers, whenever students were still passive in their learning, and their language level was still low, it was not easy for the teachers to employ IAs in teaching EFL reading as they expected. This study's findings provided the evidence to explain for the “stagnant, afraid-to-change” situation in teaching EFL reading subjects of the participating teachers, which was considered as the contribution of the present study to depict the whole picture of teaching reading skills in Vietnamese ELT context.

### **6.3 Summary of the Chapter**

Overall, this chapter presented several factors affecting the employment of IAs in teaching English reading skills at tertiary level based on participating teachers' perspectives. Classroom interaction in reading classes is highly complex, and interactive reading activities are rather complicated, yet it is central in the process of teaching English reading skills as reckoned by the teacher participants. From the dimension of teaching reading classes with IAs, several typical influencing factors were found on the basis of the participants' perspectives. Teachers' lack of professional training and access to updated pedagogical theories from experts emerged as two major factors. In addition, students' low background knowledge and insufficient language competence were identified as the dominant factors that might affect the application of interactive reading activities. What is more, as revealed by three selected participants, although authentic textbooks and supplementary materials selected for Reading B1.1 course were of usefulness for the teachers to implement IAs in different stages of teaching reading subjects, there exist some negative effect that hindered the teacher's employment of interactive reading activities. Teachers' testing-oriented teaching style, teaching and learning facilities, and limited time allocation for the B1.1 reading course were factors that affect the process of teaching and learning reading skills with IAs both positively and negatively.

Besides, some other related factors affecting each of the participants' application of IAs in their reading classes were also shared by the teachers. The complexity of the reading texts, class size, and heavy workload were reported as the

influencing factors. Although it is not the same for all teacher participants, these factors more or less affect the success of implementing IAs in their teaching reading skills for EFL tertiary students. The final chapter Conclusion and Implications will summarize the key findings of the study and provide typical implications for theory, research, institution and EFL teachers as well as suggest some of the potential related research in the future.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

*This chapter includes the conclusion of the thesis with a brief summary of the whole thesis, and some implications regarding theory, research, institute's policy and teachers. These two main parts are followed by limitations acknowledged from the study. Some possible suggestions for future research relating to the current topic are also addressed.*

#### **7.1 Conclusions**

This study investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of employing IAs in teaching reading skills in tertiary context as well as some influential factors affecting the way teachers perceived and performed in their actual teaching practices. In this thesis, a critical review of related literature revealed that the issue of classroom interaction has been attracting the attention of researchers worldwide since the very early years of the twentieth century; however, the number of studies conducted in relation to EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching a particular skill of the English language was rather few. More noticeably, there is still a lack of empirical research investigating the ways EFL teachers really perceive and act in reading classes with IAs in Vietnamese tertiary contexts. The present study attempts to shorten the gap in such research issues.

With the aim of gaining a deep insight into the ways EFL teachers think about IAs and behave in actual teaching reading with IAs, the researcher adopted the qualitative case study paradigm, in which a single case study was chosen because of its fitness to the purpose of the study. A local university in the northern-central region of Vietnam which has distinctive features regarding geographical location, history of development, specific mission and representativeness was selected as the research site and the case of the study. In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, three EFL teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience were chosen as the participants, they were both the interviewees and the observed. Data from the interviews and classroom observations were analyzed on the basis of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines of thematic analysis.

In this study, Vygotsky's (1978) SCT and Mo's (2020) perspective of teachers' belief system was adopted as the theoretical frameworks, which allowed the researcher to investigate into the selected EFL teachers' beliefs and practice in regard to the issue of IAs in teaching reading subject at the university which was chosen as the case of the study.

The qualitative analysis process exposed three main findings in relation to the three research questions. Firstly, regarding EFL teachers' beliefs of using IAs in teaching reading, the findings provided reliable evidence to indicate that those EFL teachers viewed IAs as important and useful tools to help promote students' comprehending competence. Thus, they were aware of setting goals, principles for their reading lessons. The findings revealed three main goals that the teachers set before teaching process with IAs namely (i) motivating students' participation; (ii) increasing students' communicative competence and (iii) improving students' social interaction skills. These goals influenced their beliefs of principles to be followed when applying IAs into teaching reading skills, engaging students into reading activities; Fostering IAs in reading with collaborative work, building a collaborative learning activity and building good rapport with students. In addition, teachers' beliefs of context in teaching reading subjects with IAs including the teachers' beliefs of the advantages and obstacles arisen were also identified. The last issue included in this part is the teachers' roles in teaching reading skills with IAs. The findings revealed that teachers had positive or negative effects on the students' participation and collaboration in reading classes. They played multiple roles such as: an instructor, an organizer, a facilitator, a motivator, a corrector, an evaluator, an encourager and so on. However, all teachers were aware of the nature of the interactive teaching approach which emphasized student - centeredness, therefore, these teachers tried not to control students in every reading activity. Instead, they created a collaborative learning environment where students are encouraged and motivated to participate in all reading activities in a positive and interactive way. With their teaching experiences and dedication in the teaching profession the selected teachers functioned their multiple-roles with high responsibility and efficacy.

Secondly, the findings on EFL teachers' actual practice of using IAs in teaching reading helped to give an answer to the second research question of the present study. From the classroom observation data, four main issues relating to EFL teachers' practices emerged including (i) teachers' practice of using IAs to motivate students' participation in reading class; (ii) teachers' practice of using IAs to increase students' oral language use, (iii) teacher's practice of using IAs to build the students' collaborative working community and (iiii) teachers' practice of using IAs to build teacher – student rapport.



The findings from classroom observation data with three EFL selected teachers showed that teachers always tried to facilitate the students' participation, interaction and collaboration in reading classes. The reading activities were organized at different stages of reading, i.e., pre-reading, while reading and post-reading with a wide variety of IAs. These activities were regarded as teachers' scaffolding activities to help students' better at their comprehension competence, and more widely enhance their language ability.

Emphasizing collaborative working environment as a crucial element in making reading classes interactive, the selected teachers organized IAs in the form of pair work, group work, team work or even individuality interchangeably and flexibly. What the selected teachers perceived in terms of goals, principles, contexts and their roles was mostly compatible with what they actually acted in practice. However, the findings also pointed out the mismatch between the teachers' beliefs and their practice relating to the issue under investigation: The major incompatibility were the teachers' domination in reading classes, the allocated time for the subject, and the infrequent use of IAs as perceived.

Finally, in order to address the research question about the factors affecting the teacher participants' beliefs and practices of deploying IAs in teaching reading subjects, influencing factors were identified. Teachers' lack of professional development activities, teachers' lack of experts' pedagogical theories and students' low background knowledge and language proficiency were pointed out as internal factors. Meanwhile, limited time allocation, the curriculum for reading subjects including text book and supplementary materials and teaching and learning facility conditions were regarded as the main external ones. All of these factors not only explained the way the selected teachers perceived and acted in their teaching reading with IAs, but also helped to depict a picture of the status quo of EFL reading teaching in Vietnamese tertiary contexts. From the finding it was indicative that the teachers had to rely on the available sources in their context, due to their lack of expert theories, the limitation in updating the theories of the field, in fact, restricted the teachers from updating the new teaching approach. The findings about the influential factors affecting the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices are also evidence for the university and the FL Faculty's management board to the way to help EFL teachers improve their professional development with an updated teaching approach.

## **7.2 Implications of the study**

The findings of the present study emerge some implications for not only theory but also the research and the institute's policy.

### ***7.2.1 Implications for theory***

This study adopted Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory which mainly focused on the social interaction of classroom environment in teaching English as a FL with IAs, and Mo's (2020) theory of teachers' belief system in teaching EFL reading. Since teacher beliefs or cognition is situated and contextually bound, the adoption of this framework was regarded as a foundation for the researcher to investigate such a complex construct which mainly focuses on the IAs in relation to their practices and influential factors. Therefore, to some extent, the findings of this study add more empirical evidence to validate the value of this framework when adopted for specific research purposes. Other studies in the same field can adopt Mo's model of beliefs in combination with the specific focuses in this study in order to build a more adequate framework to investigate teachers' beliefs of IAs in teaching specific skills of English.

In addition, as previously mentioned, sociocultural theory views classroom as a small society where teachers and students are the members in this social environment. This theory affirms that "the social and cultural contexts such as schools and classrooms function as frameworks of value and interpretation in which language teachers must learn to work effectively". (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, p.409). The findings of the present study also emphasize the social environment in reading classrooms as it is a factor that contributes to the active and interactive teaching and learning community. However, grounding on the findings of factors affecting the teachers' beliefs and practices as revealed in the present study, the researcher adds a question whether the teachers are completely directed and guided by such factors or not, although the issues relating to the contexts were taken into the teachers' consideration before the teachers deliver their actual teaching practices.

### ***7.2.2. Implications for research***

As mentioned earlier, the theory recommended by Mo (2020) merely focused on investigating the teachers' beliefs of teaching EFL tertiary reading skills; however, the researcher adopted this model in a more practical way, that is teachers' belief of using IAs in teaching reading skills. Therefore, in order to be able to adopt the framework suitably and flexibly, on the one hand, researchers in the field should keep in mind the main purpose of their study, link it to the relevant literature with the aim of building an

appropriate framework for their study. On the other hand, the researchers should consider the framework as the skeleton or the foundation to “build their house” rather than completely depend on it. Instead, they should use it in a more flexible way and adopt it suitably with their research context. Therefore, during the data analysis process, the researchers should pay attention to the new elements emerging from the data to add them in the framework and consider discarding inappropriate elements if any.

Furthermore, in qualitative case studies like the present one, the use of multiple data sources is recommended with the aim of investigating complex constructs relating to teachers’ beliefs and practice as confirmed by some researchers (Canh, 2011; Borg, 2009); however, the number of researchers making use of such methodology is still limited. As far as the researcher’s understanding, many of the studies choose quantitative sources of data using questionnaires. Although in some cases questionnaires are a reliable source of data to help the researchers collect reliable data for statistical analysis, they cannot help the researchers seek an insight into inner thoughts of teachers in a deeper way. Therefore, with its triangulation of data collection methods, this study adds more empirical and reliable evidence to the effectiveness and appropriateness of such a qualitative research approach.

### ***7.2.3 Implications for institute policy***

The present study may be of interest to the higher education institutes whom it may concern. Firstly, it attracts the university management board’s attention. The findings revealed that teachers lacked professional development activities and expert theories. Thus, they had to take advantage of the sources of teaching materials (including textbooks and supplementary materials) available at their teaching contexts or on free websites. In addition, they had to strictly follow the administrative guiding authorities which made them rather routinized and stagnant in teaching. Some teachers are even persistent with a traditional teaching approach that emphasizes the teacher’s role as a dominator in the language class and students are passive listeners who only listen to the teacher passively without having chances to participate in collaborative activities or expressing their ideas. In such pictures, EFL teachers’ beliefs and practices were strongly guided and impacted by the influential factors from different scales. In order to improve such situation, it is important for the administrators to take these influential factors into consideration.

Therefore, as for the professional development activities, the administrator should hold workshops or conferences for teachers to gain good understanding about

interactive teaching approaches, provide them with opportunities to attend workshops or conferences so that they have more chances to share teaching experiences with other tertiary teachers in Vietnam and worldwide. Regarding the expert theories, it is implied from the findings that the administrators should spend a certain amount of budget buying theoretical books about teaching methodology to help the teachers update the new teaching approach. In addition, teachers could be encouraged and facilitated in their teaching if they were given less administrative work, more time to prepare the lessons and more importantly, more power, more opportunities to raise their voice, and higher income. In other words, whenever the teachers are well-equipped with teaching facilities, proper workload and well-paid income, their motivation to teach and to devote themselves to teaching career will be much better.

As stated in the findings, the students' background knowledge and language proficiency were the factors that affected the deployment of IAs in teachers' teaching jobs. The researcher was aware of this issue when the teachers said that they could not organize IAs in their reading lessons as planned due to students' lack of language knowledge. In fact, interaction is very important in a language classroom, since it contributes to the success of the teaching and learning process. Thus, it is necessary that the students should be provided with language knowledge by practical guidelines and instructions from the lower levels of education. Although in some recent years, the MoET has paid attention to the enhancement of foreign language competence for Vietnamese learners such as the CEFR project, there are still limitations in implementation and some targets of the project have not been fruitfully succeeded.

In brief, it is obvious that in order to create an interactive teaching and learning environment, especially in English language classes, it requires not only a great attempt from the teachers themselves but also tentative efforts from the authorities at different levels. The researcher, from the findings of the present study, has a strong belief that if there is a top-down synchronism in policy and implementation, the quality of teaching English for Vietnamese tertiary students as well as other levels of education will be much improved soon.

#### ***7.2.4 Implications for EFL teachers***

As mentioned in the previous chapter, teachers at local universities do not have as many favorable teaching conditions as those who teach in the universities in big cities. They also have less access to programs and projects in innovating teaching methods; have few opportunities to be trained professionally abroad as their sharing

in the participants' profiles. Thus, their teaching is mainly based on accumulated professional knowledge and teaching experience.

To maximize the condition, firstly, EFL teachers' positive perceptions of teaching English as a foreign language should be maintained and enriched. Secondly, when they are given opportunities to participate in projects, quick courses or programs for innovating English teaching methods, teachers should be actively involved. In addition, not only do they attend available workshops and training on interactive teaching or other teacher professional training but they should also be more active and flexible in performing their actual teaching practice, as being too "resistant" in teaching style may make them conservative with passive or traditional teaching methods.

### **7.3 Limitations of the study**

As the person who tried whole heartedly to this study from the initial days, the researcher herself found out that although this study has brought some significant insights into the investigation of EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of deploying IAs in teaching reading for EFL tertiary students within a Vietnamese context, during the process of carrying out the research, limitations seemed unavoidable.

Firstly, the researcher intended to conduct this research in three universities which are located in three different regions in Vietnam, for she really wanted to make a comparison among such chosen universities in terms of teachers' beliefs and their practices of using IAs in their reading teaching by listening to their sharing and observing their action, from which identifying the similarity and differences and the roles of IAs in making reading classes become a socially interactive environment for students to join. However, due to the geographical distances, the wide spread of COVID 19 pandemic and the personal experiences in researching, the scope of the study was adjusted.

Secondly, regarding the participants of the study, at the beginning, the researcher planned to choose at least five teachers to participate in the research; however, since there was an adjustment in the teaching workload, only three out of five teachers could participate in the research. The researcher was aware that such a limited number of participants might not fully provide enough data from interviews and classroom observation for the research analysis. Yet, since the researcher chose a qualitative case approach for her present study, the number of participants did not have much influence on the overall results of the study. Besides, the age range and teaching experience of three teacher participants, especially Lisa and Rosie, were somewhat

similar, which made the collected data less diverse. In addition, the researcher was also self-aware that the similarity in age and teaching experience of the participants also affected the multidimensionality of the data obtained.

Thirdly, due to the spreading of Covid-19 pandemic all over the world and Vietnam is not an exception, the teaching and learning process was interrupted for a long time. Both the teachers and students had to work online; thus, the researcher could not conduct interviews and observe classes of reading as planned, which greatly affected the overall procedure of collecting and analyzing the data for the present research. In addition, due to limited time for talking and recalling after their classes, the researcher could only ask the participating teachers some of the main questions to recall their thoughts and some of the unclear-cut points in the classroom observation.

The use of Vietnamese in the interviews is considered as the minor limitation of the present study. With the aim of facilitating the teachers' idea sharing, all interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. Although the researcher tried her best to translate the recorded statements of the participants as accurately as she could and then sent the translated versions back to the participants for reconfirming the accuracy and to a professional translator for checking before officially using it for data analysis, some inaccuracies might occur unexpectedly.

Fourthly, the findings of the current study might not be used for generalization since it aims to explore the phenomenon in some specific contexts with specific characteristics. However, with the clear-cut procedures of data collection and analysis as presented in Chapter 3 of the thesis, the applicability and transferability of the findings are hoped to be possible and feasible in some related contexts.

Finally, despite a number of efforts to avoid subjective bias in the position of a qualitative researcher, the researcher's experience as an EFL teacher might impose some certain personal ideas on the interpretation of the data. However, with the support of triangulation of multiple data sources and the valuable critiques from the researcher's supervisors as well as the academic scientific committee, such bias is believed to be minimized as much as possible.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for future research**

From the limitation drawn in the present study, it is suggested that further research relating to IAs in EFL context should be taken into the researchers' consideration.

Firstly, this research investigated IAs deployed by EFL teachers in teaching RC

subject to EFL tertiary students; however, this issue is still under investigation at lower levels of education. Therefore, within the same contexts, further research should be carried out at primary schools and high schools so as to provide for those who concern with a broader and deeper insight into the use of IAs in teaching reaching, a basic practical skill of English. Moreover, extending the scope of the study to other skills of English: listening, speaking and writing might help the researchers to understand thoroughly about beliefs and practices of EFL teachers working in Vietnamese contexts as well as others in the world.

Secondly, further research should be conducted with more participants coming from different geographical regions of Vietnam. If so, the research might be more interesting because the researchers are provided with a multidimensional angle to discuss the impacts of different influential factors. It is also good for the researchers to compare the cases in the broader research site. Such studies might help to describe more precisely and fully the picture of interactive teaching approach in Vietnam through the lenses of EFL teachers.

Thirdly, this study only focused on identifying teachers' beliefs and practices of using IAs in teaching reading through the lens of EFL Vietnamese teachers. In the future, it is also worthy to explore this issue from the perspectives of other stakeholders such as students, administrators and foreign teachers who are currently teaching EL in Vietnam so as to gain a more comprehensive picture of classroom interaction in EFL teaching in Vietnamese context.

Finally, it would be more insightful if more empirical studies were conducted to compare the teachers' beliefs and practices before and after professional training courses on interactive teaching approach. In addition, comparative and contrastive studies of teachers' beliefs and practices should be carried out in order to measure the effect of IAs interference in English reading courses in comparison with those without IAs interference.

In short, despite the valuable findings and deep insight regarding IAs in teaching reading skills to EFL students at tertiary level, the study also reveals some issues that need further investigation and consideration. The researcher, therefore, highly appreciates the contribution of the researchers, educators and whomever it may concern.

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## LIST OF AUTHOR'S WORKS

1. **Nguyen Thi Le Hang** (2022). *A study on interactive activities to foster teacher - student interaction in EFL tertiary reading comprehension classes*. Hue University Journal of Science: Social Sciences and Humanities (Acceptance Letter of Publication).
2. **Nguyen Thi Le Hang** (2021). *Interactive activities deployed by teachers in EFL tertiary reading comprehension class: Teachers' beliefs and practices*. Journal of Language and Life. ISSN 0868-3409 11B. (319).
3. **Nguyen Thi Le Hang** (2020). *Foster reading comprehension through interactive activities – EFL tertiary teachers' perceptions*. Journal of Language and Life. ISSN 0868-3409.
4. **Nguyen Thi Le Hang** (2020). *Using teachers' questioning techniques to promote the teacher-student interaction in English reading*. Journal of Sciences of Quang Binh University. ISSN 0866 - 7683. 20 (01)



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE

*This form is designed to serve the purpose of providing a full description about the participants of the current study entitled “EFL Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices on the Use of Interactive Activities in Reading Classes at Tertiary Level: A Case Study at a Local University in Vietnam”. The information collected is of great importance in providing the researcher with sufficient bio-data of the participants selected to participate in the study. Your holistic responses are regarded as one of the most important criteria to make this study successful.*

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1. What are the highest professional qualifications have you received so far?

.....  
.....

2. What are the certificates on teaching methodology have you achieved up to now?

.....  
.....

3. How long have you been teaching English at your university?

.....  
.....

4. What are the subjects that you have been in charge of teaching?

.....  
.....

5. Have you ever participated in any professional associations or organizations? If so, what are their names? How do you benefit from them?

.....  
.....

6. Have you participated in any teacher training or professional development programs? If so, could you tell me the length and purposes of the program and the benefits you gained from these activities?

.....  
.....

7. Have you had any overseas studies? If so, please tell me the name of the course, time, place, length, and country. How do you benefit from your overseas experiences?

.....  
.....

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

## APPENDIX B

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

No.	FOCUS AREAS	SUB-AREAS	QUESTIONS
1	<b>EFL Teachers' understanding of IAs (Q1)</b>	<i>Conceptions</i>	1. Xin Cô vui lòng cho biết quan niệm của cô về “hoạt động tương tác” (HĐTT) 2. Theo Cô mục đích của việc tổ chức HĐTT trong lớp học là gì?
		<i>Necessity</i>	3. Cô thấy HĐTT có thực sự cần thiết trong dạy – học nói chung và dạy – học ngoại ngữ nói riêng không?
2	<b>EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Goals (Q2)</b>	<i>Motivation</i>	1. Theo Cô, hoạt động tương tác trong lớp học đọc hiểu có giúp tạo động lực học cho sinh viên không?  <u>Extra questions</u> Cô có thường khuyến khích sinh viên tham gia vào các hoạt động tương tác không? Cô có yêu cầu sinh viên tham gia tích cực vào những hoạt động mang tính tương tác khi học đọc hiểu không?
		<i>Communicative competence</i>	2. Theo Cô, hoạt động tương tác trong lớp dạy đọc hiểu có giúp sinh viên tăng tần suất sử dụng ngôn ngữ không?
		<i>Social interaction</i>	3. Hoạt động tương tác trong lớp học đọc hiểu có giúp sinh viên cải thiện các kỹ năng tương tác xã hội (kỹ năng làm việc nhóm, kỹ năng hợp tác...) không?
3	<b>EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Principles (Q3)</b>	<b>Extra questions</b> Cô có đặt ra cho mình những nguyên tắc cụ thể khi dạy đọc hiểu thông qua các HĐTT không? Xin cô chia sẻ những nguyên tắc mà cô thường đặt ra khi triển khai các HĐTT trong dạy đọc hiểu?	
		<i>Active engagement</i>	1. Cô có tạo cho SV ý thức chủ động tham gia các hoạt động đọc không?
		<i>Collaborative</i>	2. Cô có thường xuyên yêu cầu hoặc

		<i>work</i>	nhắc nhở sinh viên mình tham gia tích cực vào những hoạt động mang tính tương tác khi học đọc hiểu không?
		<i>Collaborative learning community</i>	3. Cô có thường giúp SV tạo ra môi trường học hợp tác không thông qua các HĐTT không?
		<i>Teacher – Student rapports</i>	4. Theo cô, HĐTT có giúp tạo mối quan hệ tốt đẹp giữa giảng viên và sinh viên không?
4	<b>EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Contexts (Q4)</b>	<b><i>Extra questions</i></b> Xin cô cho biết những yếu tố mà cô cho là có khả năng ảnh hưởng đến kết quả giờ dạy học phần này khi cô triển khai các HĐTT.	
		<i>University support</i>	1. Nhà trường có hỗ trợ tốt cho việc giảng dạy ngoại ngữ không? 2. Cô có hài lòng về trang thiết bị dạy học hiện có tại lớp học đọc hiểu mà cô đang giảng dạy không?
		<i>Main textbooks</i>	3. Cô thấy giáo trình sử dụng cho học phần này đã phù hợp chưa? 4. Có điểm gì trong giáo trình làm Cô chưa hài lòng không?
		<i>Efficacy of Collaborative work</i>	5. Cô đánh giá như thế nào về việc tham gia các HĐTT của sinh viên? 6. Giáo trình mà cô đang sử dụng để dạy đọc hiểu mang lại những thuận lợi/khó khăn gì cho việc triển khai các hoạt động tương tác?
		<i>Time allocation</i>	7. Theo cô, thời gian phân bổ cho học phần kỹ năng Đọc đã phù hợp chưa?
		<i>Ss' background knowledge and language proficiency</i>	8. Trình độ SV (Kiến thức nền và năng lực ngoại ngữ) trong lớp đọc hiểu cô đang dạy có phù hợp yêu cầu của học phần không? 9. Trình độ SV có ảnh hưởng nhiều đến việc triển khai các HĐTT trong giờ dạy đọc hiểu của Cô không?

		<i>Classroom management</i>	<p>10. Cô có cảm thấy hài lòng với việc quản lý lớp của mình khi SV tham gia các HĐTT khi học học phần Đọc hiểu không?</p> <p>11. Theo Cô, việc kiểm tra, đánh giá có làm ảnh hưởng đến cách thức giảng dạy môn Đọc hiểu không?</p>
5	<b>EFL Teachers' Beliefs of their roles (Q5)</b>	<i>Roles</i>	<p>1. Theo Cô, giảng viên có những vai trò gì khi dạy học đọc hiểu với các hoạt động tương tác? Vai trò nào là quan trọng nhất?</p> <p>2. Cô nhận thấy mình đã thực hiện tốt các vai trò đó chưa? (Điều gì làm Cô cảm thấy chưa tốt?)</p>
		<i>Professional Knowledge</i>	<p>3. Kiến thức được trang bị từ các bậc học (Đại học, cao học, các lớp tập huấn...) có hỗ trợ cô triển khai HĐTT không?</p> <p>4. Cô có thường xuyên được tham gia tập huấn về phương pháp giảng dạy không?</p> <p>5. Cô nhận thấy việc từ bồi dưỡng, chia sẻ kinh nghiệm giảng dạy của mình như thế nào? Cô có gặp khó khăn trong việc tiếp cận các tài liệu cập nhật liên quan đến dạy hợp tác?</p> <p>6. Cô thấy việc học hỏi kinh nghiệm từ đồng nghiệp có giúp Cô nhiều trong quá trình giảng dạy của Cô không?</p> <p>7 Cô có thói quen cập nhật nâng cao kiến thức và kỹ năng dạy đọc hiểu không? Đặc biệt là kỹ năng triển khai các HĐTT?</p>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

#### **Research Title:**

**EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices on the Use of Interactive Activities in Reading Classes at Tertiary Level: A Case Study at a Local University in Vietnam**

**Contact:** Nguyen Thi Le Hang, PhD Candidate, Hue University of Foreign Languages Hue University.

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- Address: Quang Binh University, 312 Ly Thuong Kiet Street, Dong Hoi City, Quang Binh, Vietnam.

#### **Background:**

You are invited to participate in a study to be conducted by a PhD candidate. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is necessary that you make sense of why the research is being done and how it will be conducted. Please take time to read the following information carefully, and ask the researcher if you are unclear about anything or if you need any further information.

The researcher conducts this study for her PhD dissertation at Hue University of Foreign Languages, Hue University, Vietnam.

The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL teacher's beliefs of interactive activities and their application of interactive activities in reading comprehension classes in a local university in Vietnam, and explore the influential factors affecting the deployment of interactive activities in the reading comprehension lessons in a particular Vietnamese tertiary teaching context.

#### **Research Procedure:**

Your expected time commitment for this study is:

✓ A preliminary interview (approximately 30 – 45 minutes)

✓ Classroom observations (3 weeks)

✓ A stimulated - recall conducted shortly after each classroom observation (approximately 15 minutes)

✓ All of the interviews and observations will be audio-recorded.

#### **Benefits:**

There will be no direct benefit for you as a participant of the study. However, it is

my expectation that the information you provide may contribute positively to the research literature of classroom interaction, particularly interactive activities in EFL reading classes as well as to the improvement of EFL teaching reading in a particular Vietnamese context.

### **Voluntary Participation:**

You can decide whether or not to take part in this study since your participation is voluntary. You will be free to withdraw at any time of the research process; however, you are kindly requested to inform the researcher of your withdrawal at least a week in advance so that it will not affect the data collection and analysis of the study.

### **Confidentiality**

The researcher will make her effort to guarantee your confidentiality including the following things:

- ✓ Your names will be pseudonymous and coded in all extracts used in the study.
- ✓ The information gathered from you during this study will be recorded by the researcher in such a manner to ensure confidentiality of the subjects. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this project.
- ✓ All the information provided by you will be confidential. The researcher will not share your answer and/ or transcript with other participants or anybody else but you in a way which can identify the respondent.
- ✓ All questionnaires and tapes, and a copy of this form will be stored in a file cabinet accessible to the researcher only.
- ✓ You will be able to obtain a transcribed copy of your interview.

### **Consent Statement:**

☐ I hereby confirm that I have read the consent form for participation in the research carefully and I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time of the research with a notification in advance. I am willing to answer the interview questions and allow the researcher to observe my reading comprehension classes scheduled in the time-table.

Date\_\_\_\_\_Signed\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### A SAMPLE OF A PRE-INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

#### TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW 1 WITH MARIA (VIETNAMESE)

(I – interviewer; M –MARIA) (Vietnamese)

- I** Chào Cô, trước hết, xin cảm ơn cô đã sắp xếp thời gian tham gia vào buổi phỏng vấn hôm nay. Như em đã trình bày với cô trước đây, em đang thực hiện nghiên cứu nhằm tìm hiểu niềm tin (nhận thức) của giảng viên (GV) về việc vận dụng các hoạt động tương tác (HĐTT) trong lớp học đọc hiểu tiếng Anh và thực tế vận dụng của giảng viên trong quá trình dạy học phần Kỹ năng đọc hiểu cho sinh viên hệ đại học tại một trường đại học địa phương ở miền Trung Việt Nam, đồng thời tìm hiểu những nhân tố ảnh hưởng đến việc vận dụng này. Buổi phỏng vấn của chúng ta sẽ kéo dài khoảng 30 đến 40 phút, và em xin phép được hỏi cô câu hỏi chung liên quan đến nhận thức của cô về khái niệm hoạt động tương tác, sự cần thiết của các HĐTT trong lớp học đọc hiểu. Tiếp đến sẽ là những câu hỏi cụ thể liên quan đến mục đích, nguyên tắc, ngữ cảnh hay vai trò của GV trong lớp học đọc hiểu có sử dụng HĐTT. Sau đó là những nội dung liên quan đến những nhân tố ảnh hưởng đến việc cô sử dụng HĐTT trong dạy học đọc hiểu.
- M** Chào em. Chúc em mọi việc thuận lợi nhé.
- I** Như thư chấp thuận em đã gửi cô qua email, xin phép cô cho em được ghi âm cuộc phỏng vấn này. Trong quá trình phỏng vấn cô có thể đề xuất bỏ một phần nào đó câu trả lời của cô khỏi bản ghi âm, và cô cũng không bị bắt buộc phải trả lời bất kỳ câu hỏi nào mà cô không cảm thấy thoải mái.
- M** Uh, OK em
- I** *lòng cho biết quan niệm của cô về “hoạt động tương tác”*
- M** Theo mình, HĐTT có thể được hiểu là các hoạt động trao đổi thông tin trong môi trường lớp học giữa người dạy và người học, hoặc giữa các người học với nhau.
- I** *Vậy thì theo cô mục đích của việc tổ chức HĐTT trong lớp học là gì?*
- M** Chủ yếu là làm cho giờ học sôi nổi hơn, người học hứng thú với bài giảng hơn và (có thể thôi nha) hiểu bài nhanh và sâu hơn.
- I** *Cô thấy HĐTT có thực sự cần thiết trong dạy – học nói chung và dạy – học ngoại ngữ nói riêng không?*
- M** Tất nhiên là có rồi, đặc biệt trong lớp học tiếng Anh thì lại càng cần thiết, vì đặc thù của môn học này không giống những môn học khác.
- I** *Theo Cô, hoạt động tương tác trong lớp học đọc hiểu có giúp tạo động lực học cho sinh viên không?*
- M** Việc đưa ra mục tiêu sử dụng HĐTT trong giảng dạy đọc hiểu là rất quan trọng vì nó giúp hướng đến mục tiêu cao nhất mà mình đã đặt ra cho một bài

học hoặc cho cả khóa học. Có thể coi HĐTT như một kỹ thuật (technique) nhằm thu hút sinh viên vào bầu không khí hợp tác, nơi các em có thể làm việc tích cực với giảng viên và bạn của mình để nâng cao khả năng đọc và hiểu được nội dung toàn bài đọc.

**I** *Cô có thể nói rõ hơn không ạ?*

Ý mình là bằng cách yêu cầu SV tham gia tương tác vào các hoạt động đọc, chúng ta có thể nâng cao hứng thú đọc của SV, khuyến khích SV tham gia nhiều hơn vào các bài đọc, từ đó cải thiện khả năng đọc của các em.

**I** *Theo Cô, hoạt động tương tác trong lớp dạy đọc hiểu có giúp sinh viên tăng khả năng sử dụng ngôn ngữ không?*

**M** Có, HĐTT chắc chắn giúp SV tăng khả năng sử dụng ngôn ngữ giao tiếp thực tế bằng cách tương tác với bạn bè của họ theo cách thích hợp. Khi SV được khuyến khích bày tỏ hoặc chia sẻ ý kiến của mình với nhóm, cặp hoặc cả lớp, các em cảm thấy được khích lệ và tự tin hơn khi tham gia, đồng thời giảm bớt sự thụ động và lo lắng của bản thân khi phải nhờ sự hỗ trợ của bạn bè.

**I** *Hoạt động tương tác trong lớp học đọc hiểu có giúp sinh viên cải thiện các kỹ năng tương tác xã hội (kỹ năng làm việc nhóm, kỹ năng hợp tác...) không?*

**M** Theo mình thì lớp học được xem như một môi trường xã hội nhỏ, vì vậy các HĐTT không chỉ giúp SV tích cực trong quá trình học tập mà còn cải thiện khả năng giao tiếp xã hội của các em.

**I** *Cô có đặt ra cho mình những nguyên tắc cụ thể khi dạy đọc hiểu thông qua các HĐTT không?*

**M** Có thể gọi là nguyên tắc cũng được, nhưng mình nghĩ nó giống như là mong muốn của mình với tư cách là giảng viên đối với việc cải thiện kỹ năng đọc hiểu cho sinh viên mình thôi.

**I** *Xin cô chia sẻ những nguyên tắc mà cô thường đặt ra khi triển khai các HĐTT trong dạy đọc hiểu?*

**M** Mình thường đưa ra các hoạt động để SV tham gia thảo luận chung. Theo mình các hoạt động như thế sinh viên sẽ dần hình thành ý thức làm việc hợp tác với nhau, SV sẽ xem mình là một thành phần không thể tách rời trong các hoạt động đọc mang tính hợp tác.

**I** *Ý cô là tạo cho SV ý thức chủ động tham gia các hoạt động đọc?*

**M** Đúng vậy. HĐTT rất có ý nghĩa trong các lớp đọc hiểu. Bằng cách lôi cuốn học sinh vào quá trình đọc, các em có động lực hơn để chia sẻ ý kiến của mình, tự tin và sáng tạo hơn trong quá trình học, điều này có thể nâng cao kỹ năng đọc của các em.



- I** *Cô có thường xuyên yêu cầu hoặc nhắc nhở sinh viên mình tham gia tích cực vào những hoạt động mang tính tương tác khi học đọc hiểu không?*
- M** Nói thật lòng thì SV năm thứ nhất ở trường mình khá là nhút nhát, thiếu chủ động, tự tin khi làm các hoạt động mang tính hợp tác; do đó mình phải hỗ trợ và nhắc nhở các em nhiều. Mình luôn tạo cơ hội để các em được chia sẻ ý kiến cá nhân trước tập thể, tôn trọng ý kiến của SV.
- I** *Ngay cả khi SV trả lời sai?*
- M** Khi đó mình thường gợi ý cho các em để hướng các em đến câu trả lời đúng chứ không phản đối hay phê bình.
- I** *Cô có thường giúp SV tạo ra môi trường học hợp tác thông qua các HĐTT không?*
- M** Đó cũng có thể xem là một trong những nguyên tắc tôi đặt ra. Tôi sử dụng các HĐTT trong dạy đọc hiểu để giúp sinh viên có thêm cơ hội được học trong một trường hợp tác. Đây là lý do tại sao mình luôn khuyến khích, đôi khi yêu cầu SV tham gia vào tất cả các hoạt động cùng nhau thay vì yêu cầu các em làm cá nhân.
- I** *Vì sao cô lại xem đó là một nguyên tắc vậy?*
- M** Mình cho rằng việc thiết lập ý thức làm việc tập thể trong nhận thức của SV có thể giúp các em có cảm giác thân thuộc với nhóm và cả lớp trong các hoạt động.
- I** *Theo cô, HĐTT có giúp tạo mối quan hệ tốt đẹp giữa giảng viên và sinh viên không?*
- M** Chắc chắn là có rồi. HĐTT mang lại lợi ích cho không chỉ SV mà cả GV (như mình). Mối quan hệ tốt giữa GV và SV sẽ tạo ra môi trường thân thiện trong lớp học đọc hiểu. Thông qua các HĐTT, SV có động lực để chia sẻ ý kiến của mình, họ tự tin khi trao đổi với GV và các bạn trong lớp, đặc biệt là cảm giác rụt rè của SV, đặc biệt là những SV còn non về kiến thức sẽ dần mất đi.
- I** *Cô có thể nói rõ hơn về mối quan hệ này được không?*
- M** Các bạn sinh viên năm thứ nhất thường có tâm lý sợ các thầy cô vì họ vừa bắt đầu một môi trường mới. Việc các thầy cô thường xuyên tương tác trong giờ học sẽ tạo cho các em cảm giác gần gũi, thân thiện hơn. Và như thế, SV sẽ rút ngắn dần khoảng cách với GV, điều đó giúp họ thấy an toàn hơn khi thể hiện quan điểm, ý kiến hay đề xuất của mình.
- I** *Cụ thể trong giờ học đọc hiểu của Cô thì thế nào?*
- M** Đa phần SV trong lớp mình dạy đến từ những vùng quê, vùng nông thôn nghèo nên ban đầu các em có vẻ ngại ngùng khi tiếp xúc với mình. Mình

thấy các em khá thụ động, ngại giao tiếp, chỉ làm theo những gì mình yêu cầu và thường làm một mình chứ ít có sự tương tác với mình hay các bạn trong lớp. Giờ thì đỡ hơn nhiều rồi, có lẽ một phần là các bạn đã quen với môi trường học mới, phần vì họ cảm nhận được sự thân thiện của mình.

Ngoài việc tăng sự hứng thú và tự tin của SV trong việc giải quyết các công việc được giao, mối quan hệ này còn tạo điều kiện cho SV phát huy tối đa khả năng sử dụng ngôn ngữ trong các hoạt động khác nhau như chia sẻ ý tưởng, thảo luận, đàm phán, đánh giá, v.v. với những người khác, cụ thể là với GV và các bạn trong lớp.

**I** *Xin cô vui lòng cho biết những yếu tố mà cô cho là có khả năng ảnh hưởng đến kết quả giờ dạy học phần này khi cô triển khai các HĐTT.*

**M** Theo mình nghĩ thì các yếu tố chính là trang thiết bị dạy học, trình độ sinh viên, sự quan tâm của lãnh đạo trường/khoa, sự phân bố thời gian, và giáo trình sử dụng.

Không chỉ nhà trường và bộ môn đánh giá cao sự cần thiết của việc nâng cao chất lượng dạy và học tiếng Anh nói chung và kỹ năng đọc hiểu nói riêng mà bản thân chúng tôi cũng nhận thức được điều đó.

**I** *Cô có hài lòng về trang thiết bị dạy học hiện có tại lớp học đọc hiểu mà cô đang giảng dạy không?*

**M** Cơ bản là mình hài lòng, tuy nhiên thỉnh thoảng vẫn có tình trạng trục trặc về thiết bị và hệ thống mạng làm ảnh hưởng đến một số hoạt động đọc bổ trợ lấy từ các website.

**I** *Cô thấy giáo trình sử dụng cho học phần này đã phù hợp chưa?*

**M** Nhìn chung thì cũng được. Các dạng bài đọc được trình bày, hướng dẫn rõ ràng để SV thực hiện. GV đỡ mất thời gian thiết kế hoạt động nữa.

**I** *Cô đánh giá như thế nào về việc tham gia các HĐTT của sinh viên?*

**M** Dù là SV năm nhất nhưng mình thấy một số bạn rất hào hứng với môn học được coi là khá trầm và khó này. Mình khá ấn tượng vì các bạn khá chủ động và tích cực trong các hoạt động hợp tác mà mình đưa ra.

**I** *Trình độ SV (Kiến thức nền và năng lực ngoại ngữ) trong lớp đọc hiểu cô đang dạy có phù hợp yêu cầu của học phần không?*

**M** Nói thật lòng thì SV còn khá non về kiến thức ngôn ngữ, thậm chí một số em còn chưa hiểu nội dung bài đọc một cách trọn vẹn.

**I** *Trình độ SV có ảnh hưởng nhiều đến việc triển khai các HĐTT trong giờ dạy đọc hiểu của Cô không?*

**M** Yes, sure. Kiến thức nền và năng lực ngôn ngữ của SV nhìn chung đang ở mức thấp. Đó là một khoảng cách lớn giữa trình độ mà sinh viên phải đạt được và năng lực tiếng Anh thực tế mà họ có.

**I** *Theo cô, thời gian phân bổ cho học phần kỹ năng Đọc đã phù hợp chưa?*

**M** Cũng chưa thật hợp lý, nhưng khung chương trình đã thiết kế như thế nên khó có thể điều chỉnh được. Nếu tăng lên 45 tiết, tức 3 tín chỉ thay vì 2 tín chỉ như hiện nay thì tốt hơn.

Mình cần một khoảng thời gian thích hợp để vừa cung cấp cho sinh viên các chiến lược đọc vừa tổ chức các HĐTT trong các hoạt động để tạo điều kiện cho sinh viên tham gia vào việc đọc, giúp các em hiểu bài đọc sâu hơn. Tuy nhiên, thời gian dành cho khóa học này quá hạn chế để làm cả hai việc.

**I** *Cô có cảm thấy hài lòng với việc quản lý lớp của mình khi SV tham gia các HĐTT trong giờ học đọc hiểu không?*

**M** Thú thật là có lúc mình không hài lòng lắm đâu. Một số SV rụt rè hoặc thiếu tích cực, thậm chí có sinh viên còn “lơ” các hoạt động hợp tác nữa.

Ngoài ra, như tôi đã nói, kiến thức nền tảng và trình độ ngôn ngữ của học sinh ở mức thấp. Đó là một khoảng cách lớn giữa trình độ mà học sinh phải đạt được và năng lực tiếng Anh thực tế mà họ có.

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## APPENDIX E

### A SAMPLE OF AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW 1 WITH MARIA (ENGLISH)

(I – interviewer; M –MARIA) (English)

- I** Hello, first of all, thank you for your taking time to participate in the interview today. As I have told you before, my research is to investigate the beliefs (perceptions) of teachers about the use of interactive activities in English reading classes and their actual application in the teaching reading comprehension subjects for tertiary students at a local university in the central region of Vietnam, and explore the factors influencing this performance. Our interview will last about 30 to 40 minutes, and I would like to ask you some general questions regarding your perception of the concept of interactive activity, the need for using interactive activities in reading comprehension classes. Next, there will be specific questions relating to the teacher's goals, principles, contexts or teachers' roles in a reading comprehension class using interactive activities. Finally, there will be questions relating to the factors that may affect your deployment of interactive activities in teaching reading comprehension subjects.
- M** Hi, wish you all the best.
- I** As informed in the consent form, I sent you via email, please allow me to record this interview. During the interview you may suggest removing any parts of your answers from the recording, and you are not obligated to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with.
- M** Ok
- I** *According to you, how can interactive activities be defined?*
- M** In my opinion, interactive activities can be understood as activities to exchange information in the classroom environment between teachers and students, or among students themselves.
- I** *So, in your opinion, what is the purpose of organizing interactive activities in the classroom?*
- M** Mainly to make the class more exciting, learners more interested in the lecture and (maybe) understand the lesson faster and more deeply.
- I** *Do you think interactive activities are really necessary in teaching and learning in general and teaching and learning foreign languages in particular?*
- M** Of course, especially in English classes, it is even more necessary, because this subject is unlike other ones.

- I** *In your opinion, do interactive activities in reading comprehension class help motivate students?*
- M** Setting the goals of applying IAs in teaching RC is very important since it directs me to the highest points of the target I set for the single lesson or for the whole course. IAs can be seen as a technique which aims to engage students into a collaborative atmosphere as a social environment where they can work actively with their teacher and friends to improve their reading knowledge, and comprehend the meaning that the reading text conveyed.
- I** *Can you be more specific?*
- M** Yes, I mean by frequently asking the students to engage in reading activities, we can raise the interest in RC lessons among them, make them more actively engaged, from which enhance their reading skills.
- I** *In your opinion, do interactive activities in the reading comprehension class help students increase their language use?*
- M** Yes, IAs help my students increase their practical use of language by interacting with me and their friends in an appropriate way. When students are encouraged to express or share their ideas with their group, their partners or the whole class as much as they can, they feel more encouraged and confident to join, and they reduce passiveness and anxiety by themselves or by their friends' support.
- I** *Do interactive activities in reading comprehension class help students improve their social interaction skills (for example, teamwork skills, cooperation skills...)?*
- M** Classrooms are seen as a small social environment, so IAs not only help the students be positive in their learning process but improve their social interaction as well.
- I** *Do you set specific principles for teaching reading comprehension through interactive activities?*
- M** It's okay to call it a principle, but I think it's like my wish as a teacher to help my students improve their reading comprehension skills.
- I** *Could you please share the principles that you often set when implementing interactive activities in teaching reading comprehension?*
- M** I often offer activities for students to participate in discussions. In my opinion, such activities will gradually form a sense of cooperative work among students, and students will see themselves as an integral part of collaborative reading activities.
- I** *You mean to give students a sense of actively engaging in reading activities, is that right?*

- M** By being boosted to engage in the reading process, students are more motivated to share their opinions, more confident and creative in the learning process which may enhance their reading skill.
- I** *Do you often ask or remind your students to actively participate in interactive activities while learning to read?*
- M** To be honest, the first-year students at my school are quite shy, and they seem to lack initiative and confidence when doing cooperative activities; so I have to support and remind them a lot. I usually create opportunities for my students to share their personal opinions in front of the group, and I also respect their opinions.
- I** *Even when their answers are incorrect?*
- M** In this situation, I often give them hints to direct them to the correct answers instead of opposing or criticizing.
- I** *Do you often help students create a collaborative learning environment through interactive activities?*
- M** Yes, one of the principles I apply when teaching RC with IAs is to help the students with as many opportunities to work in a collaborative environment as possible. That's why I always encourage, sometimes require my students to participate in all IAs organized.
- I** *Why do you see it as a principle?*
- M** I think establishing a strong sense of community in the students' awareness can help them have a sense of belongingness to their groups and the class in different activities.
- I** *In your opinion, do IAs help create a good relationship between teacher and students?*
- M** Yes, sure, IAs are beneficial to not only students but the teacher as well. Good relationship between the teacher and students creates friendliness in the RC classroom. With IAs, students are motivated to share their opinions, they are more confident and positive in their RC process.
- I** *Can you make it more specific?*
- M** The first-year students are often afraid of teachers because they have just started a new learning environment. The fact that teachers often interact during class time will make them feel closer and more friendly. Through IAs, students will gradually shorten the distance with teachers, which helps them feel safer when expressing their views, opinions or suggestions.
- I** *What about this relationship in your reading class?*

**M** Most of the students in my class come from poor rural areas, at first they seem to be shy when interacting with me. I see that they are quite passive, afraid to communicate, only do what they are asked and often do it alone, and have little interaction with me or their classmates. It's much better now, maybe partly because they are accustomed to the new school environment, partly because they feel my friendliness.

In addition to increasing students' interest and confidence in solving assigned tasks, this relationship also creates conditions for students to maximize their ability to use language in various activities such as sharing ideas, discussions, negotiations, evaluations, etc. with others, especially with the teacher and classmates.

**I** *Can you tell me what factors you think are likely to affect the deployment of IAs in your reading class?*

**M** In my opinion, the main factors are teaching facilities, students' background level, the concerns of university/department leaders, time distribution, and textbooks.

Not only the university and the department highly appreciate the necessity of improving the quality of teaching and learning English in general and English RC in particular, but we are self-aware of it as well.

**I** *Are you satisfied with the teaching equipment available in your reading class?*

**M** In general, I'm satisfied, but sometimes there are device and network problems that affect some additional reading activities taken from websites.

**I** *How about the textbook and supplementary materials?*

**M** Well, the tasks for each of the reading texts are clearly instructed, so the teachers can take the reading activities or tasks in the textbook for students to do together, so I think teachers do not waste much time designing activities by themselves.

**I** *What do you think about the students' participation?*

**M** Although they are in their first year at the university, some of them show their eagerness in learning RC, a rather complicated and monotonous subject. I am impressed with their active participation in the collaborative reading activities I give them

**I** *Is the student's level (background knowledge and language competency) in your reading comprehension class suitable for the requirements of the subject?*

**M** To be honest, they are still quite weak in terms of language knowledge, some of them even do not fully understand the content of the text.

**I** *Does the students' level have a great influence on the implementation of IAs in your reading comprehension lesson?*

**M** Yes, sure. their background knowledge and language ability are generally at a low level. So, there is a big gap between the level that students are required to achieve and the actual English proficiency they have.

**I** *In your opinion, is the time allocated for the reading comprehension subject appropriate?*

**M** Not reasonable enough, but the framework for the whole program has been designed like that, so it is difficult to adjust. If it is increased to 45 periods, that is. 3 credits instead of 2 credits as at present, it is better.

We need an adequate amount of time to provide students with reading strategies and organize IAs in reading tasks assigned in order to facilitate students' engagement in reading which help them comprehend the reading text more deeply. However, time allocated for this course is too limited to do both

**I** *Do you feel satisfied with your classroom management when students participate in IAs in your reading comprehension classes?*

**M** I think sometimes there still exists ignorance of some students in some IAs organized.

In addition, as I said, students' background knowledge and language proficiency are at a low level. There is a big gap between the level that students are required to achieve and the actual English language competency they have.

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## APPENDIX F

### SAMPLE OF A STIMULATED RECALL INTERVIEW

#### TRANSCRIPTION OF STIMULATED INTERVIEW WITH ROSIE

(I – Interviewer; R – Rosie) (Vietnamese)

- I** Chào bạn, Cảm ơn bạn đã dành ít phút cho cuộc trao đổi sau buổi dạy thứ hai để mình dự giờ. Sau buổi dự giờ ngày hôm nay thì mình có một vài nội dung muốn trao đổi thêm với bạn. Hi vọng là chúng ta sẽ trao đổi một cách thân tình và cởi mở nhé.
- R** Ok bạn.
- I** Đầu tiết 1 mình thấy bạn đưa ra hoạt động warm-up, khởi động đó, khá là hay. Mục đích của phần này là gì?
- R** Đơn giản là để kéo SV vào tiết thôi.
- I** Bạn không chỉ định SV trả lời mà để SV tự giác chia sẻ ý kiến. Ý bạn là gì vậy?
- R** Mình muốn SV cảm thấy thoải mái khi chia sẻ ý kiến cá nhân. Như thế các bạn ấy sẽ chủ động và hào hứng hơn.
- I** Mình thấy bạn đưa ra rất nhiều hoạt động cho SV làm việc cùng nhau, ví dụ như thảo luận cặp, nhóm, gợi ý, giải thích...Bạn có cảm nhận gì khi dùng các hoạt động này?
- R** Ờ... Cho SV thảo luận là để giúp các em học hỏi, hỗ trợ nhau để hoàn thành nội dung bài. Còn các hoạt động hỗ trợ từ phía mình như bạn vừa nói là để giúp các em í để xác định hướng trả lời đúng cho các câu hỏi mà bài đọc đưa ra.
- I** Bạn rất ít khi phản đối hay phê bình SV ngay cả khi họ trả lời sai, lý do là gì?
- R** Cái đó thì đúng, không phải chỉ trong lớp này mà các lớp khác cũng vậy. Mình không phê bình đâu, phê bình có phải là cách tốt để tạo tương tác trong lớp học đâu. Phê bình càng làm cho các em thêm tự ti, thiếu động lực và có khi còn làm họ thêm rụt rè.
- I** Bạn hay hướng dẫn sinh viên chỉnh sửa cách phát âm khi họ đọc to, hay hỗ trợ từ vựng, vì sao bạn lại quan tâm vấn đề này?
- R** Bạn thấy đó, có vẻ như họ không luyện đọc nhiều ở các cấp học dưới, lỗi phát âm nhiều quá. Biết là mất thời gian chút nhưng như thế sẽ giúp cải thiện tốc độ và sự trôi chảy khi đọc.
- I** Trong dạng bài đọc 1, bài luyện về dạng đọc các notices và chọn đáp án phù hợp nhất ấy, bạn cho sinh viên trả lời tập thể sau khi yêu cầu các em làm việc cá nhân, bạn thấy làm như thế có hiệu quả không?
- R** Để nói hiệu quả hay không thì cũng còn phải dựa trên nhiều yếu tố, nhưng cơ bản mình thấy các em cũng tập trung, trả lời tốt. Tất nhiên là một số em yếu thì vẫn khá thụ động. .... và... thực sự thì mình chưa hài lòng lắm vì lớp học nhìn chung khá trầm, thiếu sôi động.
- I** Thiếu sôi động .....vậy theo bạn thì là do nguyên nhân gì?

- R** Ủ..., có thể là do SV năm một (nhất) chưa quen với việc học ở bậc đại học, level ngôn ngữ của họ đang bị hạn chế, .....và ....cũng có thể là do ...giảng viên.
- I** Giảng viên..... ý bạn là sao?
- R** Ủ, giảng viên thiếu hỗ trợ các em khi làm các dạng bài đọc.... như dạng bạn nói đó... không cung cấp từ vựng chẳng hạn, hay không gợi ý thêm gì để giúp SV hiểu nội dung thì các em sẽ mất nhiều thời gian hơn.
- I** Nhưng khi bạn cho SV làm bài tập nhóm, dạng team ấy, như cái hoạt động sharing ở cuối tiết đó, các bạn làm việc tích cực hơn, đúng không?
- R** Đúng thế, dù mình biết hoạt động theo nhóm, đội... thường khá ồn ào, đôi khi lộn xộn nữa, nhưng các em thấy vui hơn, hào hứng hơn. Cũng hợp lý đó. Ngoài việc dạy SV ngôn ngữ, mình còn muốn các bạn ấy học thêm về cách làm việc tập thể, và chủ động hơn trong việc trao đổi bài.
- I** À mình thấy bạn cung cấp khá nhiều từ vựng cho SV, dạy kỹ nữa.... Bạn thấy có mất nhiều thời gian không?
- R** Có đó, nhưng mình nhận ra là ở các cấp học dưới, các bạn SV không tích lũy nhiều từ vựng, và họ cũng không biết cách học và nhớ từ vựng hiệu quả, nên mình hỗ trợ các em cải thiện vấn đề này, để họ tự biết cách check từ khi học tiếng Anh.
- I** Trong lớp mình thấy hoạt động hỏi – đáp giữa cô và trò là nhiều nhất, ý là bạn giao bài tập, SV đọc, dịch, rồi trả lời câu hỏi, sau đó GV check với cả lớp, bạn thấy như thế có ảnh hưởng đến hiệu quả các hoạt động không?
- R** Đôi khi mình thấy khá là đơn điệu, nhưng vì nhiều hoạt động đọc trong sách đó, mà thời gian lại ít, nên phải chọn cách nhanh nhất để có thể giúp SV hiểu bài mà vẫn có thể cover hết nội dung.
- I** Thời lượng phân bổ cho học phần này theo mình biết là 30 tiết, bạn thấy đủ chưa?
- R** Được 45 tiết thì tốt, vì sẽ có thêm thời gian cho sinh viên luyện test theo level B1.  
Như thời gian hiện tại thì chỉ đủ cho việc dạy trong giáo trình thôi.
- I** Có vẻ như việc triển khai các hoạt động đọc cũng bị ảnh hưởng bởi dạng bài kiểm tra?
- R** Đúng đó, vì bài thi học phần đối với môn này là theo cấu trúc của level B1 khung CEFR, nên về cơ bản, cấu trúc bài dạy cũng hướng theo các dạng trong đề.

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## APPENDIX G

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE

Participant:

Class:

Lesson:

Date:

No. of periods:

No.	FOCUS AREAS	SUB-AREAS	IAs employed by the teachers	Purposes of IAs employed	Outcomes /results
1	Goals	Motivating students' participation			
		Increasing students' communicative competence			
		Improving students' social interaction skills			
2	Principles	Establishing students' active engagement			
		Fostering IAs in reading comprehension with collaborative work			
		Facilitating students in building collaborative learning community			
		Building good rapport with students			
3	Contexts	Main textbooks			
		Efficacy of collaborative work			
		Time used			
		Students' background knowledge & language proficiency			
4	T's roles	Instructing Organizing Facilitating Motivating Correcting Encouraging Evaluating Others: .....			

Other notes:

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## APPENDIX H

### SUMMARY OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER PARTICIPANT (With reference to findings in chapter 4)

No	Beliefs of...	Sub-items	Participants' responses		
			<i>Lisa</i>	<i>Rosie</i>	<i>Maria</i>
1	<b>Goals</b>	<i>Motivating Ss' participation</i>	Providing Ss with more opportunities to discuss different tasks to comprehend the reading text more deeply	Activating Ss' involvement into the reading text, Providing Ss with more positive attitudes toward learning	Engaging Ss into a collaborative atmosphere as a social environment
		<i>Increasing Ss' communicative competence</i>	IAs make good classroom management + maximize the amount of Ss' language use	Ss are encouraged to share what they know or comprehend as much as they can	IAs help Ss increase practical use of language by interacting with T and partners in an appropriate way
		<i>Improving Ss' social interaction skills</i>	SS are given chances to interact with teacher and partners in different activities such as negotiating, arguing, reviewing, summarizing...	IAs make the RC classes more socially collaborative and arouse Ss high order thinking skills	IAs not only help the Ss be positive in their learning process but improve their social interaction in a small social environment
2	<b>Principles</b>	<i>Establishing Ss' active engagement</i>	Maximizing collaborative work in reading activities may lead Ss to the sense of being closely engaged into their group	Ss should be encouraged to share what they are reading actively and enthusiastically	Ss are motivated to share their opinions, more confident and creative in the learning process which may enhance their reading skill
		<i>Fostering RC classes with collaborative work</i>	Ss share their ideas, learn from T and peers, feel safer and more encouraged	Ss are given opportunity to share their ideas, discuss the reading tasks in English in collaboration with their classmates	T set the collaborative activities/ tasks for Ss to work in group or in team

		<i>Facilitating Ss in building collaborative learning community</i>	Ss' positivity, enthusiasm and creativity in collaborative working community determine their level of comprehension in RC class as well as in the process of developing foreign language RC ability	Through collaborative classroom activities, Ss can form habits of mutual sharing and collaborative working manners to improve their own RC skill	Establishing a strong sense of community in the Ss' awareness can help them more positive in their groups and the class
		<i>Building good rapport with Ss</i>	IAs make the T-S relationship more promoted, and Ss have more positive attitudes toward learning	Building a good T-S relationship, can encourage Ss to share ideas, give responses, guess or predict something new basing on the content presented in the reading text in a natural and appropriate way	Good relationship between T-Ss creates friendliness in the RC classroom
3	<b>Contexts</b>	<i>Advantages</i>			
		+ University support	providing enough teaching and learning facilities	Concerning the innovation of English teaching method	highly appreciate the necessity of improving the quality of teaching
		+ main textbooks	clear format and suitable content	easy for T to use without worrying about the level of difficulty	Clearly-instructed tasks
		+students' efficacy of collaborative work	Ss feel eager and excited working in pair, in group or in team	Ss feel interested in reading activities/tasks	Ss show eagerness and active participation in learning RC with IAs.
		<i>Disadvantages</i>			
		+ Time limitation	Insufficient for deploying many IAs	T's deployment of IAs may be better in the unlimited time than in the	Inadequate time allocated for RC classes□ difficult to organize IAs

				limited time condition	
		+ Students' background knowledge and language proficiency	Ss' low - level background knowledge/ Unbalanced language proficiency between Ss are the challenges in organizing IAs	Ss whose background knowledge of English is poorly obtained may often get stuck when dealing with the reading text	The current Ss' background knowledge and language proficiency are at the low level, which arises a big gap between the level that Ss are required to achieve and the actual English language competency they have
		+ Classroom management	- Distracted Ss - Noise	Not easy to control Ss' chaos and maintain good classroom management	ignorance of some Ss in IAs organized
4	<b>Teacher's roles</b>		instruction, organization facilitation motivation	instruction, motivation evaluation	Instruction facilitation evaluation