Investigating Communities of Practice and ELT Teacher Research in Cambodia

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Thesis Structure

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study of English Language Teaching (ELT) research at tertiary-level in contemporary Cambodia. It comprises two phases. Phase 1 explores various views of ELT teacher research provided in a focus group discussion and two individual interviews by six Cambodian teachers representing different ELT institutions in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital. Phase 2 investigates teachers' actual research activities through an ethnographically-informed case study, and the research engagement at different levels (macro, meso, and micro) in the context of the CamTESOL conference series.

The study reveals that Cambodian ELT teachers hold unclear and confused conceptions of 'teacher research' and 'research' and this leads to difficulties in operationalising and carrying out research projects. This issue is compounded by the power of the CamTESOL conference series which has created a demand for research presentations, regardless of the underlying quality of the research, and established a research rhythm which has come to regulate the research timelines of most Cambodian ELT researchers' research engagement in their actual research projects. A consequence is that much of the research undertaken by Cambodian ELT teacher researchers lacks rigor and displays serious research shortcomings. The study also reveals that there were no true communities of practice functioning in the research practices of CamTESOL or individual ELT institutions in Cambodia. However, the research practices among individual ELT teachers come close to operating as a true community of practice.

The study calls for reconceptualising 'ELT teacher research' in Cambodia and adopting appropriate, workable operational mechanisms, i.e. a suitable modeling of a community of practice, for enhancing ELT teacher research practices there. The implications of ELT teacher research in the Cambodian setting are also of relevance to the development of ELT teacher research in other countries in the Southeast Asian region and beyond.

Statement of Candidature

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "Investigating Communities of Practice and ELT Teacher Research in Cambodia" has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution.

I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help, assistance and support that I have received in the research work and the preparation of the thesis has been appropriately acknowledged.

Moreover, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University's Ethics Review Committee, reference number: 5201100916D on 29th November, 2011.

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Chan Narith KEUK (MQ42231620)

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List of Abbreviations

ELT	English Language Teaching
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
EMI	English as Medium Instruction
IDP	International Development Program (of Australian universities)
LEiA	Language Education in Asia (journal)
CRLLT	Cambodia Review of Language Learning and Teaching (journal)
CoP	Community of Practice
CoPs	Communities of Practice
MOEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (of Cambodia)
UECA	University English Centres of Australia
Aus	Australian Embassy
US	American Embassy
ELICOS	Australian English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about tertiary-level English language teaching (ELT) teacher research in contemporary Cambodia. It explores this phenomenon through establishing teacher conceptions of teacher research and then investigating their actual research practices in the context of the CamTESOL conference series.

CamTESOL was established in 2005 by IDP Australia, a consortium of Australian universities, with the initial aim to promote English language teaching in Cambodia and showcase research in this field. As an international TESOL conference based in Cambodia, CamTESOL attracts interest from all types and levels of ELT institutions across the country, both public and private, and primary, secondary and tertiary. CamTESOL, together with its international and domestic affiliates[1] and supporters, has for nearly a decade made considerable efforts to promote ELT teacher research activities in Cambodia beyond simply hosting the annual conference. For example, it has also provided support to Cambodian ELT teachers who are interested in undertaking research in their own classrooms, by way of research workshops given by international researchers, research grants, and international research mentorship assistance (Mahony, 2011; S. Moore, 2011b). Thus, Cambodian ELT research driven by the CamTESOL conference series does not occur in isolation, but rather it is connected with international ELT/TESOL research communities.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 English language teaching in Cambodia

[1] There does not seem to be any public statement that clearly sets out CamTESOL affiliations. However, CamTESOL, with various international and domestic ELT institutions as members, has established four standing committees (Steering committee, Main conference program committee, Regional research symposium program committee, and Organising committee) in order to organise the annual conferences.

Over the past decade, English language teaching in Cambodia has grown more mature, compared to its status two decades ago. According to S. Moore and Bounchan (2010), ELT in Cambodia has developed from a status in the early 1990s in which English was taught primarily by international ELT expatriates to its present status in which English is primarily taught by Cambodian ELT professionals. Compared to the 1990s when there was only one tertiary ELT institution functioning in Cambodia (Neau, 2003; Pit & Roth, 2003), there are now many tertiary ELT institutions which train Cambodian English language teachers and offer various ELT degree and non-degree programs widely across Cambodia (Clayton, 2006; S. Moore & Bounchan, 2010).

The Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL), which is arguably the leading tertiary ELT institution in contemporary Cambodia, has offered various four-year undergraduate degree programs, including a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); a Bachelor of Arts in English for Work Skills (i.e. English for Professional Communication, English for International Business, English for Translation and Interpreting); and a Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). A recent further development of ELT education in Cambodia over the past few years is the establishment of an undergraduate degree program in International Studies at the IFL, using an English-medium instruction (EMI) approach (Keuk & Tith, 2013). This variety of program offering is evidence of the momentum and growth of ELT education in Cambodia. Tertiary ELT institutions have been encouraged to further pursue high quality ELT practices in order to sustain institutional status and to attract student enrolments. This trend of development is further manifested through the individual ELT institutions' adoption of ELT teacher research as part of their professional practices.

1.1.2 ELT teacher research in Cambodia

"Whilst it is true that ideally teacher research should be 'driven by teachers', for example, through reflective practice about their teaching (Farrell, 2013), the reality for most Cambodian ELT researchers is that teacher research is 'driven at teachers' by the demands

placed on them through CamTESOL participation and their institution's support for such participation." S. Moore (2011b) suggests some main motivations that encourage individual ELT institutions and Cambodian ELT professionals to be engaged in and with research over the past decade. For individual ELT institutions, especially at tertiary level, the principal motivation is possibly the institution's ambition to enhance their status and increase demand for providing ELT courses and degrees through the operationalisation of high-status professional practices, i.e. through undertaking ELT teacher research activities. Moreover, the tertiary ELT institutions which provide postgraduate degree programs (i.e. a Master degree in TESOL) may need to establish research activities for their staff members to participate in and to enable them to supervise students' thesis research projects.

In a similar vein, for the individual ELT professionals, their principal motivation in engaging in research activities is in part due to their aim of building a research track record for pursuing higher education degrees (i.e. PhD) overseas (S. Moore, 2011b). Over the past few years, many Cambodian ELT professionals have engaged with CamTESOL by presenting their research papers at the annual conference. Some ELT teachers have presented their thesis degree research projects, and others have presented research projects undertaken in their own classrooms quite apart from any degree requirement. According to S. Moore (2011b, p. 335), viewed from a Cambodian insider's perspective, such development of ELT teacher research practices can be viewed as "a case of unplanned context-bound organic growth". This PhD research project has been undertaken to explore this 'organic growth' in order to gain a better understanding of the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia at this relatively early developmental stage.

1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

1.2.1 ELT teacher research

Simon Borg's influential work on teacher research in language teaching (i.e. Borg (2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2013)) has shed light on the value of investigating language teachers' conceptions of 'research' and their research engagement as precursors to developing

appropriate support for ELT teacher researchers. Borg (2009, 2013), in a survey of teachers' conceptions of research and teacher's research engagement which involved language teachers, ELT directors and managers from diverse ELT settings, argues that language teachers and ELT directors and managers may have misconceived 'teacher research' (or, at least conceived it in ways that are inconsistent with western standards) and this might have prevented teacher research activities from developing. Subsequent studies in other ELT contexts, in particular the Chinese ELT context (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg & Liu, 2013; Gao, Barkhuizen, & Chow, 2011a), the Cambodian ELT context (S. Moore, 2011a), and the Vietnamese ELT context (S. H. Moore, 2014), have supported such misconceptions. Thus, Borg's conceptualisation of 'teacher research' provides a touchstone for understanding 'teacher research' practices, especially with regard to a nation in which ELT teacher research has only recently emerged. See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.3 for Borg's (2010) definitions of 'teacher research'.

Borg (2013) also argues for the need to conceptualise 'teacher research' from the language teachers' perspectives, before any attempt is made to promote teacher research engagement. He states that "understanding the conceptions of research held by teachers is important in attempts to engage them with and in research". (Borg, 2013, p. 70)

Moore's (2011a, 2011b) studies on TESOL research in Cambodia have provided general observations of the research practices and a preliminary understanding about Cambodian English teachers' conceptions of research. S. Moore (2011a) suggests further in-depth investigations on TESOL teacher research in Cambodia, especially those based on ethnographic evidence of actual research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT professionals. The studies above (i.e. Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg & Liu, 2013; Gao, Barkhuizen, & Chow, 2011a; S. Moore, 2011a; S. H. Moore, 2014) have also shown a variety of motivations for ELT teachers to engage in research, including genuine interest in discovery; perceived increase in status; financial enticements; and preparation for scholarship applications.

Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle suggests a teacher research process that is also helpful to informing the present investigation. The cycle comprises five components: (1) teachers question their own teaching and identify teaching problems that they want to investigate; (2) teachers plan data collection, i.e. design a research methodology, and select samples; (3) teachers analyse the data and interpret the findings; (4) teachers make sense of the research findings and take any action to improve their teaching; and (5) teachers disseminate their research findings in a public forum. This process of teacher research is helpful for guiding ELT teachers' research activities in terms of a research timeline, and the activities that need to be carried out at various stages within that timeline.

1.2.2 Communities of Practice

A review of the relevant literature suggests that successful implementation of teacher research may be enhanced through collaborative research activities, such as those undertaken within a community of practice (CoP) framework. The notion of communities of practice has been most fully developed by Etienne Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger, McDermott, and Synder (2002). They describe a community of practice as a group of people with similar interests and concerns and who have a passion to achieve such interests and concerns by interacting and working with each other on a regular basis. They are mutually engaged in undertaking the community's activities to build up a 'rhythm' specific to their community.

Borg (2006) argues that teacher research should be undertaken within a community because such a practice may be more conducive to success in completing research projects than undertaking research on an individual basis. Borg states that "conducting teacher research as part of a like-minded professional community is likely to be more productive than working in isolation. Thus, forms of teacher research such as action research are often conceived of as collaborative, rather than individual, activities". (Borg, 2006, p. 25)

As noted above, within a CoP framework, a CoP's members work together through regular interactions. Along the activity trajectory, they exchange information, knowledge,

experiences, and help each other achieve their goals. This mutual engagement allows a CoP's members to learn from each other's expertise about doing things (e.g. undertaking specific research activities). In other words, this practice provides an opportunity for mentoring assistance in doing research. The more experienced ELT teacher researchers mentor as well as guide the less experienced ones. Genuine learning opportunities are created for the community's members. Borg states:

> If we acknowledge that most teachers have not had a sound research education, the role of the mentor becomes crucial. Teacher research, at least initially, will often need to be scaffolded by a more experienced and skilled individual. This person need not be an academic; where communities of teacher researchers exist, the mentoring role can be assumed by a local colleague. (Borg, 2006, p. 24)

The contributions of a CoP framework to ELT teacher research as explained above may be useful for sustaining ELT teacher research activities as well as improving teacher research quality, thus meeting Allwright's (1997) concerns about teacher research quality and sustainability. Therefore, it is worth examining whether communities of practice truly exist in the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, even in its present early development stage. Such an examination will help us discern how Cambodian ELT teachers who are involved in undertaking research actually manage their research activities, and such an understanding will in turn help to indicate effective and facilitative strategies to promote appropriate practices.

1.3 AIMS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

1.3.1 Aims of study

In contemporary Cambodian ELT education, it is the case that some tertiary ELT institutions expect their English teachers to conduct research; others do not. Thus, it is important to explore ELT teacher research because ELT teachers in Cambodia account for virtually all the ELT research that is undertaken in the country. It is also important to

investigate communities of practice since a CoP framework requires agency, and is an excellent fit with ELT teachers.

This thesis aims to examine the practices of ELT teacher research at a tertiary ELT education in contemporary Cambodia by exploring different perspectives of ELT teacher research in the wider ELT community and then the actual research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers at one institution. The former will examine Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptualisations of teacher research, and the latter will investigate Cambodian ELT teachers' research activities undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series. The thesis then aims to investigate whether or not there are true communities of practice in the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia at three levels: macro (CamTESOL); meso (individual ELT institution); and micro (individual ELT teachers). The thesis also aims to formulate workable, facilitative, and effective strategies for further enhancing the practices of ELT teacher research, and promoting ELT practitioners' active engagement in research.

1.3.2 Significance of study

First and foremost, this thesis will provide emic perspectives about the practices of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia. This helps us more clearly understand Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research as viewed by tertiary ELT professionals. This understanding will enable interested parties to make informed, appropriate and realistic decisions on how to orientate support for ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia. As Borg (2013) argues above, such an understanding provides a fundamental grounding in preparing Cambodian ELT teachers to be engaged in classroom research.

The thesis will also clearly show what actually counts as research in the current practices of ELT teacher research in the context of the CamTESOL conference series, which plays such an important role in providing a 'rhythm' for research activities in Cambodia. Knowing what counts as research can help us evaluate whether these practices are essentially uniquely 'indigenous' or simply 'deviant' in terms of world standards.

Additionally, the thesis argues that a CoP framework is a productive, facilitative, and workable strategy to enhance the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. The modeling of this framework shows the potential it has to create a research rhythm that appropriately situates Cambodian ELT teacher researchers in a well-functioning teacher research CoP, and simultaneously prepares them to undertake and disseminate high quality research in a public forum, specifically at the CamTESOL conference series. This modeling, if successfully operationalised, would create a culture of teacher research activities that would potentially improve classroom teaching practices, which is the ongoing and long-term ambition for professional development in ELT education in Cambodia. It will furthermore enable ELT professionals who participate in the community to be involved in making better informed decisions about teaching and learning, including planning materials; selecting teaching approaches; developing curriculum; and undertaking assessments.

The thesis also sheds light on what future investigations would be useful in regard to various aspects of ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia and in other TESOL contexts in the region and, indeed, worldwide. The thesis also makes methodological and theoretical contributions. The former refers to an adoption of an interpretive paradigm, i.e. through using a focus group discussion to elicit ELT teachers' conceptualisations of teacher research, and an ethnographically-informed case study to examine actual research activities undertaken by ELT professionals. The latter refers to the operationalisation of ELT teacher research, with consideration of the implications suggested by the thesis, in other ELT contexts, which share similar background of development.

1.4 PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This PhD thesis can be seen as having a 'problem/solution' structure. It is presented as two phases which, in sequence, constitute the 'problem'. This is then followed by the Communities of Practice 'solution'. This thesis comprises nine chapters, including this introduction; the background of the study; a review of the literature; research methodology;

data analyses and interpretation (consisting of three chapters); implications of the research; and a conclusion. What follows are synopses of the main focus of each chapter.

Chapter 1 provides a quick overview of the thesis. It introduces the thesis's domain, including the context of the study; a statement of the research problems; the research aims; and the significance of the study. This chapter also introduces the thesis's overall structure.

Chapter 2 reports a survey of the historical development of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodian society at three levels (macro, meso, and micro). This chapter will help contextualise the present practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia and, thus, help readers situate these practices in the thesis's investigation.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature mainly related to teacher research in language teaching and communities of practice in teacher research, in order to conceptualise theoretical frameworks useful to the investigation. The former will review the historical development of teacher research in language teaching and discuss various conceptualisations of teacher research. The latter will introduce the notion of communities of practice and a community of practice framework used in the practices of teacher research. Full reviews of these important points will be subsequently provided in individual chapters of data analysis and interpretation (Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

Chapter 4 sets out the research methodology, including the process of the ethics application, and the plan for collecting data in order to fill the targeted gaps identified in the literature. It will address the research objectives and research questions identified in Chapter 3. This chapter presents two phases of data collection. Phase 1, using a focus group discussion and individual interviews, examines macro views of ELT teacher research conceptualised by six Cambodian ELT professionals from different tertiary institutions in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Phase 2, an ethnographically-informed case study, further investigates actual research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT lecturers at one tertiary ELT institution, (i.e. the IFL), in a timeline framed by the CamTESOL conference series. The

chapter will also describe the participants' validation of the data gathered in the two phases, and suggests the data analyses to be undertaken.

Chapters 5 to 7 present the findings of the research in respect of three main themes: Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research; characteristics of actual research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers in the context of the CamTESOL annual conferences; and the existence (or not) of communities of practices in the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. Each of these chapters will provide an in-depth review of the relevant literature for each theme in order to conceptualise theoretical frameworks for analysing the data collected. In brief, Chapter 5 focuses on teachers' conceptions of teacher research provided in three connected tasks in a focus group discussion and individual interviews. These tasks encompass participants' own initial, pre-existing conceptions of 'teacher research'; their discussions of research scenarios; and subsequent more considered opinion about published definitions of 'teacher research'. Chapter 6 reports an investigation of four sub-case studies of actual research activities, (i.e. four research projects, three of which are individual research projects; and one which is a joint project). Based on ethnographic techniques employed in the data collection, the investigation is focused on the research process across the research timeline to help expose the nature of Cambodian ELT teacher research. It covers actual research activities and sheds light on constraints the participants encountered while doing their research. Chapter 7 further examines the practices of teacher research in Cambodia to determine whether there are any true (i.e. operationalised in Wenger's terms), functioning CoPs. It explores the notion of CoP at three levels: at CamTESOL (macro level); at the IFL (meso level); and among individual teachers (micro level).

Chapter 8 sets out the implications of this thesis's findings for the IFL and its teacher researchers. It outlines a modeling of a CoP framework to implement teacher research practices at a micro level. More specifically, this model involves a group of individual ELT lecturers at the IFL, who are interested in improving their classroom teaching practice by

undertaking research activities. This chapter will explicate a model of a CoP framework formulated on the basis of the design principles and development stages of communities of practice espoused by Wenger, including the facilitative role of a CoP's coordinator (Wenger, 2000; Wenger et al., 2002).

Chapter 9 provides the conclusion for this thesis, with a review of the key findings of the study and a brief discussion of the limitations of the research. The chapter will suggest research areas for future investigations and implications of the research findings that would further enhance the practices of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodian society.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter has provided the rationale for investigating the practices of ELT teacher research in tertiary-level education in contemporary Cambodia. In brief, in its relatively early developmental stage, the practices of ELT teacher research need to be well understood in terms of how Cambodian ELT professionals conceptualise teacher research, and how they manage their actual research activities. Such an investigation will help better understand the practices, which will help orientate any attempt to develop them further. The chapter has also described the aims and significance of the study and provided a preview of each individual chapter in the thesis.

In the next chapter, the historical development of ELT teacher research in Cambodia will be provided in order to contextualise the thesis investigation.

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CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCH IN CAMBODIA

2.0 INTRODUCTION

As stated in Chapter 1, ELT in Cambodia has grown remarkably as evidenced through the development of the status of English language teaching and speaking in the first decade of the 2000s which is significantly different from that of the 1990s (Clayton, 2006; Moore & Bounchan, 2010). Moore (2011a) states that ELT in Cambodia has reached a level of maturity and argues that ELT teacher research is needed in order to respond to such growth in ELT education. Since the CamTESOL conference series was established in 2005, ELT teacher research has had a locally-based conference of international stature in which to showcase Cambodian ELT research. This forum has proved to be a strong influence in the research landscape in Cambodia, providing structure and motivation for Cambodian ELT professionals, especially from tertiary institutions, to become increasingly engaged in research activities.

If indeed ELT teacher research has become an established activity practised within tertiary ELT institutions in Cambodia, how can this phenomenon best be investigated and examined in terms of the nature and quality of local research, and whether or not it is progressing towards international standards? One way is to view the complexity of the research landscape through macro, meso, and micro perspectives. In this context, the macro level relates to perspectives above the institutional level; the meso level deals with institutional perspectives; and the micro level is concerned with researcher perspectives. Figure 2.1 below illustrates these three perspectives of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. It shows how individual ELT researchers are nested both within their particular institutions, but also within the wider ELT community. Conversely, it also shows how the broader ELT community is positioned to influence the behavior of ELT institutions and individual ELT researchers.

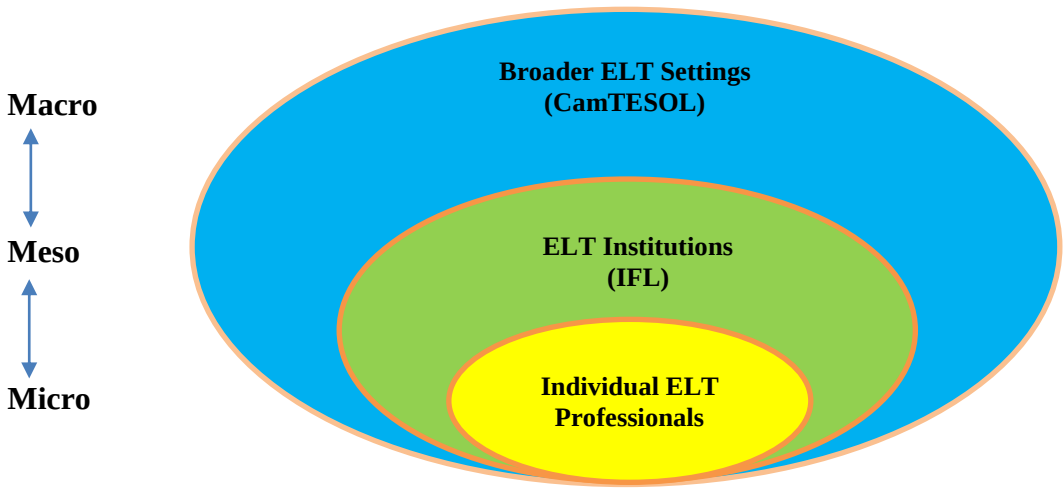

Figure 2.1: An overview of ELT teacher research in Cambodia through three perspectives (macro, meso, and micro)

In this chapter, I will describe the emergence of ELT teacher research in Cambodia over the past decade through these three perspectives in order to shed light on the general ELT teacher research landscape in contemporary Cambodia. This will be achieved through providing some specific instances of teachers' presentations of research papers, conceptual papers, workshops, and posters at the CamTESOL conference series and ELT teacher research practices at the IFL. I will then discuss Cambodian English teachers' conceptions of and engagement in research drawing from Moore's (2011a) survey of Cambodian teachers in 2011. Taken together, this will provide the reader with a sufficient background to understanding the state of development of ELT research in contemporary Cambodia, and also the rationale for investigating how the ELT research community can best be supported in its continuing development.

2.1 THE EMERGENCE OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCH IN CAMBODIA

As noted above, the general ELT teacher research landscape in Cambodia can be viewed from three perspectives, namely macro; meso; and micro perspectives. Let us now begin our view of the ELT teacher research landscape by considering each perspective in turn.

2.1.1 A macro perspective

From a macro perspective, the ELT teacher research landscape could be described as sheltering under an 'umbrella' provided by a third party organising research activities. Established in 2005 as "the national ELT conference for Cambodia" (Mahony, 2011, p. v), the annual CamTESOL conference series has attempted to accommodate the needs for professional development in ELT education in contemporary Cambodian society. It is the largest annual gathering of Cambodian ELT professionals, and provides a platform for showcasing ELT teacher research in Cambodia and the region, thus providing a crucial site which has appealed to Cambodian ELT teachers and researchers from all levels of ELT education, both public and private sectors (Moore, 2011a) to come together for their professional development. The conference has annually attracted around 900 participants from within Cambodia (Mahony, 2011), and many hundreds from across the region. According to Moore (2011a), the establishment and development of the CamTESOL conference series has provided a continuous forum for Cambodian ELT teacher research to emerge and grow. Figure 2.2 depicts CamTESOL, as a 'third party' beyond ELT institutions and their academic staff, positioned to organise research activities in connection with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MOEYS), domestic ELT institutions[2] and international institutions and supporters.

The CamTESOL conference series has attracted a number of English teachers from various ELT institutions within Cambodia to present their research projects, papers, workshops and posters at the conference. Table 2.1 shows the number of Cambodian presenters presenting at CamTESOL conferences between 2005 and 2014. In total, 262 Cambodian presenters have engaged as presenters at the conference across 283 presentations in all streams. Table 2.1 also shows that the number of research-based presentations has increased in this period from two research-based papers in 2005 to 12 papers in 2010 and to 20 papers in 2014. Compared to the total number of Cambodian conference attendees, the number of

[2] The ELT institutions included here are prominent and active in working with the annual CamTESOL conference. Most of them are members of the conference organizing committee.

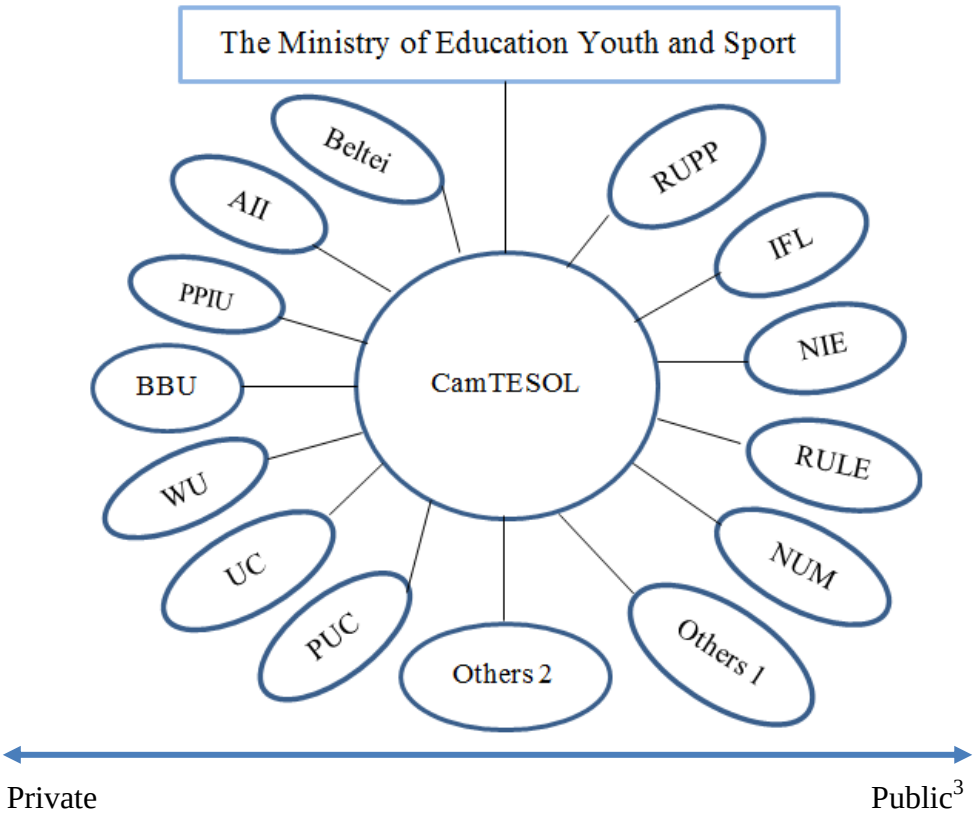

Figure 2.2 CamTESOL in connection with other ELT institutions

RUPP (Royal University of Phnom Penh), IFL (Institute of Foreign Languages), NIE (National Institution of Education), RULE (Royal University of Law and Economy), NUM (National University of Management), PUC (Pannhasastra University of Cambodia), UC (University of Cambodia), WU (Western University), BBU (Build Bright University), PPIU (Phnom Penh International University), AII (American Intercontinental Institute), Beltei (Beltei International University), Others 1 (sponsored provincial English teachers and trainers), and Others 2 (various international ELT institutions and supporters).

Table 2.1 A summary of presentations at CamTESOL conferences (2005–2014)

Year	Cambodian teachers' presentations						
	Presenters (No.)		Research (No.)	Papers[(1)] (No.)	Workshops (No.)	Posters (No.)	Total (No.)
2005	17		2	4	11	0	17
2006	27		1	2	12	13	28
2007	30		6	9	14	2	31
2008	32		6	8	21	2	37
2009	20		7	2	14	0	23
2010[(2)]	22		12	4	7	3	26
2011	28		15	6	9	0	30
2012	20		12	5	3	1	21
2013	32		15	1	14	2	32
2014	34		20	2	17	0	39
Total	262		96	43	121	23	283

Note: (1) This category of presentations at the CamTESOL conferences is referred to conceptual papers.
(2) The CamTESOL Selected Papers was transformed into LEiA journal.

[3] Some of these public universities in Cambodia have been declared public administrative institutions (autonomy). These universities offer programs to both public and private (fee-paying) students.

presentations by Cambodian ELT professionals is still very limited. For example, at the 2011 CamTESOL conference series, only 28 presentations were given by Cambodian presenters (Table 2.1), compared to around 900 Cambodian participants (Mahony, 2011) who attended the conference.

Whilst the participation of the Cambodian ELT teachers in presenting their research projects, papers, workshops, and posters at the conference is modest at best, the subsequent publication of papers authored by Cambodian presenters in CamTESOL Selected Papers, which was later transformed into the journal of Language Education in Asia (LEiA) in 2010, is very low. Table 2.2 indicates that only nine papers authored by Cambodian teachers (including two papers co-authored by Cambodian teachers and international researchers) were published in CamTESOL Selected Papers and LEiA between 2005 and 2013. There was no paper written by Cambodian teachers in either issue of Volumes 1 and 2 of the LEiA journal in 2011 and 2013. These figures show the limitation of Cambodian ELT teacher researchers sharing their research findings through what one would expect to be a natural forum for publication of their work.

Table 2.2 A summary of papers published in CamTESOL Selected Papers and LEiA Journal (2005-2012)

Year	Paper published in the conference proceedings and LEiA journal					
	Internationally authored papers		Cambodian authored papers		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2005	3	75	1	25	4	100
2006	2	50	1+1(1)	50	4	100
2007	5	83.3	1	16.7	6	100
2008	10	76.9	3	23.1	13	100
2009	25	96.2	1	3.8	26	100
2010(2)	18	90	2	10	20	100
2011(1)	12	100	0	0	12	100
2011(2)	8	100	0	0	8	100
2012(1)	9	100	0	0	9	100
2012(2)	12	92.3	1*	7.7	13	100
2013(1)	7	100	0	0	7	100
2013 (2)	8	100	0	0	8	100
Total	119		9 + 2*		130	100

Note: (1) Papers co-authored by Cambodian and international presenters.
(2) The CamTESOL Selected Papers was transformed into the Language Education in Asia journal in 2010.

CamTESOL and its affiliates and supporters annually sponsor Cambodian ELT teachers, especially those who are based in provincial ELT training centres and schools, to

attend CamTESOL conferences. However, CamTESOL has developed beyond simply hosting an annual ELT conference series. Since 2009, CamTESOL began to promote Cambodian teachers who are interested in doing research by providing annual research workshops, research grants and international mentorship assistance to conduct research projects. As a result, a small number of Cambodian ELT teachers have received research grants and mentorship assistance: two teachers in 2010 and four teachers in 2014.

We now see the emergence of ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia at a macro level with CamTESOL's effort in promoting research activity. Indeed, even the number of research-based presentations at CamTESOL conferences has increased modestly despite the small number of Cambodian teachers who have received direct support in terms of CamTESOL research grants and international mentorship assistance.

2.1.2 A meso perspective

Viewing the ELT research landscape in Cambodia in terms of a meso perspective, each ELT institution is seen to play a vital role in promoting individual English teachers' engagement in research. Such a role is practiced within some prominent tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh, especially at the IFL, but not all tertiary institutions take up this mission. In this section, I will outline reasons for tertiary ELT institutions to implement ELT teacher research and explain some fundamental roles played by tertiary ELT institutions, without which individual English teachers' involvement in research would not take place. I will provide some evidence of ELT teacher research practice at the IFL as examples.

It is important to note that throughout this PhD thesis, I use the terms "IFL" and "English Department" interchangeably, as is the custom at the IFL amongst both academic staff and students. In fact, the IFL comprises seven different departments. Six departments offer courses in foreign languages (i.e. English, French, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai), and one department offers an International Study Program, using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). All departments, except Thai Department which has just commenced certificate courses, offer four-year Bachelor degrees. According to the information about

students' enrolments in the 2013-2014 academic year that I received from my personal communication with head of the English Department, the English Department taught 3025 students, compared to 391 in the French Department; 376 in the Japanese Department; 244 in the Korean Department; 238 in the Chinese Department; and 732 in the Department of International Studies. The English Department's dominance of the IFL in terms of sheer size has contributed to the practice of its programs being considered synonymous with the IFL. Let us now turn to the motivations that have encouraged the emergence of ELT teacher research at the meso level, specifically at the IFL.

First of all, each tertiary ELT institution may wish to ensure its status as one of the leading ELT institutions in the country by promoting research practices within the institution. S. Moore (2011a) states that tertiary ELT institutions' encouragement for research practices may be a result of the current development of ELT education in contemporary Cambodia in offering postgraduate degrees (Master degree education). Some prominent tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh have recently offered postgraduate degrees such as Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). For example, the IFL has so far taught 10 cohorts totalling 122 MA-TESOL graduates since 2008. In this regard, ELT teacher research may be conceived of as one component in the competition for students and prestige in the development of ELT education at tertiary level in Cambodia.

In addition to sustaining their leading status in tertiary ELT education, the institutions have probably begun to see ELT teacher research as an innovative approach to enhance individual English teachers' teaching abilities and quality, thus contributing to professional development. One prominent advantage of language teacher research raised by Nunan (1989b, cited in Borg, 2010, p. 403) is that "it sharpens teachers' critical awareness through observation, recording and analysis of classroom events and thus acts as a consciousness-raising exercise" and that "it matches the subtle, organic process of classroom life". Thus, encouraging individual ELT teachers to be involved in teacher research is one way to enhance their teaching quality as it provides practical knowledge which cannot be learned through

academic training programs. Burns and Edwards (2014) suggest that teachers involved in research can benefit by enhancing understanding about the practice, adopting a systematic inquiry, and socialising with other researchers, whether domestic or international. Thus, ELT teacher research could be viewed as an innovation which enables individual teachers to improve classroom practice when they conduct research within their own classrooms.

Tertiary ELT institutions' attention to promoting ELT teacher research may also be influenced by external ELT and other relevant organizations. For example, the World Bank project in 2010, with a US$ 23 million budget for an aid project entitled 'Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project', certainly caught the attention of tertiary institutions and may have encouraged them to begin or continue ELT teacher research. Additionally, individual tertiary ELT institutions in Cambodia may actively encourage their academic staff to participate in research to align with the establishment and development of the CamTESOL conference series.

In 2007, a few years after CamTESOL was established, the IFL established a research unit with one of its principal aims being to assist the IFL individual ELT lecturers to undertake research. In subsequent years, the research unit of the IFL has received annual research grants from the IFL's Board of Directors, which provide the institute's research-active lecturers with more opportunities to advance their classroom research practice and, simultaneously, learn more research skills from their peer teacher-researchers. Since 2007, the IFL's research unit has published an in-house journal titled 'Cambodian Review of Language Learning and Teaching' (CRLLT). So far three volumes have been published, with a total of 14 research papers written by IFL lecturers.

Some institutions have also facilitated the process of research development by way of supporting their staff's conference fees (e.g. CamTESOL conference fees) and encouraging staff members to present papers, workshops, or posters[4]. The IFL has facilitated research

[4] I received this information through personal communication s with some tertiary ELT institutions' directors during the 2014 CamTESOL conference reception.

practices by not only supporting its staff members' conference attendance but also further organising its own research workshops and providing research grants as mentioned above.

In short, while there are various motivations for tertiary ELT institutions to initiate and implement ELT teacher research, their important role in creating a platform for individual English teachers' engagement in research, and to facilitate research activities are essential. This kind of development, coming from within ELT institutions themselves, could be viewed as an "organic growth" (S. Moore, 2011b, p. 335). Important though this is, the practice of ELT teacher research within one institution will not succeed without the participation of individual ELT teachers. I will now describe the emergence of ELT teacher research in Cambodia from a micro perspective.

2.1.3 A micro perspective

In the early 2010s, there has been an increase observed in the number of Cambodian teachers who have presented their postgraduate thesis research projects at the CamTESOL conference. Some of these presenters graduated from overseas universities or domestic tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh, but all seem to be keen to share their research with a wider audience. The teachers' decision to conduct research (typically concerned with their own classroom practices) appears to be driven by self-motivation and/or institutional influences, which we shall now explore in more detail in this section.

First, the teachers' engagement in doing research may be driven by their self-interest in socialising themselves into both domestic and international academic research communities. For example, sharing their research findings at local or international conferences seems to provide a bridge for them between working within their own ELT institution and socially networking with more experienced and expatriate researchers from around the globe to further their professional development, especially in their specific field of academic research. Moore (2011b, p. 38) suggests that some research may actually be conference-led: "… it seems that many Cambodian TESOL professionals are interested in undertaking research in order to attend conferences (especially outside Cambodia)." In the

case of the IFL, making research results public seems to be an effective way of appealing for funds from the Board of Directors of the IFL, and this serves as a strong encouragement to galvanise the IFL research-active lecturers into continuing to be actively involved in ELT teacher research.

Second, the teachers' motivation for being involved in teacher research may be driven by their aim of compiling a track record of research for ensuring their entry to pursuing postgraduate studies (especially PhDs) at various overseas universities (S. Moore, 2011b). It seems that the higher education sector in Cambodia in general, and English language teaching in particular, is undergoing a period of transition in which Master-degree holders are leaving for further educational studies overseas. This is true in the case of ELT development at the IFL. According to the 2012 IFL Information Handbook, of 93 lecturers, 63 lecturers were teaching, whilst 30 lecturers were on leave (i.e. including 16 lecturers on leave for PhD studies overseas; eight lecturers on leave for Master programs; and six other lecturers on leave for other reasons than overseas studies. As capacity to undertake research is one of the most necessary requirements for entry to a PhD program overseas, building a track record of research is one potential way to enable this requirement to be met (S. Moore, 2011b).

Last but not least, particularly at the IFL, for the past few years research-active lecturers may be involved in doing research in order to respond to the incentive of research grants made available annually by the IFL. In a research-profile survey conducted at the IFL in 2012 as part of this PhD thesis, the 63 IFL lecturers were asked to fill in the profile survey to categorise themselves in terms of their research engagement using Rogers' (2003) five adoption categories of innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Of the 37 lecturers who returned the questionnaires, three IFL lecturers self-categorised as innovators, 12 as early adopters, 10 as early majority, seven as later majority, and five as laggards in respect of their practices of ELT teacher research at the IFL (see Figure 2.3). Of these lecturers, 27 reported they had done research projects, while 10 reported they had not conducted any research projects.

Keuk (2015, In press) provides a full report on the IFL lecturers' adoption of research practice at the IFL, however, as shown in Figure 2.3, the overall profile fits a normal distribution and is indicative of any innovation in a professional workplace. In other words, there are always a few individuals who are keen to try out the latest innovation, followed by the bulk of their colleagues, and trailed by a few reluctant individuals.

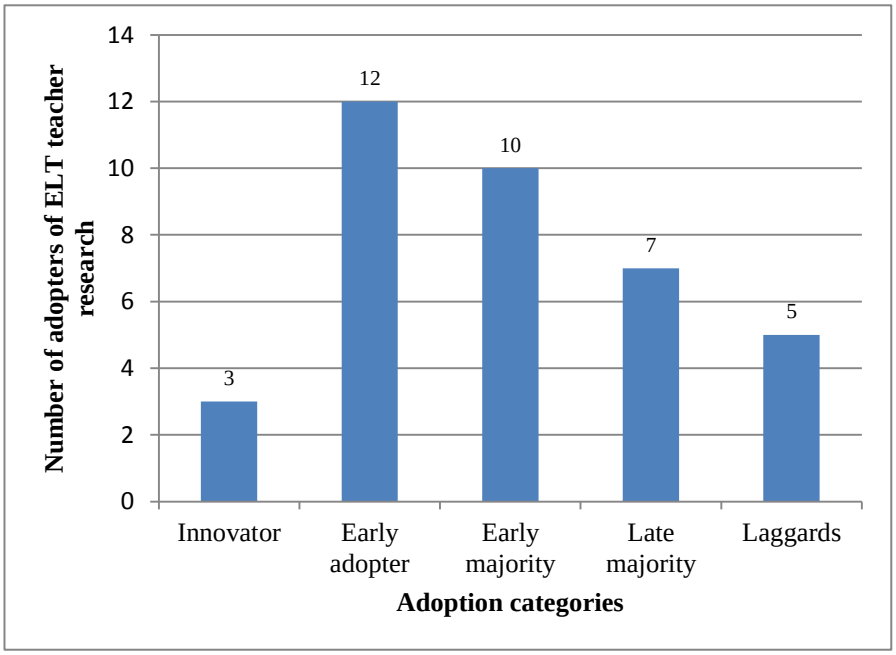

Figure 2.3: Teachers' adoption of research at the IFL (2007-2013) (n=37), *reproduced from Keuk (2015, In press)*

Although the motivation that the individual teachers have had for ELT teacher research may be complex, the teachers' actual continuous engagement in research seems fragmented. Table 2.3 shows that the IFL lecturers' engagement in research is in fact discontinuous at the country's leading ELT event, CamTESOL. Of 29 lecturers who had presented research-based papers at CamTESOL conferences between 2005 and 2014, one lecturer (T2) had given as many as seven presentations; three lecturers (T5, T12, T15) had given four presentations; one lecturer (T6) three presentations; eight lecturers (T1, T9, T13, T16, T20, T21, T25, T29) two presentations; and the other lecturers had given just one presentation across this period. Thus, in general, we can see that most lecturers are unlikely to undertake and present classroom-based research on a regular basis.

Table 2.3 shows clearly this discontinuity of the lecturers' engagement in research in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Of nine lecturers who presented research findings at the 2010 CamTESOL conference, only one lecturer (T5) presented research findings in the subsequent

Table 2.3: IFL lecturers' presentations of research projects at CamTESOL conferences (2005-2014)

No	Pseudonym	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	**Total number of presentations**
1	T1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
2	T2	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	1	1	1	7
3	T3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
4	T4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
5	T5	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	4
6	T6	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
7	T7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
8	T8	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	T9	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
10	T10	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
11	T11	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
12	T12	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	4
13	T13	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
14	T14	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
15	T15	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	4
16	T16	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
17	T17	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
18	T18	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
19	T19	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
20	T20	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
21	T21	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
22	T22	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
23	T23	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
24	T24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
25	T25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
26	T26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
27	T27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
28	T28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
29	T29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
	Total	0	1	6	6	7	7	9	4	10	4	54

CamTESOL conference in 2011, at which eight different lecturers presented their research. At the 2012 CamTESOL conference, a further two new lecturers presented their research findings. In 2013, a further three new lecturers presented their research. In this respect, it is worth investigating the current practice of ELT teacher research at the IFL so that better ways of encouraging the lecturers to be more actively and continuously engaged in doing research can be realised and research practices more generally will be able to be developed further.

To sum up this section, although the Cambodian ELT teachers' engagement in ELT teacher research is somewhat disjointed, the individual teachers teaching at tertiary ELT

institutions in Cambodia in general, and those teaching at the IFL in particular, have become more interested in recent years in undertaking ELT teacher research. Various factors seem to be fueling this interest. The motivation for their engagement in the research seem to have emerged from their aims to improve their teaching quality through self and professional development; further their educational qualifications; socialise into academic research communities; and seek recognition for their work. However, the motivation does not only seem to derive from the individual ELT teachers but also from the influence of the institutions in which they work. In the next section we will explore the research to date on ELT teacher research in Cambodia.

2.2 RESEARCH ON ELT TEACHER RESEARCH IN CAMBODIA

It is worth including a discussion of Cambodian ELT teachers' conception of and engagement in research in this chapter because the discussion will aid a deeper understanding and awareness of the nature of teacher research perceived by Cambodian teachers. Moore's (2011a) survey of 40 Cambodian ELT teachers provides some useful insights about Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of and engagement in research. These insights are consistent with those of Borg's (2009) survey of 505 English teachers from around the world, which is considered a base-line study. I reproduce Moore's (2011a) table of data showing the Cambodian teachers' conception of research in order to facilitate the discussion (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Cambodian teachers' views of the importance of 11 research characteristics, *reproduced from Moore (2011a, p. 93)*

Teachers' views	More important (%)	Less important (%)	Unsure (%)
The results give teachers ideas they can use	95.0	2.5	2.5
A large volume of information is collected	85.0	10.0	5.0
A large number of people are studied	80.0	15.0	5.0
Experiments are used	79.5	12.8	7.7
Hypotheses are tested	74.4	10.2	15.4
The results apply to many ELT contexts	74.4	12.8	12.8
The researcher is objective	71.8	15.4	12.8
Information is analyzed statistically	70.0	15.0	15.0
The results are made public	67.5	20.0	12.5
Variables are controlled	67.5	12.5	20.0
Questionnaires are used	66.7	20.5	12.8

First of all, there is a consistency in the findings of Borg's (2009) and Moore's (2011a) surveys concerning teachers' motivation for undertaking research. ELT teacher research is perceived to provide results which they can use to improve their teaching quality and strengthen their professional development. This motivation was also perceived by research of 33 primary English teachers in China in Gao, Barkhuizen, & Chow's (2011b, p. 212) study, showing that "teacher research may help teachers develop better understandings of students, and curriculum and improve their professional competence."

Moreover, Moore's (2011a) and Borg's (2009) surveys have also revealed the similarity in terms of teachers' perception of teacher research as a scientific inquiry, though the rankings of the characteristics of good quality research are different according to the respondents involved in those surveys. Characteristics of good quality research perceived by the teachers include objectivity, statistics, hypotheses, large samples, and variables (Borg, 2009; Moore, 2011a). This finding is also supported by Gao et al.' s (2011) study indicating that those primary English teachers in China perceived teacher research as a scientific inquiry with quasi-experimental research methods.

In addition to the aforementioned similarities, as in the case of those baseline English teachers in Borg (2009), Cambodian English teachers reported having insufficient time to do research as an obstacle to their research involvement, and as a consequence their engagement in research was moderately low (S. Moore, 2011a).

The views of ELT teacher research and its practices through micro, meso, and macro perspectives illuminate the general ELT research landscape in Cambodia, and, to some extent, the ELT teacher research practices and Cambodian ELT teachers' engagement with and in research that exist in contemporary Cambodian ELT education. Such practices and engagement continue and could mature further to become an activity implemented within more tertiary ELT institutions and within a wider ELT professional world. Nevertheless, these practices and engagement have been poorly understood because they have received very little attention from researchers. Thus, it is one of the key objectives of this thesis to explore these

multiple perspectives and gain a better understanding of ELT research practices and engagement with a view to identifying the path forward toward developing best practices in ELT research in Cambodia.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has contextualised ELT teacher research and its practice in Cambodia over the past decade. It has portrayed the emergence of the practices of ELT teacher research from macro perspective (CamTESOL conference series), a meso perspective (ELT institutions), and a micro perspective (individual ELT professionals). In brief, ELT teacher research in Cambodia has taken shape and been influenced in the past decade by way of the involvement of three interconnected and interdependent entities comprising including individual ELT professionals, their institutions, and the CamTESOL conference organisation. With this contextualised information about the recent development of ELT teacher research in Cambodia as a background foundation, in the next chapter I will review the relevant literature concerning teacher research and communities of practice in teacher research with a broader scope in order to help problematise and conceptualise the focus of my research in this thesis.

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CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Having contexualised ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia in the context of the CamTESOL conference series in Chapter 2, I will now review the literature related to teacher research[5] and communities of practice in teacher research in order to problematise Cambodian practices and conceptualise my research project's investigation. In this chapter, I will first briefly review teacher research and communities of practice in teacher research in the relevant literature. I will also discuss the gaps in research in this area, and identify my research objectives and research questions. It is important to note that this chapter comprises a brief overview of teacher research and communities of practice in teacher research. The detailed conceptualisations and theoretical frameworks related to each area will be provided in the individual chapters of data analyses (i.e. Chapters 5, 6 and 7). I will now begin with an overview of teacher research.

3.1 TEACHER RESEARCH

In this section, I will briefly review the literature related to teacher research. The review comprises a brief survey of the historical development of teacher research, definitions of teacher research, and ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research.

3.1.1 Historical development of teacher research

Teacher research, formulated as 'teachers as researchers', was first initiated by Lawrence Stenhouse in the 1970s as teachers were involved in undertaking research in their own teaching, sharing the research outcomes with colleagues, and improving their teaching (Hopkins, 2008). Teacher research emerged then in the context of curriculum reforms in education in the United Kingdom in curriculum research and development initiated by

[5] In this PhD thesis, "teacher research", "ELT teacher research", and "language teacher research" are used synonymously unless otherwise noted.

Stenhouse in 1975 (Borg, 2010, 2013; Nunan, 1997). According to Burns and Burton (2008), in the 1980s, teacher research in language teaching increasingly attracted the attention and interest of applied linguistics teachers, researchers and scholars to discuss various teacher research related issues, including "teachers' voices in language classrooms; engaging teachers in research; teacher-initiated actions for understanding teaching practice; inquiry-based teaching; exploratory teaching; action research; qualitative inquiry; and self-monitoring" (Burns and Burton (2008, pp. 1-2)).

Since the 1990s, there have been serious attempts to reconceptualise second language teacher education (Freeman, 2002, 2009; Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Yates & Muchisky, 2003) and to develop and promote teacher research in language teaching (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998; Hiep, 2006; S. Moore, 2011b; Reis-Jorge, 2007; Wyatt, 2011). For example, Freeman and Johnson (1998a) suggest reconceptualising knowledge-based teacher education, in which teachers play an important role in learning to teach and improve teaching in their own context (of school, teaching, and activities). Freeman (2009) further suggests expanding the scope of second language teacher education by way of important roles for the participation of second language teachers and social activities in improving professional practices.

In recent research developments in language teaching, there has been a trend towards involving (novice) ELT teachers and student teachers (i.e. ELT teachers who are taking undergraduate or postgraduate programs) in participating in professional practices by operationalising reflective teaching (Farrell, 2013, 2014; J. C. Richards & Farrell, 2005; J. C. Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Farrell (2013), J. C. Richards and Farrell (2005), and J. C. Richards and Lockhart (1996) provide principles, theoretical frameworks and activities which help promote language teachers' engagement in reflective practices. More studies, (e.g. Uzum, Petrón, and Berg (2014), Hyacinth and Mann (2014), and Ryder (2012)) have exemplified actual operationalisations of reflective practices in various ELT settings. Farrell (2013) states that through reflective practice teachers question their own teaching, and find

solutions to the problems by systematically undertaking research activities in their own context.

In particular in ELT teacher research development, there has also been recent evidence in promoting a teacher-research movement through practices of 'teachers as researchers' undertaking research activities in their own classroom (Ado, 2013; Atay, 2006, 2008; Burns & Edwards, 2014; Goh & Loh, 2013; Hopkins, 2008; Jones, 2004; Olson, 1990; Reis-Jorge, 2007; Wyatt, 2011; Yayli, 2012). Olsen (1990) and Freeman and J.C. Richards (2002) provide various accounts of research activities undertaken by novice and experienced language teachers for improving their professional practices (see Olsen's (1990) and Freeman and J. C. Richards' (2002) edited volumes for these detailed research accounts). These studies commonly report that the teachers' participation in undertaking research in their own classrooms has empowered them to enhance their own professional practices as well as ELT professional development more widely.

Freeman (1998) suggests a 'teacher research cycle', describes the nature of teacher research, and provides accounts of research activities undertaken by novice language teachers in various schools in the United States. Other examples of efforts in developing teacher research can be viewed in Nunan's (1997) discussion of the standard of teacher research and Allwright's (1997, 2003, 2005) work in discussing the sustainability of teacher research, rethinking practitioner research in language teaching, and developing principles for practitioner research. Borg's (2006, 2007) work on teacher engagement in research and suggestions regarding conditions for developing teacher research has also made a major contribution to this field.

More recently, there has been the development of a teacher research movement in conceptualising teacher research in the context of language teaching (Borg, 2010, 2013) and researching language teachers' conceptions of research (Borg, 2009, 2013; Gao, Barkhuizen, & Chow, 2010; S. Moore, 2011a), and teacher engagement with and in research (Borg & Liu, 2013; Gao et al., 2011a). Let us now briefly review these areas in the relevant literature.

3.1.2 Defining teacher research

Over the past few decades teacher research in language teaching has been conceptualised by applied linguists, researchers and scholars. Such conceptualisations have yielded various definitions of teacher research (see Appendix 4.1, Part 2, Task 3 for five definitions of teacher research). Despite the variability in the definitions, the conceptualisations have centred on teacher research being systematic, intentional, contextual, public, and having potential benefits.

Being a *systematic* inquiry, teacher research follows certain processes, comprising asking questions about teaching that teachers want to know more about; gathering information in their classrooms; analysing the information; reflecting on and learning from the outcomes of analyses; and making improvements in classroom teaching and fulfilling the learners' needs (Anderson, n.d.; Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998; Henderson, Meier, Perry, & Stremmel, 2012; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1993; Mohr et al., 2004b).

Teacher research is *intentional* because such research is driven by teachers having particular question(s) about teaching that they need to answer and want to know more about, or problem(s) related to teaching, to which some solutions need to be explored and investigated (Anderson, n.d.). Teachers plan action to explore or investigate the problems they identify, and to find ways to address them. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, p. 24), teacher research is "an activity that is planned rather than spontaneous." Mohr et al. (2004b) explain that teacher research begins with the teacher's commitment and intention to investigate a topic or question that he or she has identified. Although self-critique or self-generatedness is supplemental to the characteristics of teacher research in this respect (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999b; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999b) do not recognise any self-inquiry or reflection of one's own educational work as teacher research if it is not systematic and intentional.

Being *contextual* means that teacher research is undertaken by teachers in their own context, i.e. in their own classrooms or schools (Borg, 2010, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Lytle,

1999b; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Lankshear and Knobel (2004) emphasise that teacher researchers are classroom practitioners at any level, ranging from primary to tertiary levels. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999b) explicitly state the range of various contexts, namely K-12; higher education; continuing education; classrooms; schools; programs; and other formal educational settings. Mohr, et al. (2004b, p. 26) argue that teacher research is "context-dependent, context-relevant, and context-responsive".

To be *public*, teacher research findings need to be disseminated to the public (Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998; Mohr et al., 2004a). Mohr, et al. (2004a) explain that the inquiry is made public through the process of research, beginning from the teacher researcher's discussion of topics, assumptions, data, methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation and working through to the sharing of research outcomes with colleagues and as well as other concerned audiences inside and outside a teacher's own school. Such sharing can be done through informal exchanges or formal dissemination of research results via presentation in local, national, and international conferences or by publication of the research in newsletters, professional teaching journals or peer-reviewed academic journals.

Last but not least, having *potential benefits*, teacher research is perceived to provide teachers as well as ELT education with a lot of useful and practical ideas. Some proponents of teacher research agree that teacher research has a significant role for improving the quality of education in classrooms at all levels (Ellis & Castle, 2010), for improving "student progress, achievement and development, and especially for the purpose of school improvement" (Carter and Halsall, 1998, cited in Borg (2010, p. 393)). Other scholars agree that teacher research has empowered teachers with professional competence and pedagogical voices in what is often an educational vacuum in which they are working (Gao et al., 2011a). Teachers who are teacher researchers, have become "expert knowers about their own students and classrooms" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999b, p. 16), and have developed a "sense of agency in their working lives, taking an active role in managing their learning, organizing their work environments, and making changes to school communities, curricula, and their classroom

practices" (Everton, Galton, & Pell, 2000, Shkedi, 1998, cited in Barkhuizen (2009, p. 113)). See Borg (2010, 2013) for a comprehensive list of teacher research benefits.

The conceptualisations of teacher research above are understood from the point of view of applied linguists, researchers, and scholars, rather than language teachers themselves. What follows is a brief review of language teachers' own conceptualisations of research as gleaned from various studies in the relevant literature.

3.1.3 ELT teachers' conceptions of research

In recent years there has been an increase in studies on investigating language teachers' conceptualisations of research in a worldwide context (Borg, 2009, 2013), in the Chinese ELT context (Borg & Liu, 2013; Gao et al., 2010; Gao et al., 2011a), and in the Cambodian ELT context (S. Moore, 2011a). These studies generally report what language teachers conceive of as research; what the important characteristics of research are; and what kind of research engagement language teachers have.

Borg (2009, 2013) and S. Moore (2011a) report similar characteristics of research conceived by language teachers who were involved in rating and commenting on various research scenarios. The characteristics include elements that are often associated with academic, scientific research, i.e. large sampling, hypothesis testing, and descriptive statistics analyses. Besides these characteristics, objectivity, a large scale, and experimental design were also reported as important characteristics of good research. Teachers also stated that 'research findings that give them results that they can use for classroom practice and for broader ELT settings' was an important characteristic of good research.

Borg (2013) argues that understanding language teachers' conceptualisations of research is essential for orientating any attempts to promote teacher engagement with and in research. According to Borg (2013, pp. 70-71), from the teachers' conceptualisations of characteristics of (good) research reported above, language teachers may have misconceived teacher research as being conventionally defined academic, scientific research which is bound

with “large scale, hypothesis testing, and statistics,” to name some characteristics, which in part makes teacher research a “minority activity”.

To better understand teacher research, the concept of communities of practice is particularly useful. Experiences of practices of teacher research suggest that successful teacher research is undertaken through collaborative work (Arhar et al., 2013; Bruce & Easley-Jr, 2000; Gu & Wang, 2006; Hall, 2009a). These experiences also indicate that the collaborative work in teacher research needs to be practised in a CoP framework (Bruce & Easley-Jr, 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, 1993). I will now briefly review the literature related to communities of practice, and communities of practice in ELT teacher research. This review will help us conceptualise a CoP framework in teacher research.

3.2 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

In this section, I will first briefly review the notion of communities of practice. I will then discuss and conceptualise a community of practice framework that can be used in teacher research.

3.2.1 What is a community of practice?

Wenger (1998, 2006), who can be considered as perhaps the most prominent authority in the field, defines communities of practice as groups of people who share similar interests, and have passion to achieve such interests by working together on a regular basis. He states “communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”. (Wenger, 2006, p. 1)

A growing community of practice (CoP) comprises three interconnected, fundamental characteristics: domain; community; and practice (Wenger, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). A CoP’s members must share the domain, and mutually engage in doing activities together regularly to achieve the domain. When the members are actively engaged in doing activities

together, they build repertoires of the community. See Chapter 7, Section 1.1 for a full account of the literature on communities of practice.

3.2.2 History of communities of practice

A review of the literature on communities of practice shows that the notion of 'communities of practice' has increasingly attracted interest from educational researchers over the past two decades. Koliba and Gajda's (2009) extensive review of over 230 references relating to CoPs shows 14 different fields where a CoP framework has been used, and the fact that it has been used "descriptively, as an analytical framework, and proscriptively, as an organisational intervention" (p. 98). The major disciplines where the CoP framework has been used include business management (Lee & Valderrama, 2003; Sense & Clements, 2007; Zook, 2004); education (elementary and secondary education) (Buysse, Sparkman, & Wesley, 2003; Levinson & Brantmeier, 2006; Thompson, 2007; Wesley & Buysse, 2001); public administration (Pavlin, 2006; Snyder, Wenger, & de-Sousa-Briggs, 2003; White, 2004); health care (Andrew, Tolson, & Ferguson, 2008; Hara & Hew, 2007; Popay, Mallinson, & Kowarzik, 2004); higher education (Cesareni, Martini, & Mancini, 2011; Ennals, 2003; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Ibáñez-Carrasco & o-Alcala, 2011); and gender studies (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999).

My review of the literature also shows that the notion of CoPs has been used in 'organisational learning' and 'knowledge management' to describe, explain and provide principles and framework for certain professional groups' learning to undertake specific activities in various workplace settings (Blackmore, 2010; Hara, 2009; Hernáez & Campos, 2011; Hildreth & Kimble, 2004; Skyrme, 1999).

In English language *learning* research, the notion of CoPs has become a crucial framework for research studies about learning phenomena in classrooms, and it has been used as a theoretical framework by many researchers in this area (Benthuysen, 2008; Haneda, 2006; Little, 2003). Most of the research projects reviewed by Benthuysen (2008, p. 127) use a model of CoP to investigate "learning practice, group dynamics, and learner identity." The

CoP model has also been used to examine ELT practitioners' continuous professional development (Edge, 2007; Fraga-Cañadas, 2011; Little, 2002), autonomous growth (Edge, 2007), power relationships in academic settings (Shi & Yang, 2014); and to explore novice teachers' and student teachers' learning to teach and improve classroom practices (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Lambson, 2010). In recent years, the CoP model has increased its influence in improving teachers' professional learning through virtual social learning systems in online CoPs (Gunawardena et al., 2009; Hou, 2015; Moule, 2006; Murugaiah, Azman, Thang, & Krish, 2012; J. Rogers, 2000).

CoPs create social networks among members to interact and work together to achieve their shared goals through their exchanges of expertise, experiences and knowledge. CoPs thus create social learning systems (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within workplaces, organisations, and institutions, and operationalising CoPs will galvanise a CoP's members into generating a CoP's shared knowledge (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). In the following section we shall see these concepts in relation to the discipline of ELT teacher research.

3.2.3 Communities of practice in ELT teacher research

In this section, I will explain why the notion of communities of practice is proposed as a theoretical framework for this PhD project. The review of the literature concerning teacher research and CoPs shows that communities of practice which adopt professional inquiry have made various contributions to ELT teacher research. First, an obvious advantage is that CoPs have transformed teachers to become "either consumers or researchers themselves" (Barkhuizen, 2009, p. 113), and it has the potential to move teacher research from "fringe to forefront" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, p. 320). ELT teachers working in such inquiry communities are not isolated or sheltered from sharing their failure, problems, and success, or dependent on informed formal knowledge or explicit knowledge given by expert or university-based researchers. In other words, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992) argue, teachers are activists and creators of their local knowledge, working together within a larger group of other teachers, sharing their experiences and solutions to problems they have

encountered in their own classrooms, schools, or communities. Given these benefits, Farrell's (2013, p. 131) concept of "teacher reflection group" seems best fit with the practice of ELT teacher research within a CoP framework.

Bruce and Easley-Jr (2000, p. 249) assert that the results of research undertaken in the form of collaborative work has a "richness and grounding" which individual or separate research projects cannot provide. Bruce and Easley-Jr (2000) report some examples of a successful implementation of a collaborative research project conducted in a CoP framework called 'Dialogues in Method Education' (DIME). In these projects, the essential role of a CoP is not only to exchange information between participants but also to define members' participation. It is this participation that provides members of a community with opportunities for the negotiation of meaning (Wenger, 1998).

In addition, Vlaenderen (2004, pp. 137-139) proposes that merging a CoP of teacher researchers into a community of practice of a local community provides a "joint activity," in which interactions among community members take place, and the process of which produces a "system of knowledge, including concepts, beliefs, values, goals, and perceptions." Such interactions give teachers opportunities to learn to undertake research, as well as to improve classroom practice.

We now see the benefits that teacher research provides to teachers who undertake research in their own classrooms, and these benefits are better achieved if the research activities are undertaken in a CoP framework. If teacher research in Cambodia is practised within a CoP framework, do communities of practice of Cambodian ELT teacher researchers follow Wenger's (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al.'s (2002) fundamental characteristics as described above? S. Moore (2011b) states that it seems that ELT research practices in Cambodia do not operate as communities of practice. As Moore (2011b) notes, if there is any community of practice in the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, the CoP appears fragmented by not fulfilling the basic characteristics of a CoP determined by Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002). In this case, the practice of ELT teacher research in

Cambodia may need to be viewed from a different perspective. Wenger et al. (2002) suggests some entities whose forms and functions are different from communities of practice to a certain degree (see Table 7.2 for more details). Such entities may possibly be useful for explaining, exploring and examining the existence of communities of practice in ELT teacher research in Cambodia. It is, therefore, important to examine how the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia has operated, either within a CoP framework, or within a different kind of entity. To facilitate such an investigation, a three-level approach has been adopted, one that captures aspects of a CoP at macro, meso and micro levels. What follows in the next section is a discussion in support of this three-level approach.

3.2.4 The three-levels of communities of practice (macro, meso, and micro)

Over recent decades, the concept of a teacher as a learner who is learning to teach has attracted strong attention among scholars, applied linguists, and teacher educators (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999a; Freeman, 1998, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Yates & Muchisky, 2003). Donald Freeman and Karen E. Johnson are leading scholars in initiating this reconceptualisation of the knowledge-base of language teacher education, in which teachers are viewed as learners who construct knowledge about teaching in their own context (school) and within pedagogical processes (teaching). In this learning process, teachers construct knowledge about teaching through questioning their own practice, developing conceptual and interpretive frameworks for making judgments of practice, theorising practice, and connecting their work with other colleagues within and outside their teaching communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999a; Freeman, 1998; Freeman & Johnson, 1998b). In other words, in order to construct knowledge about practice, teachers combine their efforts in undertaking various research activities within their teaching communities (i.e. their schools or institutions) and across various settings. Thus, individual teachers' research activities do only not operate among individual teachers themselves (i.e. at a micro level), but also within an institution (i.e. a meso level) as well as across broader ELT or TESOL communities (i.e. a macro level). Such a framework is common to other critical approaches in applied linguistics, for example,

Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Mayr, 2008; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001), in which language texts are positioned at the micro level, institutional practices at the meso level, and society and its cultural practices at a macro level. Examples of this three-level approach are also found in ELT research, such as Burns & Edwards (2014), in which the participation of a postgraduate student is seen to involve classroom, institutional and professional levels of engagement, corresponding to micro, meso, and macro respectively.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section, I will discuss the gaps in research on ELT teacher research in Cambodia, and present research objectives and research questions. From these questions, the research methodology will be designed to collect data for appropriate analysis and interpretation in order to provide answers to the questions.

3.3.1 Gaps in research on teacher research

The review of relevant literature suggests some gaps in research on ELT teacher research and communities of practice in ELT teacher research. First, though interest in promoting ELT teacher research practice in peripheral countries has grown, not many scholars or expert researchers have studied the actual operation of ELT teacher research within these countries. As a result, there is a mismatch between supportive mechanisms and local contexts of ELT teacher research practice. Borg (2009, 2010, 2013) and Moore (2011a, 2011b) argue that understanding the nature of ELT teacher research in local context is essential for promoting and developing ELT teacher research, and increasing ELT teachers' research engagement.

Second, most propositions which suggest successful operation of teacher research are based on research undertaken by teachers of local schools in collaboration with external (expert) researchers (Bruce & Easley-Jr, 2000; Gu & Wang, 2006; Hall, 2009a). In other words, this research does not centre on teacher researchers working (among themselves) together to undertake research within their own classrooms, institutions or the wider ELT

professional world. Moreover, suggestions on contributions of communities of practice to teacher research practice is usually based on conceptual understanding and experiential assumptions (Bruce & Easley-Jr, 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, 1993, 1999a). In short, this review of the literature has not found any study focused on the working of actual communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers.

Third, gaps of research on ELT teacher research in Cambodia can easily be identified. As stated in Chapter 2, Section 1, see also S. Moore (2011b) and Keuk (2015, In press), there have been attempts to promote Cambodian ELT teachers' engagement in research at CamTESOL and the IFL in terms of providing research grants, research workshops, seminars, and international mentoring assistance (for CamTESOL research grant recipients). However, the general ELT teacher research landscape, including teachers' conceptualisations of teacher research and actual research activities is still poorly understood.

Last but not least, there are some gaps in understanding about Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research. One of the gaps is perhaps the limitations of information obtained from the respondents due to the research methodology used in survey research (S. Moore, 2011a). Moore emphasises that the use of survey questionnaires does not reveal the motivations as to why the participants choose certain responses to the questions. Additionally, survey questionnaires may provide little insight into what Cambodian English teachers know about teacher research, how they do research within their own context, whether they work individually or cooperatively, and whether there are any communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers, in which they can participate. S. Moore (2011a) suggests if any inquiry is proposed to explore Cambodian ELT (teacher) research, it needs to be conducted through more interactive modes. Moore (2011a, p. 97) proposes using "interviews and, preferably ethnographic data relating to actual research being undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers" in order to better discern Cambodian ELT teacher researchers' conceptualisations of teacher research.

This PhD thesis research project, comprising two phases, is designed to address the gaps identified above, and its objectives are described in the next section.

3.3.2 Research objectives

As stated above, this research project comprises two phases, which aim to understand ELT teacher research in Cambodia from three perspectives: macro, meso, and micro (see Figure 2.1). The project will first focus on Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptualisations of ELT teacher research from the broad view of ELT teacher research contributed by Cambodian ELT professionals from various tertiary ELT institutions. It will also examine Cambodian ELT teachers' actual research activities undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series. Then, the project will examine whether there are any communities of practice in ELT teacher research in Cambodia operating at three levels: at CamTESOL (macro), at the IFL (meso), and among individual ELT teachers (micro).

3.3.3 Research questions

To achieve the objectives as set out above, this PhD project seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What do Cambodian ELT teachers conceptualise as 'teacher research'?
2. What actually counts as research in the context of the CamTESOL conference series?
    - 2.1. What is the research process and what are the research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers in the context of CamTESOL conference series?
    - 2.2. What are the characteristics of teacher research undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers?
    - 2.3. What are the constraints in teacher research encountered by Cambodian ELT teacher researchers?
3. What is the degree to which Cambodian ELT researchers function as a community of practice:
    - 3.1. at CamTESOL (macro level)?
    - 3.2. at the IFL (meso level)?

3.3. among individual ELT practitioners at the IFL (micro level)?

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of the literature related to ELT teacher research and communities of practice in ELT teacher research. The review has identified gaps of research on ELT teacher research and the communities of practice in ELT teacher research. This PhD thesis project is designed to fill these gaps by focusing on three levels of research engagement in the Cambodian ELT profession and the notion of community of practice. The research considers macro perspectives of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, drawing from Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptualisations of teacher research; characteristics of actual research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers in the frame of the CamTESOL conference; and the existence of communities of practice in ELT teacher research in Cambodia at three levels (macro, meso, and micro).

Having problematised the research domain and identified gaps in the research literature on teacher research and communities of practice in teacher research, and formed research objectives and research questions, the next chapter will set out the research methodology designed to address the research objectives and answer these questions.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In order to answer the research questions posed at the end of Chapter 3, this chapter will describe the research methodology used in this study, including the various data collection instruments and the kinds of analyses used to understand the data. My study is positioned in an interpretive paradigm which involves the collection of a range of data using qualitative approaches and triangulation of methods and sources (Dörnyei, 2007; K. Richards, 2003; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). This allows the researcher to better understand complex human beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, and be able to adequately interpret the findings of the research (Duff, 2008; Golafshani, 2003; Marková, Linell, Grossen, & Orvig, 2007; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 2002; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). The study comprises two phases, each with a different purpose and deploying different research methods. Phase 1 consists of a focus group and two individual interviews with Cambodian ELT lecturers from six different tertiary-level institutions. Phase 2 consists of a case study of research projects undertaken by five Cambodian ELT lecturers from one university, and involved a range of ethnographic techniques for collecting the data. As this research involves human participants, an ethics application was submitted to the Ethics Committee at Macquarie University, and approval was granted on November 29, 2011 (Appendix 4.2). Figure 4.1 summarises the two phases of data collection.

4.1 PHASE 1: MACRO PERSPECTIVES

Phase 1 explores ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia at a macro level. It seeks to understand Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptualisations and understandings about ELT teacher research. A focus group and individual interviews were conducted to collect data to achieve this aim.

Phase	Focus	Data Collection	Participants	Institutions
1	**Macro perspectives**	Focus Group discussion	Four	These six lecturers were invited from different tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh.
		Individual Interviews	Two	
2	**Case Study**	Sub-Case Study A1	Five	These five lecturers were invited from the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL).
		Sub-Case Study B1		
		Sub-Case Study B2		
		Sub-Case Study B3/B4		

Figure 4.1: Summary of the two-phase data collection

4.1.1 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions have become increasingly popular as a research method in a wide range of fields in recent decades (Marková et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2011). A focus group is "based on open-ended discussions that examine a particular set of socially relevant issues" (Marková et al., 2007, p. 32) and provides in-depth exploration of the topic, and yields preliminary data about the topic which is little known (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). Researchers use focus groups because they need "to understand and explain the meanings, beliefs, and cultures that influence the feelings, attitudes, and behaviours of individuals" (Rabiee, 2004, p. 655), and to examine the concerned parties' (e.g. ELT teachers) perceptions of a new innovation (e.g. ELT teacher research) (Holly, 1999). The participants who are involved in focus group discussions should feel at ease to express their experiences, opinions, and beliefs with other group members. Thus, a focus group discussion provides rich and detailed data (Carey & Asbury, 2012). An overarching reason for selecting a focus group discussion for this phase of my PhD research project was to gain the benefits that this research method provides in terms of the way the participants could be engaged in discussing different research scenarios (see Appendix 4.1) to define 'ELT teacher research'. In other words, the participants were involved in making decisions (Marková et al., 2007) about whether or not each scenario was 'research', and then having to justify the rationale for their choices.

In the context of contemporary ELT in Cambodia, despite much anecdotal evidence, actual ELT teacher research practices have not been the subject of academic study and, therefore, are poorly understood. Therefore, a focus group discussion is appropriate to stimulate in-depth responses from the participants who are considered broadly representative of Cambodian ELT professionals, having been engaged with and in (doing) research to some extent. It also provides more emic perspectives (Freeman, 1998; McDonough & McDonough, 1997) which are crucial in understanding the nature of ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia.

Despite the benefits that focus group discussions can provide in this PhD research, focus group discussions do have some important drawbacks that must be mentioned. The first drawback is related to the difficulties in the recruitment of suitable participants who will be able to provide relevant information in the discussion (Holly, 1999). The second drawback is ensuring the participants' (equal) participation in the discussion. As they are invited from different institutions, participants might feel awkward talking to strangers in the discussion, which then influences the degree of involvement in giving comments and sharing opinions (Holly, 1999). Last but not least, there is a drawback of using the focus group discussion to gather information that is related to group dynamics. Given that participants invited to join the focus group discussion possess different knowledge and backgrounds, they might give their comments and opinions differently, based on presuppositions and assumed knowledge, which also causes difficulties with analysing the data (Holly, 1999). To deal with these concerns, I followed 'best practice' in making relevant decisions as to how the focus group data would be collected. In particular, my organisation of the focus group discussion, including planning the focus group discussion; recruiting appropriate participants from various tertiary ELT institutions and preparing a moderation of the focus group discussion, was based on focus group guidelines (Krueger, 1998a, 1998b; Morgan & Scannell, 1998) in order to aim for data of high quality being collected. Nonetheless, the actual undertaking of the focus group discussion faced some constraints which will be discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.3 and Chapter 9, Section 9.2.3.

4.1.1.1 Participants and recruitment

In Phase 1, six Cambodian ELT lecturers were invited to join a focus group. They were purposively selected from six prominent tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh, the capital and largest city in Cambodia. In this thesis I have identified these institutions using pseudonyms, i.e. AAU, BBU, CCU, DDU, EEU, and FFU. One participant was selected from each institution. Four of the six participants were able to join the focus group, while the other

two participated in individual interviews that covered substantially the same questions and issues. Table 4.1 provides brief profiles of the six participants, including their backgrounds.

Table 4.1: Phase 1 participants

	Participant	Sex	Age	Degree	Level of teaching	University (pseudonym)
Focus group	K1	Male	30s	BEd (TEFL) MEd	University	AAU
	K2	Male	30s	BEd (TEFL) MA (TESOL)	University	BBU
	K3	Male	20s	BEd (TEFL) MBA	University	CCU
	K4	Male	30s	BEd (TEFL) MA (TESOL)	University	DDU
Individual interviews	K5	Female	30s	BEd (TEFL) MEd	University	EEU
	K6	Male	40s	BEd (TEFL) MEd	University	FFU

The selection of participants was facilitated by the relevant dean of faculty or head of the Department of the six institutions, who had consented to allow their academic staff to participate in my project (see Appendix 4.3). They were informed of the research objectives of my project and the criteria for recruitment of potential participants. They each suggested three potential participants to allow for more alternatives for the eventual recruitment.

I approached the first participants listed for each institution to provide them with an Expression of Interest flyer (see Appendix 4.4). In the case where the first participant named in the list was not interested in joining the focus group discussion, I approached the second suggested participant on the list. When they agreed to participate, the participants and I scheduled date of the focus group discussion. I followed this procedure until I was able to recruit participants for the focus group discussion. They were given Information and Consent forms (the participant's and investigator's forms) to sign (see Appendices 4.5), and then arrangements for the focus group discussion were finalised.

4.1.1.2 Phase 1 Participants' Backgrounds

In this section, I will provide fuller descriptions of the six participants who joined the focus group discussion and individual interviews. Such descriptions are important to help us

better discern their conceptualisations of ELT teacher research. These descriptions were based on the information that the participants provided during the focus group discussion and individual interviews.

As we can see from Table 4.1, all the participants held postgraduate degrees (i.e. Master degrees), had backgrounds in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), and were all teaching English at tertiary level. A description of each participant's background in teaching as well as undertaking research now follows.

Participant K1

K1 is male, aged in his 30s, and is married. He currently holds a Master degree of Educational Leadership which he obtained overseas. He graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the IFL. He has worked as a full-time lecturer at AAU, an average private university in Phnom Penh, for two years. Besides his role as a lecturer at the university, he is also a course outline designer, a subject leader of Research Methodology, and a personal advisor to the Dean of the university. It is noteworthy that K1 is a staff member at a government education training center, where he teaches English to high school students.

K1 learned research methodology when he was taking his Bachelor degree at the IFL, and Master degree overseas. The research methodology, as he mentioned, also covered literature reviews. He did not do any research for the Bachelor degree, but conducted a survey on reading with two groups of students overseas for his term paper for the Master program. He also conducted a thesis research project working on educational management, for fulfillment of his Master degree. He used questionnaires and follow-up interviews as instruments to collect the data. K1 presented his thesis research outcomes at the 8th Annual CamTESOL conference in 2012. As a staff member at the university, he has partly engaged with reading research articles so as to improve his teaching. Regarding the challenges in doing research, K1 identified four areas of difficulties he had encountered while he was doing

research. These four areas comprised literature review, research design, research instruments, and data analysis.

Participant K2

K2 is male, aged in his 30s and is married. He currently holds a Master degree of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the IFL. He graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the same Institute. He has worked as a full-time lecturer at BBU, an average private university in Phnom Penh, for two years. In addition to his teaching routines, such as lecturing, preparing lesson plans and setting tests for his classes, he also works as an ELT consultant at the university.

K2 undertook action research in his own classroom while he was taking his Master degree in TESOL at the IFL. The research was completed as a requirement for a course in Action Research in the program. The research concerned how to deal with disruptive behaviors within the classroom. As a lecturer at the university, he said he had not done any research, but it should be noted that while K2 was taking his Master degree, he was also teaching. K2 pointed out his challenges in undertaking research in terms of generating research topics and reviewing relevant literature. He also raised the issue of time constraints that he encountered while doing his thesis research.

Participant K3

K3 is male, aged in his 20s, and is single. He currently holds a Master degree of Business Administration from a domestic university in Phnom Penh. He graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the same university. He has worked at CCU, an average private university in Phnom Penh, for three years. Apart from lecturing and preparing course outlines, K3 recommends books related to curriculum development. He is teaching Foundation year at the university.

K3 did not do any research while he was taking a Bachelor degree, but conducted a research project as it was required for fulfillment of a Master degree in Business Administration. The research focused on a process of recruitment of staff at one university. He prepared a set of questionnaires surveying around 80% to 90% of the staff and conducted an interview with the director of the university. K3 identified four research challenges, including reviewing relevant literature; designing a questionnaire and administering it; analysing data; and facing time constraints.

Participant K4

K4 is male, aged in his 30s, and is married. He currently holds a Master degree of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the IFL. He graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the same Institute. He has worked at DDU, an average private university in Phnom Penh, for two years. He is responsible for giving lectures, preparing and administering tests, designing a course syllabus and course outline for his subject.

K4 experienced doing an action research when he was a post-graduate student in 2007. The action research was conducted in his workplace. He began with thinking of research problems, and then made a questionnaire to survey both students and staff. He used follow-up interviews with four or five students. He then analysed all the data. Apart from this research, K4, as a student, was involved in reading research journals and literature reviews for his courses. The research challenge that K4 encountered while he was doing research was reviewing relevant literature, which he stated was problematic due to a lack of access to relevant documents.

Participant K5

K5 is female, aged in her 30s, and is married. She is currently taking a Master degree of Education at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. She holds a Bachelor degree of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the IFL. She has worked

at EEU, a prominent public university in Phnom Penh, for six years. In addition to her routines of teaching students, designing and administering tests, and marking her tests, K5 is also responsible for supervising teacher trainees who are undertaking their practicums at the university.

As K5 is currently taking a Master degree in Education, she was attending a Research Methodology course, in which she was informed about kinds of Educational Research and how to collect data. K5 stated that she was assigned to complete the program with a thesis research project. She was assisted by her supervisor at the stage of generating a topic for the research, and once it was done, she conducted the research alone. K5 presented her thesis research project at the 8th Annual CamTESOL in 2012. K5 indicated that she used a qualitative approach for her research. She first used a free writing method to gather data from the targeted participants (students at IFL). She analyzed the data from this free writing, and once she discovered unclear perceptions cited in the narrative, she noted and included them in the information she read in previous research articles so that she could use them to organize questions for follow-up interviews. K5 stated that there was no requirement for teachers to conduct any research at her workplace. K5 stated her challenges in doing research in terms of reviewing relevant literature, which was due to a lack of access to relevant materials, and analysing data, by which the findings were quite different from the literature review.

Participant K6

K6 is male in his 40s, and is married. He holds a Master degree of Education and Leadership from a domestic university. K6 graduated his Bachelor of Education in TEFL from a partial enrichment program, which was formally established by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in cooperation with Cambodian Secondary English Teaching (CAMSET), sponsored by the Government of the United Kingdom. According to K6's account, the program was conducted partly at the IFL, Battambong Regional Teacher Training College and in the United Kingdom. K6 is currently taking his Doctoral degree in

Educational Planning and Leadership at the same university. K6 has worked at FFU, a leading private university in Phnom Penh, for five years as a lecturer, trainer and a Vice Dean of the Faculty of Education of the university. He lectures both BA and MED classes, runs an in-service training program, conducts classroom observations, and reviews the BA in TESOL curriculum.

Although K6 had not undertaken any research as a student, he stated that he had been involved in several fieldwork research projects, collaborative work jointly with the MoEYS and some Non-governmental organisations. K6 gave an example of the last project he was involved in which determined the ministerial policies and educational policies and how a program of one project aligned with the ministerial policies and whether it achieved its set objectives. K6 presented two challenges he encountered. First was the literature review. He stated that they had limited resources in Cambodia. The second challenge was the political influences on research. K6 explained that politics play very important roles in education in a way that a topic of the research should not be sensitive to the Government's current politics. K6 gave an example of his topic that was generated for a dissertation focusing on teachers' declined status covering two aspects such as low salary and corruption in education. The topic was not recommended by his supervisor. Similarly, it is worth noting that law students at one university in Phnom Penh were told to avoid 14 topics for their undergraduate thesis writing (Phorn, 2010).

To sum up, all participants have experiences in actually doing research only when they were post-graduate students. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires (K1, K3, K4), free writing (K5) and follow-up interviews (K1, K3, K4, K5). Back at the workplace, their research involved reading research journals in order to improve their teaching (K1, K2). K5 stated that doing research at her workplace was not required by the university, while K6 shared his collaborative work experiences with some international NGOs. The participants reported to have encountered similar challenges while they were conducting their research projects. Those challenges related to generating research topics (K2, K6), searching for

relevant documents to the research topics in order to organize a literature review (K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6), designing research methods and instruments (K1, K3), analysing data collected (K3, K5), and facing time constraints in terms of not having enough time either for reading the materials or data gathering (K2, K3). K6 raised an issue of political influences on students' decision making about suitable research topics.

4.1.1.3 Procedures

The focus group discussion was piloted with a group of six lecturers invited from the IFL. I moderated the session, and a lecturer from the IFL was invited to act as a research assistant to observe the discussion and take notes of specific points, which later were used as recommendations for the adjustment of the focus group process. From this pilot, weaknesses were identified, and some adjustments to the focus group prompts were made (see Appendix 4.1 for details).

Table 4.2 displays an outline of the actual focus group discussion and individual interviews, which comprised five parts: (1) participants' background information; (2) conceptions of 'ELT teacher research', consisting of three sub-tasks; (3) perceptions about the current practice of ELT teacher research; (4) perceptions about communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers in Cambodia; and (5) future plans of research engagement. The

Table 4.2: Outline of focus group discussion and individual interviews

Part		Content	Duration	
			Focus group discussion	Individual interview
1		Participants' background	2 hours and 24 minutes	60 minutes
2	2.1	Initial pre-existing conceptions of ELT teacher research		
	2.2	Research scenarios		
	2.3	Selection of published definitions of ELT teacher research		
3		Perceptions about the current practice of ELT teacher research		
4		Perceptions about communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers		
5		Future plan of research engagement		

whole focus group discussion lasted more than two hours, while the interviews lasted only one hour. The focus group participants referred to one another by the assigned pseudonyms: (i.e., K1, K2, K3, or K4).

During the focus group discussion I acted as the moderator with two major roles: to manage the discussion following the tasks and prompts as outlined above; and to provide the participants with an equal opportunity for contributing their opinions. In other words, I ensured that the participants who were quieter by nature, would be invited to provide their opinions if they did not do so of their own accord.

4.1.2 Individual Interviews

As noted earlier, two participants were unable to join the focus group discussion, so individual interviews for these participants were organised one week after the focus group discussion was conducted. Each individual interview followed the prompts used in the focus group discussion. In conducting the individual interviews, I adopted a role not only as an interviewer but also a peer interviewee to increase the interaction with each interviewee and encourage the participants to freely contribute their opinions, especially about the research scenarios.

4.1.3 Focus group and Individual interview prompts

As stated above, both the focus group discussion and individual interviews followed the same prompts. The prompts were organized in five parts as illustrated in Table 4.2. Part one asked the participants to provide their experiences in doing research and challenges they encountered while they were doing research. Part two, which was the major part of the focus group discussion and individual interviews, was divided into three tasks.

In Task 1, the participants were asked to provide ‘initial pre-existing’ conceptions of “teacher research” in their own words. In Task 2, the participants discussed ten pairs of research scenarios. The scenarios in the first pair part (Set ‘a’) were taken from Borg’s (2009) research scenarios, and the scenarios in Set ‘b’ were adapted from the characteristics of teacher research defined by Borg (2010) to provide some distinctive differences. For

example, was the research systematic or non-systematic, were the results made public or not, was the research clearly quantitative or qualitative, and what effect did different contexts in which research is undertaken have on participants' thinking. These differences are underlined in the scenarios displayed below for Set 'b'. The aim of including the adapted scenarios (i.e. Set 'b') was to provide the participants with more information related to both a research concept (discussed in Borg (2010)) and a context (i.e. research that is conducted at the IFL, a tertiary ELT institution which is familiar to all selected participants) in order to encourage the participants to better engage in the discussion and to contribute more opinions. Borg defines 'teacher research' in language teaching as follows:

> [Teacher research is a] systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly. (Borg, 2010, p. 395)

Below is an example of a pair of research scenarios. All the scenarios are provided in Appendix 4.1.

Scenario 1a: A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful.

1b: A teacher at <u>IFL</u> noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. <u>She discussed these notes with her colleagues and learned a new teaching technique.</u> She tried this new technique in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful. <u>She practiced it in several lessons and realized that it worked effectively. She started to write up a paper to publish in a local ELT journal.</u>

The scenario-based focus group discussion and individual interviews, adopted for this data collection can help collect rich and in-depth information with a high potential for revealing Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research. The scenarios will provide the participants with relevant contexts (i.e. doing research in language classrooms), functioning as

simulations that bear authenticity for the discussion, and they will function as a communicative tool, which is a vital role needed for the discussion (L. Cooper & Baber, 2003). Therefore, these scenarios will effectively encourage the participants to be actively engaged in providing comments and opinions.

In Task 3, the participants selected one of five published definitions of teacher research which they thought could best describe 'ELT teacher research' in the context of ELT education in Cambodia. The definitions, all of which can be read in the prompts (Appendix 4.1) were taken or adapted from different sources. The specific characteristics of each published definition are explained in the following paragraphs.

Definition 1 was adapted from Anderson's (n.d.) notion of 'teacher research', in which a teacher desires to answer certain questions he/she needs to better his/her teaching performances and to fulfil his/her students' learning needs. The teacher, thereafter, designs a plan of action, implements it by collecting data and analysing them for outcomes and adjusting his/her plans in order to achieve his/her aim in the subsequent teaching.

Definition 2 was taken from Lankshear and Knobel (2004). In this definition, teacher researchers are referred to as classroom practitioners at all levels of educational settings, who are involved individually or collaboratively in self-generated and systematic research-related activities. This definition is similar to the first definition in terms of purposes of the research undertaken, i.e., teachers undertake research in order to improve professional practices as educators.

Definition 3 was taken from Borg's (2010) definition of 'teacher research' in language teaching, which specifies four fundamental characteristics of teacher research. By these characteristics, 'teacher research' should be an inquiry which is (1) systematic, qualitative or quantitative; (2) individually or collaboratively conducted by teachers in their own professional settings; (3) made public through sharing the outcomes with colleagues and other professionals in various educational settings; and (4) which may inform ways for enhancement of educational goals.

Definition 4 was taken from Mohr et al. (2004a). In this definition, the characteristics of "teacher research" defined by Borg's (2010) are extended with two additional characteristics, namely intentional, and ethical. Mohr et al. (2004) explain that 'teacher research' begins with teachers' desire and commitment to pursuing or investigating into any relevant issues to their teaching. Moreover, teacher researchers strive to obtain their subjects' permission for data and dissemination of research outcomes. Mohr et al.'s definition of 'teacher research' comprises six characteristics, i.e. "intentional, systematic, public, voluntary, ethical, and contextual" (Mohr et al., 2004a, p. 23).

Definition 5 was developed to provide a variation of definitions of 'teacher research' in this task of the focus group discussion and individual interviews. It was grounded in Hitchcock & Hughes' (1995, pp. 31-35) notion of 'evaluation research'. Given that, Definition 5 describes teachers' engagement in assessing the effectiveness of a course, a language program, materials, books, particularly teaching techniques and methods being practiced within their classrooms over a period of time.

4.2 PHASE 2: CASE STUDY

Phase 2 data collection was essentially a case study, and was designed to examine what actually counts as 'ELT teacher research' in Cambodian ELT education in the particular context of the highly influential CamTESOL conference series. That is, it examined actual research activities undertaken by five IFL lecturers and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. Drawn from these five lecturers' actual research activities, Phase 2 also investigated whether there are any true communities of practice functioning at the macro, meso or micro levels of ELT research practices in Cambodia.

This case study actually comprises four sub-case studies (A1, B1, B2, and B3/B4), which were conducted at the IFL over a period of six months. It began when the participants submitted conference abstracts to the 2013 CamTESOL conference in September 2012, and

progressed through to include the participants' presentations of their research papers at the CamTESOL conference held in February 2013.

4.2.1 Participant Recruitment

Following two plans[6], an Expressions of Interest flyer was placed on the noticeboards in the IFL's staff rooms (see Appendix 4.6). Eight lecturers expressed their interest and were recruited to participate in the Phase 2 data collection and were assigned into two groups: Group A (whose participants were named A1, A2, and A3) and Group B (named as B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and B6). The participants signed the Information and Consent forms (see Appendices 4.7) to indicate their willingness to participate in this phase of the project.

A2 and A3 were conducting a joint research project when they were recruited. However, A3 unexpectedly left the IFL for overseas employment and was therefore not able to present a research paper at the 2013 CamTESOL conference (although he was able to attend a group discussion and an individual interview as part of my data collection). A2 did not participate fully in the research activities due to the fact that the main research activities were undertaken by A3. A2, on the other hand, was able to give the presentation at the CamTESOL conference following the Powerpoint slides prepared by A3. Thus, only A1 from Plan A was recruited to participate in the Phase 2 data collection. A1 had, in fact, already completed his research project when he joined the Phase 2 data collection.

B1's research activities were almost half-way completed when he expressed his interest in joining my Phase 2 data collection. For this reason, B1 was categorised as a participant in group B rather than Group A. B5 and B6 left the group after they attended the introduction meeting because they had been granted a scholarship to study overseas and were no longer available. Four participants (B1, B2, B3, and B4) stayed through the whole Phase 2

[6] In my PhD research proposal that I submitted to the Higher Degree Research Ethics committee of Macquarie University, I included two plans (Plans A and B) for the Phase 2 case study. Plan A sought to recruit participants who had already submitted research abstracts to the 2013 CamTESOL conference, while Plan B was designed to be a place-holding data collection plan in case Plan A would not be viable. It aimed to recruit participants who had not yet submitted conference abstracts and were interested in participating in the Phase 2 data collection.

data collection and were involved in undertaking research activities and presenting their research at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. Table 4.3 summarises the Phase 2 participants' personal information, teaching experiences and years of engagement in doing and presenting research at the CamTESOL conference series.

These five participants undertook four research projects between them, in which three research projects (A1, B1, and B2) were undertaken individually, and one research project (B3/B4) was undertaken collaboratively.

Table 4.3: Phase 2 participants

No	Participant	Sex	Age	Education	Teaching Experience (years)	Number of research presentation (years)
1	A1	M	30s	BEd (TEFL) MA (TESOL)	4	3
2	B1	M	30s	BEd (TEFL) MSc (Education)	8	1
3	B2	M	30s	BEd (TEFL) MA (TESOL)	4	1
4	B3	M	30s	BEd (TEFL) MA (TESOL)	13	3
5	B4	M	30s	BEd (TEFL) MEd (Educational Psychology)	14	6

4.2.2 Phase 2 Participants' Backgrounds

As previously stated, five IFL lecturers were involved in Phase 2 data collection. All the participants had similar backgrounds in teaching English as a foreign language (i.e. they all held Bachelor in Education in TEFL), but had various degrees of research experiences. What follows are fuller descriptions of the five lecturers' backgrounds related to teaching, undertaking research and research challenges.

Participant A1

A1 was recruited as an IFL lecturer in 2009 upon completion of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) degree. While he was teaching English in the Department of English of the IFL, he was taking a postgraduate degree, namely the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at this institute. A1 began to be involved in doing research when he was a student by working as a

research assistant to his lecturer and also sharing in the presentation of this project at the 2007 CamTESOL conference. As a lecturer, A1 conducted a collaborative research project with one of his colleagues and presented it at the 2010 CamTESOL conference. A1 undertook another research project in 2012 to fulfill the requirements for his Master (TESOL) degree, which he also presented at the 2012 CamTESOL conference. See Appendix 6.1 for a brief summary of A1's research activities.

Participant B1

B1 was recruited as a lecturer in the Department of English at the IFL in 2005, and after five years of teaching English in the department, he was offered an international scholarship for a Master's degree in Education overseas. In 2012, he graduated with a Master of Science in Education. B1 stated that he began to be engaged in doing research when he was teaching a course of Research Methodology in the undergraduate program at the IFL. He stated that he was trying to conduct one research project with a group of students, but he described this experience as a failure. As a student in an overseas MSc (Education) program, B had attended many classes of Research Methodology and statistics. B1 had a successful experience of doing a thesis research project to fulfill the requirements of the program. Upon his return from the Master's program, he resumed his teaching at the IFL and began to conduct another research project, which he presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference.

Participant B2

B2 has been an ELT professional at the Department of English at the IFL since 2008 when he successfully completed his MA (TESOL) at this institute. In fact, B2 has been a staff member of the computer and internet unit of the IFL since 2005. B2 had done three empirical research projects during his MA (TESOL) degree program. Of these three projects, two were undertaken for two separate courses, while the other one was done to fulfill the requirements of the degree. B2's research involved an investigation of teachers' teaching strategies and students' learning strategies. B2 did not subsequently conduct any research after graduating with this MA (TESOL) degree.

Participant B3

B3 became a staff member of the Department of English of the IFL in 1999. Along his trajectory of teaching, B3 was granted an international scholarship for an MA (TESOL) overseas in 2005. Upon returning from his overseas study, B3 began to be involved in research activities by first teaching the Research Methodology course and then undertaking research in his classrooms in 2009, 2010, 2013, and 2014. B3 presented each of these research projects at various annual CamTESOL conferences. (See Appendix 6.1 for more details of B3's research projects.) B3's engagement in research was influenced by his attempt to be more involved in teaching in the IFL MA (TESOL) program.

Participant B4

B4 joined the Department of English as a teaching staff member in 1998. He was granted an international scholarship for overseas study in 2003, receiving an MED in Educational Psychology. B4 began to engage in research activities at the IFL since he returned from his overseas study. B4 had undertaken five research projects between 2007 and 2013, and presented them at the annual CamTESOL conferences. (See Appendix 6.1 for more details about A4's research project.) B4's research engagement was influenced by his belief about the benefits that research provided to improve classroom practices and his attempt to be involved in the IFL MA (TESOL).

4.2.3 Research instruments

As stated earlier, Phase 2 data collection is a case study of four individual sub-cases (i.e. four research projects) undertaken by five IFL lecturers and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. This case study, following Watson-Gegeo's (1988) and Duff's (2008) principles of ethnographic study in ESL context and applied linguistics, employed various ethnographic techniques and instruments adopted for data collection (Duff, 2008; Watson-Gegeo, 1988; Woodside, 2010). These techniques include:

- **Relevant documents**. The collected documents comprise annual CamTESOL conference handbooks (2005-2014); IFL information handbook; participants' conference

research abstracts submitted to the 2013 CamTESOL conference; PowerPoint slides that the participants used to present their research at the conference; research papers; and (limited) research diaries in which the participants recorded their research activities.

- **Group discussions**. Two group discussions were organised for Group B participants (B1, B2, B3, and B4). The first group discussion was conducted at the beginning of the data collection to discuss and provide opinions about the research scenarios[7]. The second group discussion was conducted at the end of the data collection to discuss their research activities, including challenges that they faced in undertaking research, their views about ELT teacher research practice at the IFL and CamTESOL, and suggestions for improvement of the practice. On the other hand, only one group discussion was conducted with the Group A participants to discuss the research scenarios due to the fact that their research projects were completed before they submitted the conference abstracts to the 2013 CamTESOL conference prior to their response to the Expressions of Interest to participate in the Phase 2 data collection.

- **Individual interview.** One individual interview was organised with each participant. This individual interview was undertaken with Group B participants mid-way through their research journey. The interview was semi-structured, and followed guiding questions (see Appendix 4.8). In the interview, the participants provided an account of their research experiences and current (2013 CamTESOL) research activities, encompassing what they had completed in the research project; what challenges they had encountered; and what they would need to do to continue the research project. The interviewer took notes and asked questions either to clarify information or to elicit more information about the participants' research accounts. Each individual interview lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. The individual interviews conducted with Group A participants were mainly to collect retrospective data of their research accounts.

[7] The research scenarios were the same ones used in Phase 1's focus group discussion and individual interviews (see Appendix 4.1).

- **Subsequent discussions.** Subsequent discussions with Group B participants were organised virtually through social media communication. These discussions aimed at collecting more information about the participants' research activities partly because the research diaries were not being utilised sufficiently by the researchers and provided too limited information to clearly set out the research processes undertaken along the research timeline.
- **Occasional notes**. I made some occasional notes during the fieldwork, including notes about information related to the participants' research activities that I happened to discuss with participants, and notes that I took from the participants' presentations of their research at the 2013 CamTESOL conference.

Group discussions, individual interviews, and subsequent discussions were all audio-recorded and transcribed. It is important that I acknowledge that my original plan for Phase 2 data collection involved close ethnographic study of how participants actually performed research activities. However, such close ethnographic study, including the use of participant research diaries was impractical and to the extent it was undertaken, only offered limited information. Thus, the research processes reported in the four sub-case studies depended primarily upon the participants' accounts of research activities orally reported through individual interviews, group discussions, and subsequent informal discussions with me. In this respect, the research processes were retrospective by nature rather than ethnographically generated and understood.

4.3 DATA VALIDATION

As stated earlier that this thesis research is qualitative research study, data validation was conducted for both Phase 1 and 2 data analyses. Data validation adopted for this study allowed the participants who were involved in the data collection to ensure that what they said was what they meant to say (Creswell, 2007, 2012; Stake, 2010). Creswell (2012, p. 259) calls this kind of validation "member checking". For the Phase 1 focus group discussion and

individual interview, the data validation was undertaken after the data were transcribed, classified by participant, and summarised and segmented into nine sub-headings. These were (1) profile; (2) research background; (3) research challenges; (4) 'initial pre-existing' conceptions of 'teacher research'; (5) conceptions of 'teacher research'; (6) perceptions about the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia; (7) perceptions about communities of practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, (8) future plans for research engagement; and (9) suggestions for improvement of ELT teacher research. The analysed data were then sent to the participants by email. The participants subsequently confirmed that the summary was accurate and included what they had stated and meant in the discussion and interview.

For the Phase 2 case study, after the information gathered from the subsequent discussions as mentioned above was transferred into a table (see Chapter 6, Tables 6.A1, 6.B1, 6.B2, and 6.B3/B4), face-to-face data validation was conducted. I met each of Group B participants to discuss their research activities during my attendance at the 2014 CamTESOL conference. For this data validation, the participants clarified the timeframe and time durations that they reported to have spent doing each research activity, and the research instruments that they used to collect their data.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Applied linguists and experienced researchers have provided useful frameworks as well as guidelines for analysing qualitative data (see Dörnyei (2007), K. Richards (2003), Freeman (1998), McDonough and McDonough (1997), and Creswell (2007, 2012)). The review of the relevant literature as mentioned above indicates that Creswell's (2012, p. 237) six steps for analysing qualitative data are practical and succinct to adopt for analysing the qualitative data collected in this study. The six steps encompass: (1) "preparing and organising the data for analysis"; (2) "engaging in an initial exploration of the data through the process of coding it"; (3) using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data – descriptions and themes"; (4) "representing the findings through narratives and visuals"; (5)

making an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature that might inform the findings"; and (6) "conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings. The data collected in both Phases 1 and 2 were analysed using NVivo software program, Version 9 and then later Version 10. The audio recordings of the focus group and individual interviews (Phase 1) and group discussions and interviews (Phase 2) were also transcribed using the same software. The transcribed data were coded making nodes of emerging themes; making categories of different research scenarios (Phase 1); recording notes that I made during the focus group discussion and interviews in annotations; and organising memos using the same software. The subsequent analyses were thus content and theme-based. Four overarching themes emerged, namely Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of 'teacher research'; what actually counts as 'teacher research' in the context of CamTESOL conference series; the existence of communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers; and how the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia are improved through communities of practice. The analyses of each of these overarching themes then followed different analytical frameworks. These are set out in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 which deal with each of these themes in turn.

4.5 ETHICS

This PhD thesis project was approved by the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Ethics Committee of Macquarie University prior to the data collection (see Appendix 4.2). In Phase 1 data collection, six tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh approved a request to recruit one of its teaching staff members to participate in the focus group discussion (see Appendix 4.3). In Phase 2 data collection, the IFL approved a request to be a site of a case study comprising five lecturers who undertook research and presented the research at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. With Ethics approval, Phase 1 and Phase 2 data collection were conducted and completed, and the data analyses are presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 respectively.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter describes the research methodology deployed for this PhD study across two phases. In brief, Phase 1 data were collected from a focus group discussion and two individual interviews, which involved six Cambodian ELT lecturers from six different tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh. Phase 2 data were collected through a case study, comprising four sub-cases of four research projects undertaken by five Cambodian ELT lecturers from the IFL. Phase 1 aimed to discern Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of 'teacher research'. Phase 2, on the other hand, aimed at examining the nature of ELT teacher research practices undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series, and investigating whether true communities of practice exist in the current practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. Chapter 5 will examine Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptualisations of ELT teacher research.

CHAPTER 5

ELT TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHER RESEARCH

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will report an analysis of Phase 1 data of my PhD thesis. As stated in Chapter 4, Section 1, this phase focuses on macro perspectives of ELT teacher research conceptualised by Cambodian ELT teachers. The data were contributed by six tertiary ELT lecturers from different universities in Phnom Penh. In this data collection, the participants were involved either in a focus group discussion or in individual interviews. They gave their opinions about teacher research in three connected tasks: (1) they provided opinions about teacher research in their own words; (2) they provided opinions about various research scenarios; and (3) they selected what they considered to be the best of five published definitions of teacher research. The analysis and interpretation of the data will help us understand more clearly what Cambodian tertiary ELT teachers conceive of as teacher research. As Borg (2013) argues, such understanding is important for orientating any initiatives to promote and develop teacher research in language teaching.

In this chapter, I will first briefly review relevant literature on teacher research to conceptualise definitional characteristics of teacher research as a theoretical framework for my analysis. I will then analyse the participants' opinions contributed in the three tasks noted above. I will also track the individual participants' opinions contributed in these tasks to examine whether or not their views about teacher research are consistent. This way of triangulating analysis of the data will help produce credible and interpretable findings. Lastly, I will discuss some important issues related to teacher research drawn from the participants' conceptualisations of teacher research.

5.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section reports a brief overview of recent development in teacher research in the context of language teaching from two perspectives: functional and structural.

From a functional perspective, teacher research is viewed as contributing a lot of benefits to teachers as researchers, as well as to language teaching and learning. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999a) and Ellis and Castle (2010) assert that teacher research enhances teachers' knowledge of teaching. Borg (2010, 2013) provide a comprehensive list of benefits of teacher research reviewed in the literature. Such benefits range from direct benefits to teacher themselves to further development in language teaching on a large scale. For example, once engaged in undertaking research in their classrooms, teachers become more autonomous, critical, reflective, and analytical about their teaching (Atay, 2006; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). They socialise in a research community by way of making connections with different experienced researchers, and thus develop a sense of enhanced status (Burns & Edwards, 2014; Paul Davies, Hamilton, & James, 2007). In terms of large-scale benefits, teachers are involved in making decisions about teaching, including participating in developing curricula, materials, and teaching activities (Hopkins, 2008; Olson, 1990). Thus, they are able to bridge the gap between teaching and learning theories and actual teaching and learning practice.

From a structural perspective, teacher research is defined by its "nature and process, scope, focus and research methodology" (Reis-Jorge, 2007, p. 406). Reis-Jorge proposes two dimensions to describe teacher research. The first dimension is a "contextual dimension", and it reflects two positions that teachers hold, i.e. "a world of professional researchers," in which "teachers are subjects and/or assistants of research" and a "world of classroom teachers," in which teachers are truly "inquiring practitioners" of their own practices (Reis-Jorge, 2007, p. 404). For ease of this review, I have adapted Reis-Jorge's (2007) framework of a teacher research continuum as shown in Figure 5.1. ELT teachers as researchers may be involved in one of four types of research world. According to Reis-Jorge (2007), in Types 1 and 2, teachers are involved in formal, academic research activities which comply with university-

based research undertakings, and in Types 3 and 4 teachers' research activities are informal and exploratory.

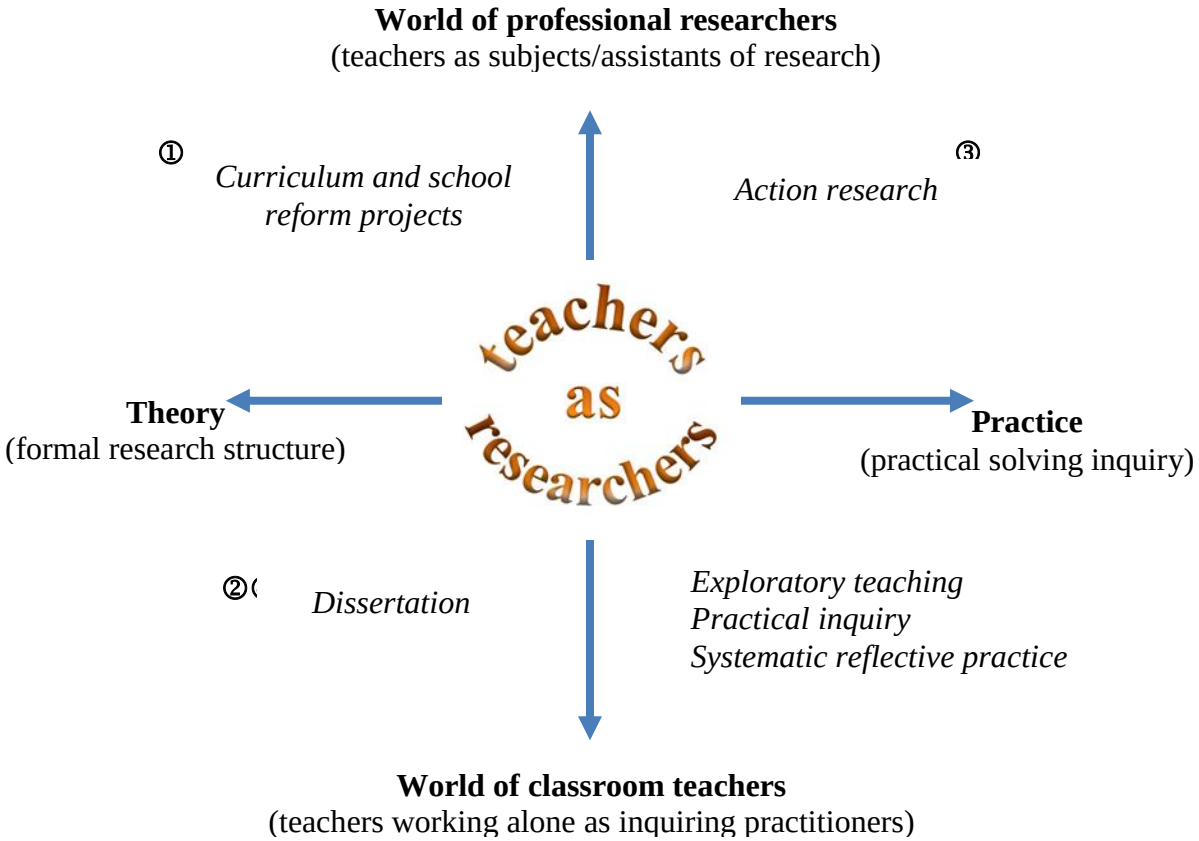

Figure 5.1: Teacher research continuum, *adapted from Reis-Jorge's (2007, p. 404)*

The second dimension is a "structural dimension", and it refers to "forms and methodological approaches to research" adopted by teachers. This dimension manifests the way teachers are involved in conducting research by following more formally structured academic research protocols (Types 1 and 2); alternatively, teachers have adopted their own individual research protocols, i.e. adopting "methodological criteria" that are derived from their own "interpretive expertise", and "criteria of validity" that are influenced by their prior experiences investigating their own teaching practices (Types 3 and 4) (Reis-Jorge, 2007, pp. 403-404). In the latter case, teacher research is divided into two forms: (1) teacher research is a "quiet form of research," where teachers are involved in a "reflective and/or reflexive process" in order to improve their own teaching practices and for individual benefits (Reis-Jorge, 2007, p. 403); and (2) teacher research is "exploratory teaching", "practical inquiry", or

“systematic reflective inquiry”, which, according to Reis-Jorge, has its own “standards of logic, consistency and clarity, and with its own distinguishing features: focus, methodological and epistemological stance and ownership” (Reis-Jorge, 2007, p. 403).

The review of the relevant literature also reveals basic characteristics of teacher research through the discussion of various definitions of teacher research (Anderson, n.d.; Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998; Henderson et al., 2012; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Mohr et al., 2004a). The literature reveals various research genres that are related to teacher research in one way or another. Such research genres include evidence-based inquiry (Philip Davies, 1999; Elliott, 2001; Spencer, Detrich, & Slocum, 2012; Taber, 2007), teacher reflection (Farrell, 2013, 2014; Freeman & Richards, 2002), exploratory teaching (Allwright, 1997, 2003, 2005), practitioner research (Allwright, 2005), classroom research (Hopkins, 2008), action research (Burns, 1999, 2009, 2010), and teacher research (Borg, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2013; Borg & Liu, 2013; Burns & Burton, 2008; Freeman, 1998; Hiep, 2006; S. Moore, 2011a, 2011b), to name some major types. Borg (2010) distinguishes teacher research from other research genres mentioned above. He argues that teacher research could be viewed as classroom research, reflective teaching, and action research, but not all classroom research, reflective teaching and action research could be viewed as teacher research. This is because, as Borg (2010) argues, these types of research may not be undertaken by teachers themselves. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 33) highlight the notion of “evaluation research” which is also distinguished from teacher research in terms of its different purpose and requirements for undertaking research. Unlike teacher research, which is undertaken by teachers in order to improve their teaching practices, ‘evaluation research’ (i.e. evaluating language teaching programs, courses, and materials) is undertaken by researchers rather than teachers, and for administrative purposes and different audiences (i.e. ELT directors, managers, and curriculum developers).

However different the definitions of teacher research are, they have some common characteristics, which I will now focus on in this review. The common characteristics of

teacher research that scholars (i.e. those mentioned above) consistently raise include teacher research being a systematic inquiry undertaken by teachers in their own classroom settings in order to improve teaching and learning. Teacher researchers systematically plan and undertake various research activities to achieve their aims. Being systematic, teacher research requires teachers to plan and undertake research activities appropriately and time them realistically along the research timeline. For example, teachers question their own practice and develop a research question that they intend to pursue; plan how to collect data; analyse and interpret the data; and take any necessary action to improve teaching and learning quality in the classroom (Freeman, 1998).

In contrast to these common characteristics, the issue of teacher research being made public appears to be viewed differently by different scholars. While some scholars consider that teacher research findings are for internal use to improve classroom practice as the end point (Anderson, n.d.; Henderson et al., 2012), other scholars argue that teacher research must be made public (Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998; Mohr et al., 2004a). Borg (2010, 2013) argues that teacher research must be made public either through information sharing among colleagues or formal oral presentations at staff meetings, seminars, conferences, or by way of written publication. Freeman (1998) further suggests how teacher research findings can be made public and fit with recognised academic genres. For example, teacher research findings can be disseminated to the public through one of four types of presentations: (1) interactional presentation, by which audience and teacher researchers can interact and comment on research processes and findings; (2) virtual presentation, by which research processes and findings are virtually presented via video recordings or multimedia; (3) performed presentation, which, taking a form as staged events (i.e. displaying a planned, scripted and structured presentation), exposes an audience to research processes and findings in an "organised and orchestrated manner"; and (4) written presentation, which is the most common way of disseminating research processes and findings through written publication (Freeman, 1998, pp. 156-157).

For the purpose of analysis of the data in this chapter, I will conceptualise characteristics of teacher research grounded in Borg's (2010) definition of teacher research and Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle as "definitional characteristics" of teacher research, because they seem to be complementary and, in combination, provide a useful analytic tool. These characteristics are set out in Figure 5.2. For ease of viewing, I reiterate Borg's (2010) definition of teacher research.

> [Teacher research is a] systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly. (Borg, 2010, p. 395)

The characteristic of teacher research being made public as part of the systematic research process, should be considered as one step among the other important steps of the research process, which teacher researchers are expected to accomplish when they undertake research activities. However, Borg (2010, 2013) states that language teachers, and ELT directors and managers are likely to view teacher research as private and informal. Therefore, this characteristic (teacher research being made public) is emphasised and suggested as one of fundamental characteristics in Borg's (2010, 2013) definition of teacher research.

The review above shows the different definitional characteristics of teacher research and the process by which teacher research is supposedly carried out. I will now provide some background on participants which will help contextualise the study before we examine how the Phase 1 participants' opinions posit their conceptions of teacher research.

5.2 PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND

Let us now examine the participants' experiences in doing research. The accounts of their research experiences may reveal significant insights about their knowledge of the practice of doing research. This in turn will have contributed to how they have conceptualised

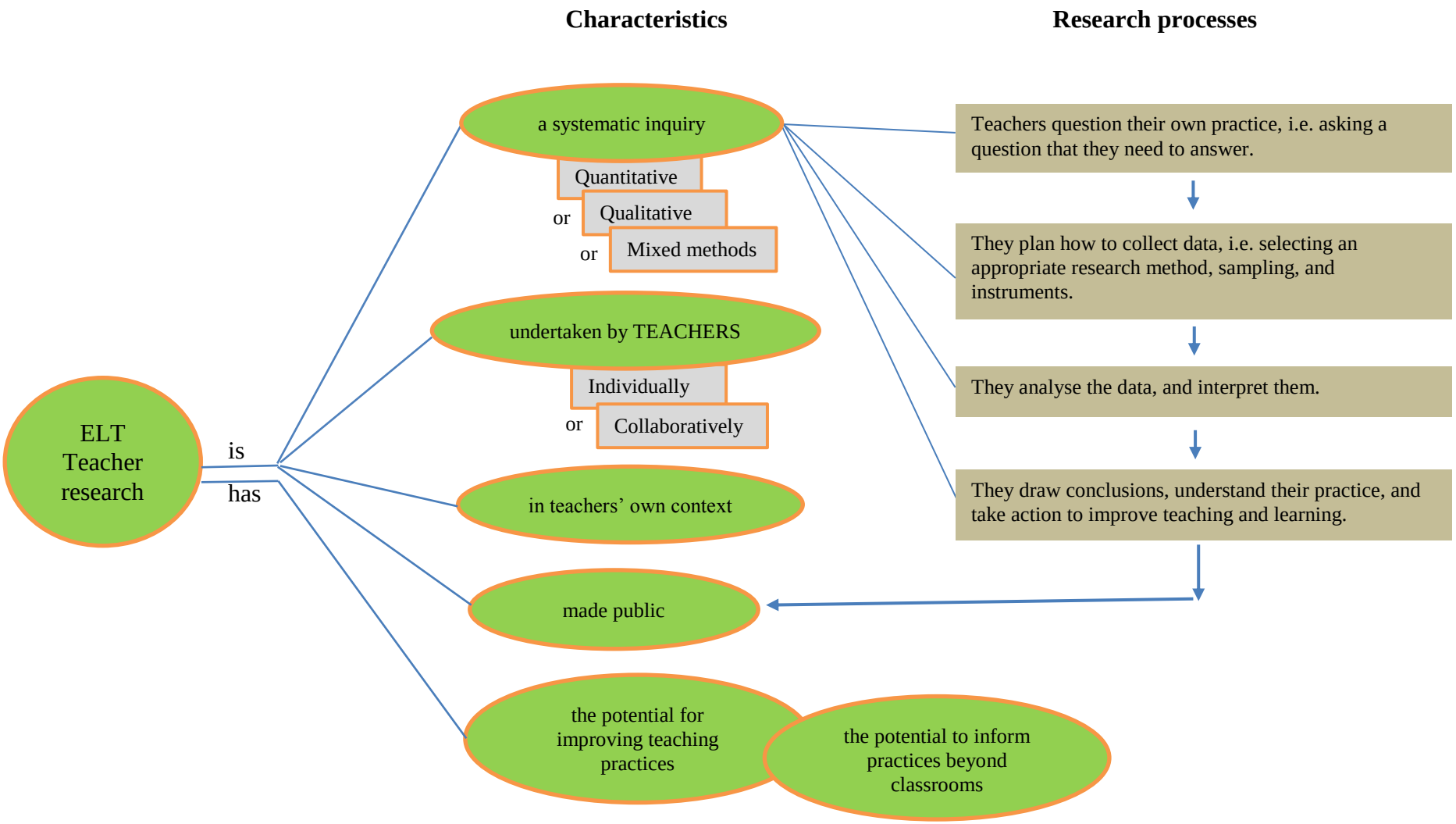

Figure 5.2: Definitional characteristics of ELT teacher research, *adapted from Borg (2010, 2013) and (Freeman, 1998)*

ELT teacher research. As stated in Chapter 4, Section 1, four participants were involved in providing opinions about teacher research in a focus group discussion and two participants in individual interviews. These participants were all university ELT lecturers, and some (K2, K4) held Master degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL); some (K1, K5, K6) held Master degrees in Education; and K3 held a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and a Master in Business Administration.

All participants, except K6, had undertaken research activities to fulfill the requirements for their Master's degree. Of these five participants, K1 and K5 presented their Master's research projects at the 2012 CamTESOL conference. However, none of the participants reported subsequent research activities after they graduated from the Master's programs. This indicates that these participants, whilst having had some experience doing research, were not actually very experienced ELT teacher researchers.

5.3 PARTICIPANTS' CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHER RESEARCH

This section will present the participants' conceptions of teacher research. As displayed in Table 4.3, the participants who were involved in the focus group discussion and individual interviews followed the focus group and interview prompts comprising five different parts. For this chapter, the data included in the analysis were only taken from the participants' views of teacher research contributed in Part 2 of the focus group / interview protocol, which consists of three sub-tasks: 'initial pre-existing' conceptions of teacher research; discussion of the different research scenarios; and selection of published definitions of teacher research. I will now analyse each of these themes in turn.

5.3.1 Initial pre-existing conceptions of teacher research

This section will report the participants' initial pre-existing conceptions of teacher research viewed from functional and structural perspectives. This task conducted in the focus group and individual interviews helps us understand how the participants conceptualised "teacher research" before they were exposed to the different research scenarios.

The participants were asked to write a definition of teacher research in their own words. For ease of reference, I will address this kind of conceptualisation as 'initial pre-existing conception' of ELT teacher research. The participants' written definitions of teacher research are recorded in Appendix 5.1. The analysis reveals the participants' various initial pre-existing conceptions of 'teacher research'.

From the functional perspective, the participants seemed to reach a consensus on how useful ELT teacher research is to teachers, teaching and learning. Table 5.1 shows the list of the functions of ELT teacher research raised by the participants.

Table 5.1: Functions of teacher research perceived by the participants

	Teacher research is conducted in order to/for
Direct benefits	• [improve] knowledge. *(K1)* • practicality [in teaching]. *(K1)* • reflect [one's] teaching and do research for *teaching* materials. *(K1)* • help improve one's teaching method. *(K2)* • further applications [in teaching]. *(K2)* • find out strength and weakness of teachers in their teaching field. *(K3)* • try out new methods. *(K4)* • find out the teaching and learning background and adopt changes to old methods. *(K4)* • find solutions to a problem. *(K5)* • investigate how the existing theories of learning and teaching work in the Cambodian context. *(K6)*
Indirect benefits	• meet the requirements to be a teacher. *(K4)* • meet the needs of the community. *(K4)* • pursue [one's] own studies – assignments or projects. *(K1)* • being an independent researcher. *(K1)*

The benefits of teacher research that the participants raised at this initial pre-existing conceptualisation stage are divided into two categories: direct and indirect benefits. The former refers to the benefits which are closely related to classroom practice. The majority of the participants noted that teacher research is conducted in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The latter are related to teachers' own professional development as long-term benefits. These benefits are consistent with the benefits of teacher research discussed in the literature (Borg, 2010, 2013), especially one of reported important features

that research can provide, i.e. “the research results give teachers ideas that they can use”, in Borg’s (2009, p. 368) study (in the worldwide context) and in Moore’s (2011a, p. 92) study (in the Cambodian ELT context).

From the structural perspective, the participants’ initial pre-existing conceptions of ELT teacher research could be viewed from three perspectives. From the first structural perspective, teacher research is referred to as “classroom action research” (K1, K5, K6) and is defined as teachers’ engagement in undertaking research in their own classroom to find out effective teaching strategies in order to improve teaching quality. This engagement also includes undertaking language assessment (K6). K6 stated that once involved in doing research, teachers would have critical views about the answers to the question that they want to find out about. In this regard, K6 defined teacher research as an action undertaken in language classrooms to validate existing theories of language teaching and learning whether or not the theories work in the Cambodian ELT context. K6 also raised the matter of a narrow scope for ELT teacher research.

From the second structural perspective, teacher research is determined by teachers’ engagement with peer-teaching and mentoring, searching and reading research journals and relevant documents with the aim of improving their teaching knowledge, methods, and materials (K1, K2). Such initial pre-existing conceptions are also consistent with the worldwide views of teacher research engagement in Borg’s (2009, 2013) studies.

From the third structural perspective, teacher research is perceived as “teacher evaluation”. Teacher research is done to investigate teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and how much teachers have applied what they have learned and what they need to improve (K3). K4 and K5 stated that teacher research may be research about teachers or related to teachers. Moreover, from this perspective, teacher research seems to be used as a criterion to evaluate teachers’ performances, as K4 stated that “teacher research might be defined as conducting any research to meet the requirement to be a teacher and what they should do being teachers.” *(K4, Initial-standing definition)*

The analysis of the participants' initial pre-existing conceptions of ELT teacher research from the functional and structural perspectives also suggests a status of teachers which can be viewed from two dimensions. From the first dimension, teachers are perceived as researchers who plan some actions to take in order to deal with problems they face in classrooms or schools. K5 clearly expressed her conception of this status that "teacher research is conducted by teachers and can be conducted by a team in order to have more ideas to share for improvement within classrooms or universities."

From the other dimension, teachers are perceived as subjects of research. This can be clearly seen in K4's initial pre-existing conception of teacher research. He stated "teacher research may be also research about teachers and what they should do being teachers." K5's initial pre-existing definition of teacher research also indicates this view, seeing teacher research as a study about teachers themselves. In a similar vein, this status of teachers is also revealed in K3's view of teacher research. He wrote "teacher research is a kind of research which is conducted to find out strengths and weaknesses of teachers and education, challenges in teaching, what teachers need to improve, and how much teachers have applied what they have learned effectively" *(K3, Initial-standing definition).*

To sum up, the analysis in this section has revealed a variety of initial pre-existing conceptions of ELT teacher research among the participants. This variety of conceptions is realised in terms of what functions teacher research is perceived to play, what teacher research is perceived to be, and what status teachers are perceived to hold in the context of ELT teacher research. What follows in the next section is an analysis of the participants' opinions about ten pairs of different research scenarios.

5.3.2 Participants' discussion of research scenarios

5.3.2.1 Analysis of participants' opinions about the individual scenarios

This section will present the participants' opinions about ten pairs of different research scenarios. I will first present the participants' opinions about individual research scenarios, and also analyse characteristics of each research category that emerged in the focus group

discussion and individual interviews. Then, I will present the participants' selection of their preferred published definition of teacher research. Lastly, I will track the stability of the individual participants' opinions about teacher research provided in the three tasks.

As stated in Chapter 4, Section1.1, the participants were exposed to ten pairs of research scenarios, in which the scenarios in Set 'a' were taken verbatim from Borg's (2009) basic research scenarios, and the scenarios in Set 'b' were modified versions of Set 'a', adapted from Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research. The two scenarios in each pair are different from each other in terms of one or more characteristics such as the different context in which the research is conducted, being systematic or non-systematic, being public or non-public, or being quantitative or qualitative in nature. In this analysis, the differences between the pairs are indicated with the underlined words, phrases, or sentences in the scenarios in Set 'b'. It is important to note that the scenarios in Set 'b' were aimed at providing more information about research to enable the participants to be more engaged in their discussion and more explicit about their beliefs. The analysis indicates that the more information explicitly provided in the scenarios, the likelier the participants were to consider them as "research". The analysis also reveals that instead of assigning each scenario into "definitely not research", "probably not research", "probably research", or "definitely research" as we can see in Borg's (2009) and Moore's (2011a) studies, the participants assigned the different scenarios into one of the different categories comprising "not research", "partly research", "teacher research", "almost complete research", or "(real/complete) research". Table 5.2 provides a brief explanation about the taxonomy of each of these research categories provided by the participants. For ease of analysis, two categories (i.e. "not research" and "partly research") are considered as "not research", while the three other categories (i.e. "teacher research", "almost complete research", and "(real or complete) research") are considered as "research", but it should be noted that they also vary in terms of "research being systematic" and "research being made public".

Table 5.2: A taxonomy of research categories assigned by the participants

Type of research		*Descriptions*
Not research	**Not Research**	This label was given to scenarios which are perceived as being not research-related activities. In general, they are classroom observation, teacher self-reflection, educational report, and reviewing literature.
	Partly Research	This label was given to scenarios which were only one part of the research processes. In other words, the descriptions of these scenarios did not show complete processes of research.
Research	**Teacher Research(1)**	This label was given to scenarios which comprise some research activities undertaken to improve teaching and learning in classrooms. Generally, the research activities in this category did not include "making research public". In other words, the research was only for private/personal purposes.
	Almost Complete Research(1)	This label was given to scenarios which showed the whole range of research processes, i.e. generating research questions, planning data collection methods, collecting data and analysing them, and using the findings to improve teaching quality, but excluded written publication. The research in this category was also considered private. This category was different from the "teacher research" category only in terms of the fact that the research was perceived to be undertaken more systematically than that in the "teacher research" category.
	(Real or complete) Research	This label was given to scenarios which showed the whole research process, beginning with asking research questions; planning to collect data; collecting data; analysing the data and interpreting them, drawing conclusions of the research findings, and writing up research papers for publication in a journal.

Notes: (1) Research in this category did not cover written publication of the research papers; however, when sharing research findings were mentioned, it was only sharing the findings among colleagues.

Let us now examine the participants' views of the first pair of the research scenarios, based on this taxonomy. For ease of viewing, the descriptions of each pair of the research scenarios are included in this analysis.

Scenario 1a

"A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful."

Scenario 1b

"A teacher <u>at IFL</u> noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. <u>She discussed these notes with her colleagues and learned a new teaching technique.</u> She tried this new technique in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful. <u>She practiced it in several lessons and realised that it worked effectively.</u> <u>She started to write up a paper to publish in a local ELT journal.</u>"

Table 1a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 1a

Scenario 1a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	✓		✓			
Partly research						
Teacher research				✓		
Almost complete research		✓				
Real/complete research					✓	✓

Table 1b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 1b

Scenario 1b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
Real/complete research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As displayed in Tables 1a and 1b, all participants had the same opinions about Scenario 1b, but different opinions about Scenario 1a. They viewed 1b as "research" because it was systematic (K2), collaborative work (K1), conducted within the teacher's classroom (K4) to find more effective teaching methods (K5, K6), with better sampling (K1) and broader benefits (K1), and publication (K1, K2, K3, K4). In contrast, the participants had various views about Scenario 1a as "not research" (K1, K3), "teacher research" in a classroom (K4), "almost complete research" (K2), and "research" (K5, K6).

From this analysis, 'being made public' was a determinant to define Scenario 1b as "research" (K1, K3, K4) and to distinguish it from 1a, which was considered as "teacher research" (K4). It is also worth noting that K5 had doubts about the narrow scope of the research although she agreed that both scenarios (1a and 1b) were "research". Moreover, although K2 viewed both 1a and 1b as "research", he argued 1a was "almost complete research" due to the absence of publication of research outcomes.

Scenario 2a

> A teacher read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video-recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He analysed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

Scenario 2b

A teacher at IFL read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video-recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He compared the learners' written work produced before and after his experiment involving this new approach. He asked the learners to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the new approach. He analysed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

Table 2a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 2a

Scenario 2a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Real/complete research					✓	✓

Table 2b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 2b

Scenario 2b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research	✓	✓	✓	✓		
(Real/complete) research					✓	✓

Tables 2a and 2b show that the participants (K1, K2, K3, and K4) agreed that both scenarios (2a and 2b) were "research", but they were not "complete research" ("almost complete research") in terms of an absence of writing for publication, which could be understood from the participants' comparison of these scenarios to Scenario 1a. Though they perceived these scenarios as "almost complete research", they stated that Scenario 2b provided more details about the research processes, comparing learners' performances before and after the implementation of a new approach (K1, K2), using questionnaires (K4), and being more in-depth in terms of data collection and analysis (K6). K5 viewed both scenarios (2a and 2b) as "research", but she questioned the scope of the research.

The analysis provides some significant points. First, as with the research in Scenarios 1a and 1b, the research in 2a and 2b was conducted by a teacher within his or her own classroom to improve teaching quality. However, neither of these two scenarios (2a and 2b)

was labelled as "teacher research" by the participants. Second, the participants (K1, K2, K3, K4, and K6) argued Scenario 2b was more rigorous than 2a in terms of data collection methods (i.e. video-recording and questionnaire filling) and data analysis (i.e. comparing students' written work before and after the experiment). Such an argument points out the participants' bias in favour of mixed-methods approaches. K2, on the other hand, stated that he liked 2b because it was experimental research, probably showing his preference for a quantitative over a qualitative research approach. Third, once again, the participants' (especially K1) argument for the scenarios as "almost complete research" due to its being not made public through written publication strongly indicates that being made public through written publication is truly an indicator to characterise the scenarios as "research" notwithstanding its otherwise rigorous design.

Scenario 3a

A teacher was doing an MA course. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching then wrote an essay of 6000 words in which she discussed the main points in those readings.

Scenario 3b

A teacher was doing an MA course at IFL. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching. She discussed the main points in those readings and identified one effective grammar teaching and learning method. She then applied it in her class over a period of four weeks. She collected and analysed her students' learning outcomes before and after the application of the method, and feedback from her students. She wrote an essay of 6000 words on this finding and sent it to a journal for publication.

Table 3a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 3a

Scenario 3a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	✓		✓		✓	
Partly research						✓
Teacher research		✓*		✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research						

Note: K2 viewed Scenario 3a as "action research". It is located in the "teacher research" category because later K2 viewed "action research" synonymously with "teacher research"

Table 3b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 3b

Scenario 3b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As shown in Tables 3a and 3b, Scenario 3b was viewed as "(real) research" by all participants. The main factors raised by the participants included the teacher's engagement with (reading) and in (doing) research (K3, K4), publication (K3, K4), testing a new method (K5), and applying a theory in real practice (K6). In contrast, Scenario 3a was viewed variably as "not research" (K3, K5), "library research" (K1), which later was considered as "not research", "partly research" (K6), "action research" (K2) and "teacher research" (K4).

It is worth noting from the participants' opinions about these two scenarios (3a and 3b) that the notion of being systematic and made public had recurred in this discussion. Being systematic, along with a notion of testing a new teaching method, which K5 related to testing a hypothesis, makes 3b "(real) research" (K1, K2, K4). Being made public seems to influence K4 to view 3b as "(real) research", distinguished from 3a, which he viewed as "teacher research".

Scenario 4a

A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyse the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

Scenario 4b

A lecturer <u>at IFL</u> <u>invited 6 teachers, each of whom was selected from one of six respected tertiary ELT institutions in Cambodia for a group discussion</u> on the use of computers in language teaching. <u>The discussion was audio-recorded</u> and, the data were analysed and interpreted. He wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

As shown in Tables 4a and 4b, all participants, except K1 who did not comment on the scenarios, agreed that both scenarios (4a and 4b) were "research". However, the participants explained their opinions differently. K3 stated that the lecturers in both scenarios had the same purpose for doing research, but they used different research instruments. K5 also emphasised the data collection and analysis in these two scenarios. K6 did not provide any explanation about his opinions. K2 and K4 viewed 4a as "almost complete research" because the scenario did not describe the full range of research processes.

Table 4a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 4a

Scenario 4a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	Not known					
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research		✓		✓		
(Real/complete) research			✓		✓	✓

Table 4b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 4b

Scenario 4b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	Not known					
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research		✓		✓		
(Real/complete) research			✓		✓	✓

Some notable factors influenced the participants' opinions. K2 and K4 stated that Scenario 4a was not detailed, i.e. it comprised only three steps of the research process. They also described Scenario 4b in a similar way. Therefore, they assigned both 4a and 4b as "almost complete research". The analysis also points out the participants' position regarding the notion of the research findings being made public through written publication. Moreover, drawing from the participants' opinions provided in the discussion of the four pairs of scenarios above, they did not appear to distinguish the research being conducted by teacher(s) from the research being conducted by university lecturer(s).

Scenario 5a

Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.

Scenario 5b

Two teachers <u>at IFL</u> were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and <u>concluded they over-controlled their classes.</u> <u>They both decided to modify their controlling behaviors.</u>

Table 5a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 5a

Scenario 5a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	✓		Not known			
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research		✓		✓	✓	✓

Table 5b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 5b

Scenario 5b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research			Not known			
Partly research						
Teacher research	✓*			✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research		✓			✓	✓

Note: * K1 viewed Scenario 5b as "action research". As later in their discussion, the participants, including K1, used action research synonymously with teacher research, I have located K1's view of this scenario in the "teacher research" category.

Tables 5a and 5b illustrate the participants' various views about Scenarios 5a and 5b. K3 did not provide his opinions about the scenarios. K1 viewed 5a as "not research" and 5b as "action research". He argued that writing a research report for a newsletter (5a) was not research because it was only a short report article typical of a newsletter. Regarding Scenario 5b viewed as "action research", K1 explained that it was the teachers' own research, meaning the teachers did the research for improving their own teaching performance. K2 and K4 viewed 5a as "research" owing to the teachers' publication of their findings in a newsletter. K2 also viewed 5b as "research" although he stated that the research was conducted for an internal purpose. K4, on the other hand, in this regard, viewed 5b as "teacher research". K5's views of both scenarios (5a and 5b) as "research" relied on the teachers' investigation on their controlling behaviors within their own classroom, while K6's opinions about these scenarios as "research" were based on the expected functional roles of research. He stated that "the research was the way of finding and looking at how things work and how its information could be shared among colleagues and friends in the same field." *(K6, Individual interview)*

Some significance can be drawn from the analysis of the participants' opinions about these scenarios. First, being made public has remained a prominent characteristic of "research", regardless of whether the publication of the research is in a journal or a newsletter

(K2, K4). With the absence of a written publication, 5b was considered as "teacher research" (K4). Second, a new term of "action research", viewed as the teachers' own research in Scenario 5b (K1) had emerged in the discussion of these scenarios.

Scenario 6a

To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching.

Scenario 6b

To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a lecturer at IFL applied them in her two classes over a period of eight weeks. Then, she selected representatives from each class for two focus-group discussions about the methods. Each group consisted of 6 students, 3 from each class. She recorded the discussions and analysed the data and realised a better method. She decided to use it in her own teaching.

Table 6a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 6a

Scenario 6a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	Not known		✓		✓	
Partly research						
Teacher research				✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research		✓				✓

Table 6b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 6b

Scenario 6b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	Not known				✓	
Partly research						
Teacher research				✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research		✓	✓			✓

The analysis of the participants' opinions about these two scenarios (6a and 6b) reveals that all the participants, except K1 who did not provide his opinions, viewed the scenarios differently. Despite different data gathering instruments used in the research, K2 viewed both 6a and 6b as "research". He stated that in 6a, the teacher conducted an experiment, but in 6b, the lecturer conducted focus group discussions. In K3's view, 6a was "not research", but 6b was "research". K3 did not explain why he viewed 6a as "not research", but he explicitly raised some points to support his view of 6b as "research". For example, these points included the lecturer's application of the different teaching methods in

the classrooms for eight weeks, inviting representatives from each class for discussion to find out the effectiveness of the methods, recording the discussions and analysing the information from the discussions, and applying the effective method in the class after the research. K4 clearly argued both Scenarios 6a and 6b as being "teacher research" and associated them to "action research" because the teacher or the lecturer was trying to use different methods in the classroom. He reiterated his way of conceptualising "teacher research" as shown in the quote below. He stated:

> "I think if we look at the term research, they both 6a and 6b do not look really like research, but if we used a specific name, such as classroom research or teacher research or action research, I think they both are research." *(K4, Focus group)*

K5 viewed both Scenarios 6a and 6b as "not research". She questioned the reliability and validity in collecting data. She argued that it was hard for the researchers to test the hypothesis when they applied the teaching methods in different classrooms. Despite the different data collection instruments and analysis, K6 viewed both 6a and 6b as "research". His argument was grounded in the fact that the teacher and the lecturer were trying to find out which of the two methods was effective.

Despite the participants' different views of these scenarios, two insights can be drawn from the analysis. The first insight is that a concept of "teacher research" had recurred in K4's view and that this concept was more explicitly spelled out than it was in Scenarios 1a, 3a, and 5b. This view can be seen in K4's statement quoted above. Thus, to K4, without the research outcomes being published, the scenarios were only "teacher research". The second insight is that the participants did not see any significant difference between research conducted by teachers and research conducted by university lecturers.

Scenario 7a: A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education.

Scenario 7b

A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a paper which he submitted to <u>an educational journal</u>.

Table 7a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 7a

Scenario 7a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Partly research						✓
Teacher research				✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research						

Table 7b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 7b

Scenario 7b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research	✓			✓	✓	
Partly research						✓
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research		✓	✓			

As shown in Tables 7a and 7b, the participants had nearly similar views of the scenarios. Almost all participants (K1, K2, K3 and K5) viewed Scenario 7a as "not research". They (K1, K4, and K5) also viewed Scenario 7b as "not research". K6 viewed both 7a and 7b as "partly research". K1 argued that both scenarios described only normal reports. K2's view was grounded in the headmaster's submission of a report to the Ministry of Education. K5's opinions about the scenarios as being "not research" were grounded in her argument that the headmaster did not generate research problems or questions, without which there was no reason for the headmaster to conduct the research. K6's opinions were based on the quality of data collected. K3 argued that 7a was only a report sent to the Ministry of Education. In contrast, K2 and K3 decided that 7b was "research" due to the headmaster's submission of the report to the educational journal. K4 doubted the value of research in 7b and, therefore, decided 7b as "not research", while he argued that 7a was "teacher research".

The analysis of the participants' opinions about these two scenarios reveals some issues of concern. The first issue of concern is the headmaster's submission of the report to the educational journal (i.e. research being made public) which leads both K2 and K3 to the view of Scenario 7b as "research", regardless of whether the report would meet the publication requirements. The second issue of concern is K4's view of 7a as "teacher research", which reflects some participants' 'initial pre-existing' conceptions of "teacher

research", i.e. any research about teachers. Apart from the issues above, the discussion of the two scenarios (7a and 7b) allows us to clearly see K4's view about "teacher research". He stated:

> "I'm not really sure about the term teacher research but in my view the term teacher research is about finding out ways or methods in teaching to improve teaching in the classroom. So if the term teacher research is the same as what I think then scenario 7a is research again; it is teacher research in the classroom." *(K4, Focus group)*

Scenario 8a

Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Scenario 8b

Mid-way through a course, a teacher at IFL spent half an hour talking with his students in order to elicit some feedback on his teaching. He noted what the students shared and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Table 8a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 8a

Scenario 8a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research	✓	✓	✓*	✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research					✓	✓*

* See the explanation about B3's and B6's opinions in the analysis that follows.

Table 8b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 8b

Scenario 8b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research					✓	✓*

* See the explanation about B6's opinions in the analysis that follows.

As illustrated in Tables 8a and 8b, all participants viewed these scenarios as "research" but labelled them as different types of research. For example, K1, K2, and K4 identified both 8a and 8b as "teacher research". K1 explained that if following a definition of fully recognised research, then the scenarios were not like complete research, but he stated

that if following K4's conception of "teacher research" raised in an earlier discussion, the scenarios were "teacher research". K2 and K4 agreed with K1's view and reasoning. Although K6 viewed these scenarios as "research", in his discussion, he emphasised these two scenarios as "teacher research", i.e. the teacher was finding out opinions from the students within the classroom in order to improve his or her instruction. K5 argued that the scenarios are "research" but pointed out the issue of the narrow scope of the research.

By contrast, in his discussion, K3 did not assign any particular category to any of the two scenarios. He stated that the data collected in Scenario 8b were not enough for the teacher to make a decision for the course. He also stated that compared to 8b, Scenario 8a was more formal. However, later in this discussion, he supported K4's views of Scenarios 8a and 8b.

This analysis shows that the participants appeared to have perceived students' feedback evaluation as "teacher research" and "research". Taking into consideration Hitchcock and Hughes's (1995) notion of "evaluation research", this indicates the participants' confused conceptualisation of "evaluation research" as "teacher research". Most participants (K1, K2, K4, and K6) began to explicitly use the term "teacher research" in their discussion. K1 referred to K4's conception of teacher research to justify his opinions about Scenarios 8a and 8b, and later K2 shared the same view.

Scenario 9a

A teacher trainer asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal.

Scenario 9b

A teacher trainer <u>at IFL</u> asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments, the trainer decided to <u>investigate the trainees' ideas.</u> <u>She administered a questionnaire survey in her class, and analysed the data statistically</u>. She presented the results at an ELT conference.

The analysis of the participants' opinions about these two scenarios provides useful information related to their conceptualisation of "teacher research". All participants, except K4, viewed Scenario 9b as "research". K1 and K3 argued that the information gathered in 9b

Table 9a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 9a

Scenario 9a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						✓
Teacher research	✓	✓*	✓	✓*		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research					✓	

* See the explanation about B2's and B4's opinions in the analysis that follows.

Table 9b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 9b

Scenario 9b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research				✓*		
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

** See the explanation about B4's opinion in the analysis that follows.

was based on the trainees' responses in the questionnaires, not solely based on the trainees' perceptions stated in the assignments, as described in Scenario 9a. K2 argued for 9b being more systematic working through administering questionnaires, analysing the data and presenting the results. K5 viewed both 9a and 9b as "research", but she had doubts about the reliability and validity of the research in 9a. Some participants (K1, K2, K3), on the other hand, argued 9a was "teacher research". K1 argued the case for the teacher's conducting his own research as a means of improving his classroom teaching practices. K2 stated Scenario 9a was "probably only action research or teacher research". K3 had a similar idea to K1's idea. K6 argued 9a was only "partly research" on the grounds that it was not an in-depth study, but he stated that 9b was "research" because the study was more in-depth. K4 stated that both 9a and 9b were beyond "teacher research" due to the teacher's submission of the paper for publication in a professional journal and presentation of the research findings at a conference.

As we can see, in the views of Scenario 9a given by K1, K2, and K3, the notion of research rigor has become an indicator to determine the status of a scenario. Being more rigorous in terms of data collection, Scenario 9b was identified as "research", while 9a was only "teacher research". K4, on the other hand, distinguished "teacher research" from "research" because of the publication component. It is also noted that the fact that it was a

teacher trainer who conducted research as stated in 9a and 9b does not distract the participants from viewing Scenario 9a as "teacher research". Let us now examine the participants' opinions about the last pair of scenarios.

Scenario 10a

The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, then presented the results at a staff meeting.

Scenario 10b

The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She selected eight representatives of the teachers and invited them for discussion. She studied the recorded discussion and used the information to decide what she should do with the new course book.

Table 10a: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 10a

Scenario 10a	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 10b: A summary of participants' opinions about Scenario 10b

Scenario 10b	Focus group discussion				Individual interview	
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Not research						
Partly research						
Teacher research						
Almost complete research						
(Real/complete) research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As displayed in Tables 10a and 10b, all participants viewed both scenarios as "research". Among these participants, only K1 questioned about the data collection instruments described in both scenarios. He argued that for a more rigorous data collection not only a questionnaire but also follow-up interviews or group discussion would be used. Once again, the participants appeared to have viewed "evaluation research" as "research".

Furthermore, this analysis also shows that the participants seemed to view research having a large scope as an important factor to define "research". In this case, the head of the English department researched the teachers' perspectives about a new course book across the department. Compared to Scenarios 8a and 8b, in which the teacher researched the students' perspectives about a course, the scenarios (8a, 8b) were only viewed as "teacher research".

We have so far examined the participants' opinions about the different research scenarios. As noted earlier, the aim of including the different research scenarios in the second pair part (Set 'b') was to provide a rich context and information related to "research" in order to encourage the participants to be actively involved in sharing their opinions about the scenarios. We have now seen that with the additional information and context related to "research" described in scenario Set 'b', the participants held clearer views about the scenarios as "research". In this respect, to better understand the participants' conceptualisation of "teacher research" and whether "teacher research" is categorised differently from "research", I will now examine the participants' opinions about the scenarios in the first pair part (Set 'a'). See Table 5.3 for the participants' opinions about the scenarios in Set 'a'.

5.3.2.2 Characteristics of each research category

As noted earlier, the participants discussed the ten pairs of research scenarios such that, inductively, I was able to identify five different research categories: (1) "not research"; "partly research"; "teacher research"; "almost complete research"; and "(real/complete) research". These, in turn, can be classified into two major groups, comprising the "not research" group and the "research" group (see Table 5.2 for an explanation of the taxonomy of each research category). Table 5.3 illustrates the majority of research scenarios being identified as a major group of "research", alongside various other types such as "teacher research", "almost complete research", and "(real/complete) research". It is clear from an immediate viewing of Table 5.3 that the two interview participants, K5 and K6, had broadly similar views and that these differed from those of the focus group participants, K1, K2, K3 and K4. To further explore these differences and others, let us now view the specific characteristics of each research category provided by the participants.

Characteristics of a "(real/complete) research" category: As revealed in my analysis earlier, the research scenarios that the participants identified as "(real/complete) research" generally comprise:

Table 5.3: A summary of participants' opinions about the research scenarios in Set 'a'

Scenarios	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
1a	Not research	Almost complete Research	Not research	Teacher research	Research	Research
2a	Almost complete Research	Almost complete Research	Almost complete Research	Almost complete Research	Research	Research
3a	Not research	Action Research	Not research	Teacher research	Not research	Partly research
4a	No comment	Almost complete Research	Research	Almost complete Research	Research	Research
5a	Not research	Research	No comment	Research	Research	Research
6a	No comment	Research	Not research	Teacher research	Not research	Research
7a	Not research	Not research	Not research	Teacher research	Not research	Partly research
8a	Teacher research	Teacher research	Teacher research	Teacher research	Research	Teacher research
9a	Teacher research	Teacher research	Teacher research	(Beyond) Teacher research	Research	Partly research
10a	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research

Color codes:

Research | Teacher research | No comments | Research (with qualifications) | Not research | Partly research

(1) the complete research process, including purpose(s) of doing research; data collection methods (i.e. describing instruments for data collection); data analysis; and making the research public, i.e. presenting the research outcomes at a staff meeting or writing a research paper for publication (see Scenarios 5a and 10a);

(2) having a broader scope beyond classroom practice, i.e. the research outcomes for fulfilling the needs at a school or institutional level (Scenario 10a); and probably

(3) is related to materials, course, and program evaluation (Scenario 10a).

Characteristics of an "almost complete research" category: My analysis above shows that a number of the research scenarios in Set 'a' that were viewed as "almost complete research" often do not explicitly describe the whole research process. For example, in Scenarios 4a, K2 and K4 argued the research was not complete as it described only three steps of the research process: administering a questionnaire; statistically analysing the questionnaire data; and writing an article for publication. In a similar vein, several participants (K1, K2, K3, and K4) viewed the research in Scenario 2a as "almost complete research".

Characteristics of a "teacher research" category: As depicted in Table 5.3, a number of the research scenarios were viewed as "teacher research". These scenarios generally comprise research activities undertaken less systematically by teachers in their own classrooms to improve teaching and learning quality (Scenarios 1a, 3a, 6a). "Teacher research" was sometimes referred to as "action research" by the participants (Scenarios 3a, 9a). In the discussion, K4 strongly emphasised the action research characteristics of "teacher research". It is important to note that both participants (B5 and B6) appeared to have viewed most of those research scenarios which were considered by other participants as "almost complete research" or "teacher research", as "research" (see Table 5.3), although K5 questioned issues related to scope, validity, and reliability of research. See Section 5.3.4 for a tracking of the individual participants' opinions given in the three tasks in the focus group discussion and individual interviews in order to show the stability of their opinions.

Characteristics of a "not research" and a "partly research" categories: As illustrated in Table 5.2, these two research categories are both classified into the "not research" group because, according to the participants, these categories have similar characteristics. The scenarios identified in this category often only described one part of the research process. For instance, Scenarios 1a and 3a described only one part of the research process. Moreover, the scenarios often provide unclear research activities as in the cases of Scenarios 6a and 7a. K5 and K6, who appeared to have perceived most research scenarios as "research" also stated that 6a (K5) and 7a (K5, K6) are "not research" and "partly research", respectively.

We have now viewed the characteristics of each research category on the basis of the participants' opinions about the various scenarios, and can see that the participants had different opinions about the scenarios. To have a clearer view about these different opinions I will now report the results of the third component of Phase 2 data collection, namely the individual participants' selection of what they considered to be the best published definition of teacher research.

5.3.3 Participants' selection of published definitions of teacher research

As stated earlier, the participants were asked to select one of five published definitions of teacher research which they thought could best describe ELT teacher research in the Cambodian ELT context. The main aim of including this task in the focus group discussion and individual interviews, especially in terms of it being undertaken after the participants had discussed the various scenarios, is to examine whether each participant had a clear, more considered, view about "teacher research" after they had been exposed to the range of different research scenarios.

As noted in Chapter 4, Section 1.3, the five published definitions selected for this task provided the participants with various choices relatable to "teacher research". To briefly reiterate, Definition 1 is a simple definition of teacher research, referring to teachers' research activities undertaken in classrooms to improve teaching and learning. Definition 2 is more

formally stated than Definition 1. However, Definitions 1 and 2 do not cover the research outcomes made public as a characteristic of "teacher research". Definition 3, which is a basic definition of "teacher research", taken from Borg (2010), comprises four fundamental characteristics, encompassing research being a systematic inquiry, conducted by teachers in their own context, being made public, and having potential for improving practices. Definition 4 has three additional characteristics of teacher research to those stated in the previous three definitions, namely that teacher research is also intentional, voluntary, and ethical. Definition 5 is different from the other four definitions, in that it refers to an evaluation of lessons, materials, courses, or programs rather than "teacher research". Table 5.4 describes these published definitions of teacher research and also reports each participant's preferred definition.

The participants independently selected quite diverse definitions. K1, K3 and K5 selected Definition 3; K4 selected Definition 1; and K2 and K6 selected Definition 5, but K6 suggested adjustments to Definition 5 (see Table 5.4). K6 selected Definition 5 as the most suitable definition of "teacher research" in the Cambodian ELT context. He explained that a systematic study does not cover only academic but also everyday activities in an institution. However, he proposed amending this definition as it does not indicate purposes for undertaking research. He suggested integrating some characteristics of Definition 1 into Definition 5 because this adjustment would emphasise the main purpose of doing research – undertaking research in order to meet the students' needs. He also suggested adding some more characteristics taken from Definition 3 such as "collaborative work" and "quantitative or qualitative research methods". K6's new definition of teacher research is detailed below:

> "Teacher research is a systematic study undertaken, individually or collaboratively, quantitatively or qualitatively, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique, method, approach or material practiced within a classroom, a particular program or set of events in an educational institution over a period of time so as to meet the student needs." *(K6, Individual interview)*

Table 5.4: Participants' selection of published definitions of "teacher research"

Number	Definitions	Participants
1	"Teacher research" is an inquiry, in which, on a daily basis, teachers design and implement a plan of action, observe and analyse outcomes, and modify plans to better meet the needs of students." (Anderson, n.d.)	K4
2	"Teacher research" can be described in this way: "Classroom practitioners at any level, from pre-school to tertiary, who are involved individually or collaboratively in self-motivated and self-generated systematic and informed inquiry undertaken with a view to enhancing their vocation as professional educators." (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004)	
3	"Teacher research" is a systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and education policy more broadly." (Borg, 2010)	K1 K3 K5
4	"Teacher research" is an inquiry that is intentional, systematic, public, voluntary, ethical, and contextual. (Mohr et al., 2004a)	
5	"Teacher research" is a systematic study undertaken in order to assess the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique, method, approach or material practiced within a classroom, a particular programme or set of events in an educational institution over a period of time. (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995)	K2 K6(5+1/3)

We now see that after the participants discussed the different research scenarios, three participants (K1, K3, and K5) preferred Definition 3; two participants (K2 and K6) preferred Definition 5; and one participant (K4) preferred Definition 1 to describe 'ELT teacher research' in the context of ELT education in Cambodia. Such findings suggest a more consistent, considered conceptualisation of "teacher research" than was apparent with participants' initial, pre-existing ideas about research. What follows in the next section is the tracking of the participants' views about teacher research in order to examine whether such viewings are consistent from Task 1 ('initial pre-existing' conception) to Task 2 (discussion of the various research scenarios), and to Task 3 (selection of published definition of teacher research).

5.3.4 Tracking of individual participants' opinions about ELT teacher research

It is useful to consider the issue of stability of stated beliefs about teacher research among the views expressed by the participants in this study. As we have seen, there is some evidence of changes in beliefs expressed as the participation in discussions progressed. I will therefore now track the individual participants' opinions given in the three tasks and their explanations of "teacher research." The tracking will begin with the 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisations of "teacher research" provided by the participants before they discussed the research scenarios, working through their commentaries about the scenarios, and then proceeding to the selected published definitions of "teacher research". This tracking will be done on an individual participant basis.

In the discussion of the various research scenarios, K1 maintained some of the characteristics of "teacher research" that he had stated in his 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation. Some of these characteristics include, for example, "teacher research" as action research (see his opinions about Scenarios 5b, 8a, 8b, and 9a). K1's opinion about "ELT teacher research" was influenced by K4's opinion (see his opinions about Scenarios 8a and 8b). When asked to decide one published definition to be the most suitable definition of ELT teacher research in the Cambodian context, K1 chose Definition 3, which is Borg's (2010) basic definition, and which covered the components he raised in the discussion, except for "teacher research" being made public.

The characteristics of K2's 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation of "teacher research," such as teacher's reading articles, searching on the internet to improve one's own teaching, and the research results being useful for further implications, were maintained throughout the whole discussion of the research scenarios (see his opinions about Scenarios 3a, 8a, 8b, and 9a). K2' conception of "ELT teacher research" became clear when he referred his definition to K4's proposition of "teacher research" in his discussion of Scenarios 8a and 8b. Nonetheless, to describe "ELT teacher research" in the Cambodian ELT context, he decided Definition 5, i.e. evaluation of materials, courses, or program as the most suitable

definition.

K3's 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation of "teacher research" is based solely on purposes of undertaking research, i.e. to investigate strengths and weaknesses of teachers (including knowledge about teaching, challenges in teaching, how much teachers have applied what they have learned, and what they need to improve). Along the course of discussion of the various research scenarios, K3 did not explicitly distinguish "teacher research" from "research" until he discussed Scenario 9a when he referred to K1's idea about Scenario 9a and mentioned the term "teacher research" in his discussion. This indicates that to K3, "teacher research" was research conducted in the classroom and, to be inferred from his discussions, for finding out strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and teaching materials so that any action for improvement could be planned. Nevertheless, K3 selected Definition 3 as the most suitable definition to describe ELT teacher research in the Cambodian context.

Among all the participants, K4 was more active than the others in defining the concept of "teacher research" in the focus group discussion. His position about "teacher research" was firm from the beginning until the end of the discussion. K4's 'initial pre-existing' definition of "teacher research", as seen in Appendix 5.1, reveals his view of "teacher research" as a criterion, by which teachers are required to do research. Throughout the discussions of the various scenarios, K4 maintained his strong position of "teacher research". See, for instance, his opinions about Scenarios 1a, 3a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 8a and 8b in Section 5.3.2.1. Drawn from his opinions, "teacher research" is likely to be confined to certain characteristics, encompassing teacher's trying out new methods (1b, 5b, 6a, 6b, 8a and 8b), teacher's reading research articles and books (3a) for finding out more effective teaching and learning techniques and methods (1a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 8a, and 8b), and research about teachers (7a). His strong position about teacher research was even clearly spelled out when he selected Definition 1 to describe ELT teacher research in the Cambodian context.

K5 was the only participant who initially inserted the notion that "teacher research" was conducted by a "teacher". In her 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation of "teacher

research", some characteristics are clear such as that research is conducted by teachers and conducted about teachers and teaching. She also related "teacher research" to action research to find solutions to the problems to share for improvement within classrooms or universities. However, during the course of the interview, K5 did not use the term "teacher research", but instead "research" to identify the various scenarios. In K5's comments, "research" is conceived to be more scientific and academic. The former is detailed in a way that the research needs to begin with a problem, a question, an objective, or a hypothesis before researchers proceed to data collection, and, according to K5, this would yield reliable and valid research outcomes (see K5' opinions about all scenarios, especially 7a, 7b, and 9a). The latter, as K5 argued, refers to a kind of research that is conducted with a large scope, and is carefully planned, following all required steps raised in the former instance, and it should have mentors functioning as supervisors to give advice on the research. K5 revealed her solid position of teacher research at the end of the interview. She stated:

> "I define research when we want to test something. We want to find out something; we have a problem; or we have an objective to do it and then we think of better method or how we can get the answer to our problem. We can report the result about our problem, but the most important thing is whether the result can be generalised or is reliable." *(K5, Individual interview)*

K5 selected Definition 3, which was proposed by Borg (2010), to describe ELT teacher research in the Cambodian context, and this selection truly reflected her stated characteristics of "research" in her discussion and, to a great extent, her 'initial pre-existing' conception of "teacher research".

In a similar vein, K6's 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation of "teacher research" characterised teacher research as investigating whether existing theories work in the Cambodian context; how children and adults acquire language through different sources; and "teacher research" is conducted in a small scale in the classroom context in Cambodia. K6 added two more characteristics of "teacher research" namely action research and language assessment. In his opinions about the various research scenarios, K6 referred to Scenarios 8a

and 8b, showing that "teacher research" and "research" were synonymous. He stated:

> "8a and 8b I think this is for finding out opinions from the students to improve his or her teaching instructions. Although not really written properly, it's also part of teacher research, investigating comments from students and then he could make his or her instruction better. That's research." *(K6, Individual interview)*

If the terms "teacher research" and "research" are synonymous, what K6 argued for about "research" should also be about "teacher research". Thus, drawn from his opinions, "teacher research" is a way of finding out how new teaching activities, techniques, methods, and theories work in the classroom in order to improve the environment of teaching and learning (see K6's opinions about Scenarios 1a, 1b, 3b, 5b, and 6b). K6 added that sharing the research results (5b) and evaluating textbooks or materials (10b) are also components of "research", as shown in the following quotes.

> "… so research is the way of finding and looking at how things work and how its information could be shared among colleagues and friends in the same field." *(K6, Individual interview)*

> "... so both are research on coursebook, evaluating the coursebooks." *(K6, Individual interview)*

When K6 was trying to select one of the published definitions of "teacher research", he was not completely satisfied with any of the definitions. He argued for Definition 5 as the main one, which, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), is a concept of "evaluation research" rather than "teacher research". However, K6 also argued that this definition needed additional points, some of which he borrowed from Definitions 1 and 3 (see K6's new definition of "teacher research" in Section 5.3.3).

The above tracking of the six participants' development of providing opinions about ELT teacher research reveals that the participants eventually seemed to settle their own beliefs and attitudes toward ELT teacher research in the Cambodian ELT context. Among the participants who joined in the focus group discussion, K4 had the strongest view of "teacher research" before, during, and after the discussion of the different research scenarios. His

strong view of “teacher research”, explicitly addressed in the discussion, influenced the other focus group participants’ (K1, K2, K3) views of “teacher research” (see their opinions about Scenarios 8a, 8b, 9a, and 9b). Nevertheless, none of these participants selected Definition 1 (K4’s selection), but instead K2 selected Definition 5, and K1 and K3 selected Definition 3. This shows that despite their opinions being influenced by K4’s strong position of “teacher research”, these participants (K1, K2, and K3) had their own individual views of “teacher research”. K5 and K6 expressed their own opinions about ELT teacher research in the individual interviews, independent from any peer influences present in the focus group discussion.

We have so far discerned the participants’ conceptualisations about “ELT teacher research” viewed from their opinions provided in the ‘initial pre-existing’ conceptions, the discussion of the different scenarios, and the selection of the published definitions of “teacher research”. The participants appeared to have held more considered preferences of “teacher research” in their selection of the published definitions of “teacher research”. However, despite such preferences, the analysis reveals some issues of concern, which I will now turn to in my discussion in the next section.

5.4 DISCUSSION

The analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in this phase of my PhD project reveals a number of issues related to “ELT teacher research” conceptualised in the Cambodian ELT context. I will now discuss these issues in relation to the definitional characteristics of teacher research displayed in Figure 5.2, the participants’ misconceptualisation of “teacher research”, and the limitations of the data collection. Let us now begin with the discussion of the first characteristic of teacher research, i.e. that teacher research is a systematic inquiry.

5.4.1. Definitional characteristics of teacher research

5.4.1.1 Teacher research: Being a systematic inquiry

The first issue of concern related to the characteristics of teacher research is the participants' viewing of teacher research as being a non-systematic inquiry. In fact, in teacher research, teachers need follow all necessary steps in conducting research. For example, teachers themselves question their own practice; form research questions; plan data collection; analyse the data and interpret the findings; and draw conclusions about the research findings (Anderson, n.d.; Henderson et al., 2012). Thus, being systematic is one of the common features of teacher research, and it fulfills what Freeman (1998) has referred to as teacher research discipline. In Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle, after teacher researchers draw conclusions from their research activities, they take some action to improve teaching practices in their classrooms and make their research public by means of oral presentation or written publication, a characteristic which Borg (2010, 2013) also strongly recommends in conceptualising teacher research. In light of the analysis in this chapter, the participants more or less viewed the complete research process of undertaking research to be a key determinant in defining the scenarios as "research". See, for example, the analysis of the participants' opinions about Scenarios 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 6b, and 9b in Section 5.3.2.1. In contrast, it would be only "teacher research" when the scenarios are not fully described with all the necessary steps of the research process. See, for instance, the analysis of the participants' opinions about Scenarios 1a, 3a, 5b, 6a, 8a, 8b, and 9a in Section 5.3.2.1. In this respect, the participants conceptualised "ELT teacher research" as being less systematic than "research".

5.4.1.2 Teacher research: Conducted by teachers in their own context

Another issue of concern is how the participants viewed teacher research in terms of the context of research, i.e. who undertakes research, why it is undertaken, and in what setting it is undertaken. Prior to discussing the participants' views of "teacher research" in this respect, let us briefly review the ten pairs of research scenarios. Of all the research scenarios, seven scenarios (1a, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 8a, and 8b) indicate that the research is conducted by

individual teachers; three scenarios (1b, 5a, and 5b) show the research undertaken by teachers in the form of collaborative work; and four scenarios (4a, 4b, 6a, and 6b), two scenarios (9a and 9b), and four scenarios (7a, 7b, 10a, and 10b) indicate the research undertaken by university lecturers, teacher trainers, and headmasters and heads of the department, respectively.

The analysis shows that the participants' opinions about the research scenarios rarely indicate that the status of researchers (i.e. being teachers, university lecturers, teacher trainers, headmasters or heads of the department) is a key determinant in defining "teacher research". However, the analysis of the participants' opinions about Scenarios 8a and 10a reveals a clear view of the participants' conceptualisation of "teacher research" in this regard. For example, both scenarios (8a and 10a) describe the same purpose of conducting research, i.e. evaluating a course (8a) and a new course book (10a), and research instrument, i.e. using questionnaires to collect data. These two scenarios (8a and 10a) are different from each other in terms of the context, i.e. the research is undertaken by a teacher in a classroom setting (8a) and by the head of the English Department in a whole school setting (10a). Some participants (K1, K2, K3, and K4) viewed Scenario 8a as "teacher research", but they viewed 10a as "research". This finding suggests that the participants' conceptualisation of "ELT teacher research" is partly influenced by the context in which research is undertaken, i.e. teacher research is undertaken by teachers in their classroom context for improving classroom practice.

5.4.1.3 Teacher research: Being made public

Teacher research made public has become a fundamental issue in the recent debates about conceptualisation of "teacher research", and in this phase of my study, making teacher research public is another issue of concern related to the characteristics of "teacher research". The compelling factor that is probably a barrier for teacher research going public is that language teachers, ELT directors and managers often perceive teacher research as private, i.e. teacher research findings are only for teachers to improve their own classroom practice (Borg, 2009, 2010, 2013).

In light of the analysis and interpretation of the participants' opinions above, it is clear that the participants' views about the notion of research being made public are similar to the views of language teachers, ELT directors and managers in Borg's studies (2009, 2010, 2013). To clarify, the participants viewed the research scenarios in which research is made public, especially as written publications, as "research", and with the absence of such written publication, similar scenarios would be viewed as "teacher research". For example, when the teachers share their research findings with colleagues at a staff meeting (2a and 2b), the participants (K1, K3, and K4) viewed them as "almost complete research". The participants were also likely to view these kinds of scenarios as "teacher research" (see the participants' opinions about Scenarios 8a and 8b). K4 clearly stated that Scenarios 9a and 9b were beyond "teacher research" because the teacher wrote a research paper for publication in a professional journal (9a) and shared the research outcomes at an ELT conference (9b). Similar comments are also seen in their discussions of Scenarios 1b and 3b.

5.4.1.4 Teacher research: Having potential for enhancing practice

Another issue of concern is the scope of teacher research, i.e. the purpose(s) of undertaking research, which becomes one potential feature for the participants to determine whether or not the scenarios are research. The participants, especially K4, K5, and K6, but including K1 who later agreed with K4's opinions, seemed to try to conceptualise research around this notion. K5, through all her explanations about the research scenarios, explicitly and repeatedly gave her opinion that the researchers must have ideas, problems or hypothesis in mind, and then they conduct the research in order to find answers or solutions to those problems, or they do the research to test whether their hypothesis is true. K6 also raised similar opinions in this regard. He argued that Scenario 1b was research because it reflected the purpose of doing research to improve the environment of learning and teaching and to improve teaching instructions. More particularly, when the participants raised the purpose of doing research, they were likely to relate this notion to the context of undertaking research. That is, the purpose of doing research within the classroom is to improve teaching and

learning, thus identifying the scenarios as “teacher research”, as distinguished from “research” (see the participants’ opinions about Scenarios 8a and 8b).

5.4.1.5 Teacher research: Quantitative or qualitative

Whether teacher research follows a quantitative or qualitative research approach is another important issue. Borg (2010, 2013) state that teacher research can be conducted quantitatively or qualitatively. Reis-Jorge (2007) argues that the purpose of undertaking teacher research is for understanding and improving teachers’ own classroom practices rather than for generalisation to a larger population of researchers. Reis-Jorge also argues that teacher researchers may undertake research by adopting formal academic research methodology, or by adopting their own research protocol. Borg (2009, 2010, 2013) and Moore (2011a) reveal reported characteristics of good research as perceived by language teachers, to be more associated with a quantitative than a qualitative research approach. These characteristics comprise objectivity, hypothesis, variables, large sampling, statistics descriptive analysis, and having a large scope.

In this study, the participants did not seem to distinguish research with respect to following either a quantitative or a qualitative research approach. For example, Scenarios 4a (i.e. the research follows a quantitative approach: questionnaires and statistics descriptive analysis) and Scenario 4b (i.e. the research follows a qualitative approach: group discussion and audio-recordings) were viewed in the same way as “teacher research” (K2, K4) and as “research” (K3, K5, K6). (See also the analysis of Scenarios 8a, 8b, 10a, and 10b for the participants’ similar viewings in this respect). However, there is some evidence that some participants favour a quantitative research approach over a qualitative research one. For instance, K2 stated that he liked the experimental study described in Scenario 2b. The participants, especially K5, explicitly questioned the large scale and scope of the research, the testing of a hypothesis, validity, reliability, and generalisability of the research outcomes during the discussion of the research scenarios.

The discussion of the participants' opinions about the different research scenarios in terms of the definitional characteristics of "teacher research" above clearly indicates that the participants made a distinction in their commentaries between "teacher research" and "research". To clarify and consolidate the participants' opinions in this regard, the characteristics of "ELT teacher research" and "research" are displayed in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: A summary of characteristics of "ELT teacher research" and "research" according to Phase 1 participants

	ELT teacher research	Research
Who?	Research is conducted by teachers	Research is not necessarily conducted by teachers
In what context?	Classroom context	Classroom context and outside classroom context
Systematic?	Less systematic	Systematic
Being public?	Not necessarily sharing, but if sharing happens, oral sharing with colleagues is stated	Presented at any conference or written publication in any journal
Scale?	A narrow scope	A large scope
What purpose?	To improve teaching and learning within the classroom	Expanding purposes beyond the classrooms
What is it related to?	Action research and classroom research	Anything – unconstrained

Having discussed the participants' conceptualisations of "ELT teacher research" from the point of view of the definitional characteristics of teacher research, I will now discuss another important issue of concern related to the participants' misconceptualisation of "teacher research".

5.4.2 Participants' misconceptualisation of "ELT teacher research"

Drawing from the analysis and interpretation of the data, some of the participants' conceptions of "ELT teacher research" could be understood as misconceived to a certain degree.

First, a misconception could be seen through the participants' recognition of Scenarios 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 10a and 10b as "research". These scenarios, to follow Hitchcock and Hughes' (1995) notion of "evaluation research", which is often undertaken for administrative purposes,

are ELT program-related evaluation such as a course evaluation undertaken in the middle of a course (8a and 8b) and a text-book evaluation (10a and 10b), and report writing (7a and 7b). Moreover, the research in Scenarios 7a, 7b, 10a and 10b is not conducted by teachers for the purpose of improving teaching practices. K6 also conceived of language assessments as one characteristic of "teacher research". Furthermore, K3, K4, and K5, from their 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisations, considered "teacher research" as a tool to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in their teaching, or as research about teachers.

The participants' misconception of ELT teacher research is also seen in their willingness to reduce the systematicity of an inquiry. For example, the research undertaken by teachers for their own improvement is considered as "teacher research" (1a, 3a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 8a, 8b, 9a and 9b), and if the teachers publish their research, it will be research proper (1b, 3b, 4a, 4b, 9a and 9b). In K5's opinions about the research scenarios, it is classroom research when it is conducted with a narrow scope, and if it covers a bigger scale and processes systematically, it is academic research. K6, too, in his 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisation of "teacher research", referred to "teacher research" as "a small-scale study" conducted in the classroom context as it is mainly involved in learning and teaching, and associated "teacher research" with "action research" and teacher's "self-reflection". In contrast, Burns (2009, p. 114) views research in action research as follows:

> [Action research] involves a systematic approach to collecting information, or data, usually using methods commonly associated with qualitative research. In this way, action research differs from the passing reflections or intuitive thoughts that most teachers have about their work. As the actions you have planned are tried out in the classroom, you record the information systematically, reflecting on it and analysing what it is revealing, so that any further actions you plan are based on current evidence. (p. 114)

Burns (2009) also encourages teacher researchers who have undertaken action research to share their research outcomes through presenting the results to their colleagues, other teacher audiences, and concerned people including administrators, and curriculum developers. Drawing from Burns' (2009) concept of action research above, the participants' conceptions of teacher research or action research or self-reflection in their discussion partly indicates

deficiencies in their understanding about research.

Another misconception is seen through the participants' conceptualisation of research as including teachers' engagement with reading relevant materials to search for more effective teaching and learning theories, materials, and activities so that they can improve teaching quality in classrooms. For example, the participants viewed Scenario 3a as "library research" (K1), "action research" (K2), "teacher research" (K4), and "research" (K6). This can also be seen in some participants' 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisations of "teacher research". For instance, K1, K2, and K3 initially defined "teacher research" as teachers' reading research journals and materials to improve their disciplinary knowledge related to teaching and teaching competence. The participants' construing teacher research in this way suggests that Cambodian ELT teacher researchers appear to consider reviewing the relevant literature as an important step prior to engaging in their research projects. This way of viewing "teacher research" may also be influenced by the participants' own cultural aspect, by which 'searching' also means 'researching'. Such a view can have a serious impact on teacher research practice, especially preventing teachers from fully participating in teacher research activities and properly designing research projects that take account of existing research findings.

This section helps us understand that the participants' conceptualisations of "teacher research", drawn from the analysis and interpretation above, is influenced in part by their misconception of "teacher research". Such misconception may be due to the participants' limited knowledge about research, inexperience in doing research, lack of research engagement as well as socialisation in a research community, and their own cultural understanding that 'searching' for teaching materials, teaching activities, and teaching and learning theories effective and practical to their teaching context, also means "researching". The analysis and interpretation above also indicate that the participants' conceptualisations of "teacher research" may also be in part due to the constraints or limitations that the focus

group discussion and interview prompts could present, the point I will turn to next in this discussion.

5.4.3 LIMITATIONS

As stated earlier, the first pair part scenarios (Set 'a') in the prompts were taken from Borg's (2009) research scenarios, while the second pair part scenarios (Set 'b') were adapted by me following Borg's (2010) definition of "teacher research" in language teaching. We know that the more explicit the information provided in a scenario is, the more likely the scenario is to be viewed as "research". From my observation of the participants' discussion, and my analysis and interpretation, each set of scenarios entails different constraints, and such constraints could have impacted on the participants' expressions of opinions about the scenarios.

From the first pair part scenarios taken from Borg (2009), the main constraint was a lack of comprehensive and explicit information related to research in some scenarios and the participants' lack of ability in implicitly comprehending the scenarios. For a scenario to be comprehensive to yield a fair discussion in terms of eliciting the participants' rich conceptualisations of 'research', it should entail useful steps of research processes (as displayed in Figure 5.2). This constraint appears to be evidenced in Scenarios 2a, 3a, 4a, 7a, 8a, and 9a (see Section 5.3.2.1), which likely prompted the participants to give unclear opinions about the scenarios, thus reducing the status of research of those scenarios to being "almost complete research", "teacher research", or "partly research".

Another constraint of the participants' discussion of the scenarios can be seen from the unclear research described in Scenario 6a, in which a researcher compared the effectiveness of two different vocabulary teaching approaches, each tested in a different class. This scenario prompted some participants to question the reliability and validity of the data collected and of the research results (see the participants' opinions about Scenario 6a in Section 5.3.2.1).

Furthermore, the adaptation of the research scenarios has also revealed a constraint on the participants' discussion of the scenarios. Instead of prompting the participants to discuss

each pair of scenarios in terms of one different characteristic of research, the adapted scenarios prompted the participants with more than one different characteristic of research. This change posed higher complexity in the scenarios and challenges for the discussion (see Section 5.3.2.1 for the participants' discussion of scenarios in Set 'b').

The constraints mentioned above can impose limitations of understanding about the participants' conceptualisations of 'research' yielded in their discussion of the various research scenarios. Such limitations call for adjustments to the research scenarios if these prompts are to be used for future examination of language teachers' conceptualisation of "teacher research".

5.5 CONCLUSION

In summary, from the analysis, interpretation, and discussion provided in this chapter, some concluding remarks on the participants' conceptualisations of "ELT teacher research" can now be stated. The participants had various views about ELT teacher research in the three question tasks (i.e. 'initial pre-existing' defining teacher research; discussion of the various research scenarios; and deciding one appropriate published definition of teacher research in the Cambodian ELT context). These variable views of ELT teacher research reveal the participants' unclear understanding and, to some extent, misconceptions of ELT teacher research. Nonetheless, with the triangulation of data analysis, some consistent, more considered, characteristics of ELT teacher research can be seen.

In their 'initial pre-existing' conceptualisations of ELT teacher research, the participants perceived similar functions that teacher research would contribute to quality of teaching and learning, which is consistent with those benefits of teacher research revealed in the literature. They perceived the status of teachers as being both subjects of research and classroom researchers (Reis Jorge, 2007). In their discussions of the various research scenarios, several participants (K1, K2, K3, and K4) eventually agreed among themselves upon a conceptualisation of ELT teacher research, in which teacher research is less

systematic, conducted by teachers in their own classroom to improve teaching and learning, with a narrow scope, less rigorous, and rather private. In deciding the most appropriate published definition of teacher research, half of the participants (three out of six) selected Definition 3, Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research.

Overall, ELT teacher research in Cambodia has not been understood and positioned appropriately within the ELT industry, especially tertiary level ELT education. ELT teacher research needs to be reconceptualised among Cambodian English professionals so that ELT teacher research can move forward for better long-term professional development. If we are to achieve this ultimate aim, Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research in language teaching and Freeman's (Freeman, 1998) teacher research cycle could perhaps be operationalised as an appropriate framework.

This chapter has helped us understand what conceptually counts as ELT teacher research in the Cambodian ELT context, viewed in a broad tertiary ELT setting. In other words, it does not provide an account of research activities which are actually undertaken by Cambodian ELT professionals, a topic which will be addressed in Chapter 6.

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CHAPTER 6

ELT TEACHER RESEARCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CamTESOL CONFERENCE SERIES

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 revealed Cambodian ELT teachers' conceptions of ELT teacher research through the focus group discussion and individual interviews involving six lecturer participants invited from six different tertiary ELT institutions in Phnom Penh. It has helped us understand what may or may not conceptually count as ELT teacher research in the Cambodian context, which is essential knowledge for orienting any initiatives to promote ELT teacher research in Cambodia. Chapter 6 will now provide an account of how individual Cambodian English teachers undertake research within the framework provided by the CamTESOL conference series. This conference acts as a platform annually showcasing and, perhaps unwittingly, orchestrating a large proportion of Cambodian ELT teacher research activities. The accounts of actual research undertakings profiled in this chapter will help us further understand what in fact currently counts as ELT teacher research in this context. Prior to introducing these accounts, more background about research, its processes and timelines is provided.

Accordingly, in this chapter I will first review the literature most relevant to understanding typical research in ELT, including the processes by which various research activities are undertaken across a research timeline. Next I will outline a 'standard' model of research processes in ELT which is an estimated composite of what could be considered 'good practice'. Although contestable to some extent, this model would not be unfamiliar to ELT researchers worldwide, and it can serve as a usual benchmark for comparative purposes. I will also review a typology of teacher research and perspectives investigated in teacher research in order to better understand the nature of teacher research activities undertaken in the ELT context. At this point I will then describe four research projects undertaken and

presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference by Cambodian ELT lecturers from one institution. I will consider the four research projects in terms of their research processes, teacher research categories and investigative perspectives, as grounded in the frameworks conceptualised in my review of the teacher research literature. To round off the accounts of the four Cambodian research projects, I will track between the abstracts the participants submitted to the 2013 CamTESOL conference and the PowerPoint (PPT) slides they eventually presented at the conference, to discern any variation between what was promised and what was delivered. This tracking will also be supplemented by interview and group discussion data collected during the course of the participants' period of research, in order to better understand how they actually carried out their projects and why variations occurred. In sum, the different components of this chapter, taken together, will provide deep insights into the context and quality of ELT research being undertaken in contemporary Cambodia, and provide a foundation for the subsequent consideration (i.e. in Chapters 7 and 8) of the concept of a community of practice in this setting.

6.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teacher research in language teaching has recently attracted interest from ELT researchers and professionals worldwide. A review of literature in this field shows that most textbooks on research methodology, especially in the fields of social science, education, and applied linguistics or English language teaching, commonly provide disciplinary knowledge of research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; Freeman, 1998; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Kothari, 2004; Kumar, 2005; McDonough & McDonough, 1997; K. Richards, 2003; Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011; Yin, 2011). This disciplinary knowledge comprises knowledge about different types of research, planning research, collecting data, analysing data, and reporting research findings. These textbooks go further and provide useful principles and techniques to plan robust, rigorous and high quality research. In most publications related to teacher research, the authors discuss advantages and

disadvantages of teacher research (Borg, 2006, 2009, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 1999a); the challenges that teacher researchers encounter in doing research (Borg, 2009, 2010; Freeman, 1998; S. Moore, 2011a; Yayli, 2012); and the quality of teacher research (Allwright, 1997; Nunan, 1997). What follows is a review of ELT teacher research processes, teacher research categories, and perspectives investigated in teacher research, all of which are relevant background to the present study.

6.1.1 Teacher research processes

The review of literature concerning ELT teacher research processes shows three different frameworks in use. Framework 1 is adapted from Kumar (2005), and suggests that in general, planning a research project should follow eight main steps, which are categorised into three stages (e.g. deciding what, planning how, and actually doing). This framework is displayed in Table 6.1. In 'deciding what' (Stage 1), a researcher needs to achieve the overall task of formulating a research problem (Step 1), which Kumar further divides into four sub-steps, including reviewing the literature (Step 1a), problematising a research topic (Step 1b), identifying variables (Step 1c), and forming a hypothesis (Step 1d). In 'planning how' (Stage 2), a researcher designs the research methodology, constructs data collection instruments, selects a sample, and writes a research proposal. In 'actually doing' (Stage 3), a researcher collects data, analyses the data, and writes a research report.

Table 6.1: Framework 1 of research processes, *adapted from (Kumar, 2005, p. 19)*

Stage		Step			
1	Deciding **what**	1	Formulating a research problem	1a	Reviewing the literature
				1b	Problematising a research topic
				1c	Identifying variables
				1d	Constructing hypothesis
2	Planning **how**	2	Conceptualising a research design		
		3	Constructing an instrument for data collection		
		4	Selecting a sample		
		5	Writing a research proposal		
3	Actually doing	6	Collecting data		
		7	Processing data		
		8	Writing a research report		

Kumar (2005) defined this generic structure of research processes in terms of the general research activities, which he claimed could be applied in various types of research in the social sciences, education, and applied linguistics or English language teaching, and stated that "the research process is very similar to undertaking a journey" (p. 16). The research processes described in Framework 1 are also endorsed by Hitchcock and Hughes' s (1995) view of teacher research processes.

A second conceptual framework (i.e. Framework 2) of teacher research is an inquiry-based approach advocated by Freeman (1998). Specifically focused on the field of teacher research in language teaching (or, in the context of this PhD thesis, ELT teacher research), Freeman (1998) defined teacher research processes by way of the 'teacher-research cycle', which comprises six main steps: inquiry, question/ puzzle, data collection, data analysis, understandings, and making findings public. These six steps are categorised into three main stages as displayed in Table 6.2. Although conceptually determined, the generic structure of this teacher research cycle was in fact supported with beginning teacher researchers' experiences in doing research. Despite many possible entry points through which teacher research activities could take place, Freeman (1998) suggests that the journey of teacher research activities should begin with inquiry. Table 6.2 further illustrates sub-steps of undertaking these teacher research activities.

In a similar vein, Yayli (2012) provides Framework 3, comprising five basic stages of a research process through which participating novice teacher researchers managed their research activities. These five stages encompass *outlining*, *collecting data*, *analysing data*, *interpreting findings*, and *providing final remarks*. The last stage, providing final remarks, is the stage at which the participating teacher researchers commented on their research activities, shared challenges they encountered in doing research, and discussed how to improve teacher research, so this stage is not relevant as a core component to be included in the actual teacher research processes. Thus, the whole process encompasses four main stages. In the context of Yayli's (2012) study, the participating teacher researchers, being full-time ELT teachers, were

doing their research projects to fulfill the requirements for the postgraduate program (a Master's degree). A summary of the teacher research processes, conceptualised as Framework 3, is illustrated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.2: Framework 2 of ELT teacher research processes, *adapted from Freeman (1998, p. 38)*

Stage		Step		Sub-steps	
1	Developing a research plan	1	Inquiry	1a	Thinking about his/her own beliefs about teaching and learning
				1b	Questioning his/her own assumptions about teaching
				1c	Articulating purpose of an inquiry
				1d	Thinking about ethics in doing teacher research
		2	Question/puzzle – forming research questions by asking researchable questions		
		3	Data collection	3a	Determining the kinds of data which respond to the questions
				3b	Articulating how the data are collected (selecting instruments for collecting data)
				3c	Determining the samples
				3e	Collecting the data
2	Collecting and analysing data	4	Data analysis	4a	Determining data analysis processes
				4b	Analysing the data
3	Going public	5	Understandings – displaying analyses and assembling the findings into a whole piece		
		6	Publishing – making public	6a	Determining purpose of disseminating the research findings
				6b	Selecting a certain genre for disseminating the findings
				6c	Presenting the research findings
				6d	Publishing the research

Table 6.3: Framework 3 of ELT teacher research processes, *adapted from Yayli (2012, pp. 260-265)*

Stage			Step
1	Outlining	1	Deciding on the problem in the field.
		2	Forming the research questions.
		3	Negotiating the research design.
2	Collecting data	4	Forming the research instruments.
		5	Piloting the research instruments.
		6	Conducting data collection.
3	Analysing the data	7	Transcribing the interview data.
		8	Coding emerging themes.
4	Interpreting the findings	9	Reviewing the relevant literature and discussing the research findings.
		10	Reporting the research findings.

In both Frameworks 2 and 3, the research activities were initiated on the basis of the teacher researchers' own practices. That is, they questioned and researched their own teaching practices. Although Freeman (1998) mentions that the inquiry can take place based upon reading relevant literature, the reviewing of relevant literature does not seem to play an important role at this early stage. This characteristic is different from the research processes mentioned in Kumar's (2005) research processes. Nevertheless, in Framework 3, the role of literature was seen at the later stage, i.e. interpreting the research findings, when the participating teacher researchers reviewed the relevant literature and discussed the research findings (Step 9).

The ELT teacher-research processes of Framework 1 (Table 6.1) only conceptually represent the processes of research in general. That is, they are not formulated in light of teachers' actual research activities. Although ELT teacher-research processes in Frameworks 2 and 3 (Tables 6.2 and 6.3) are based upon novice teacher researchers' actual experiences in doing research, these frameworks neither reveal the amount of time that the teacher researchers spend doing actual research activities, nor track what actually happens along the

way. For the specific context of Phase 2 data analysis of my PhD thesis, whose major aim is to examine the ELT teacher research activities undertaken by Cambodian ELT teachers in the context of the CamTESOL conference series, by tracking these research activities between the beginning and the end of the whole process (i.e. between planning the research and presenting it at the CamTESOL conference), the ELT teacher research processes can be located in terms of elements drawn from all three frameworks of teacher research processes presented above. These can be operationalised as displayed in a formal research activity specification in Table 6.4. This formal research activity specification, which would be recognisable to ELT researchers worldwide, represents the complete ELT teacher research spectrum, which is commonly accepted and implemented in most, if not all, contemporary ELT institutions. This spectrum comprises four main stages (i.e. planning research, applying for ethics approval, collecting and analysing data, and making research public), which are further operationalised into manageable and practical steps (Table 6.4). This operationalised formal research specification achieves two main characteristics mentioned in Borg's (2010) definition of teacher research in language teaching, i.e. that teacher research is a systematic inquiry (probably viewed through steps 1 to 9), and is made public (viewed through steps 10 to 14). In the case of making the research public (Stage 4), some ELT professionals and researchers may aim to publish their research, while some others may only aim to present their research at a conference. In this regard, the entire formal research processes comprise 14 steps in the former case, and 13 steps in the latter case. However, this specification only illustrates the generic structure of the conduct of a general and formal research project. It is, therefore, further operationalised within the specific context of western ELT research such as in Australia. This contextualisation is the result of my review of literature related to research processes conducted in this section, indicating that there has not yet been any research examining and tracking actual ELT teacher research processes. Perhaps more usefully, it provides two composite models of teacher research processes against which the four 2013 CamTESOL research projects in this Phase 2 data analysis can be compared.

Table 6.4: Framework of formal research activity specification

Research timeline	Starting point										Conference paper Abstract due	Abstract accepted			Finishing point	
Research activities	Reviewing literature, identifying niche	Forming research questions	Designing research methodology	Applying for research ethics	Collecting data	Analysing the data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results, referring back to literature	Concluding the research findings	Writing an abstract			Writing a draft paper	Preparing powerpoint slides	Presenting the research	Publication
Stage	**1**			**2**	**3**					**4**						
	Developing a research plan				Collecting and analysing data					Going public						
Step	St1	St2	St3	St4	St5	St6	St7	St8	St9	St10			St11	St12	St13	St14

In an Australian university context, where ELT professionals are generally provided with an appropriate amount of time for undertaking research, research processes are generally congruent with the formal research process shown in Table 6.4. To actually exemplify the research activities undertaken by a researcher in the Australian context, I will now outline two models of research processes, one related to an experienced ELT researcher (e.g. senior lecturer), and one to a novice ELT researcher (e.g. a full-time PhD student) at one Australian university. The experienced researcher has been involved in undertaking research and presenting research papers at various international conferences, including the CamTESOL conference series, for about 15 years. The profile of the experienced researcher is based approximately on that of my PhD supervisor; the profile of the inexperienced researcher is based approximately on myself.

These two models are exemplars of research activities, and composites (based on estimates of past experiences) of what might be considered as "standard practice" in which both researchers had a time allocation and commitment to doing research. Table 6.5 provides details of these two composite models, showing the research processes and an estimate of the period of time that was spent on each research activity in a typical project. Though contestable, these composite models of research activities capture what is involved in doing ELT research by experienced and novice researchers, especially those working in western ELT contexts such as Australia.

While the experienced researcher aims to have his or her research paper published in a peer-reviewed journal, the novice researcher probably only aims, in the first instance, at presenting his research at an international conference. However, in the case where a novice researcher aimed to have their paper published in a journal, their set of research processes would be the same as that of the research processes undertaken by the experienced researcher. The two composite models are different only in terms of the duration that the researcher would spend on each research activity, which is a function of their relative levels of research experience.

Table 6.5: Two composite models of ELT research activities undertaken in an Australian/western context

Research timeline		Starting point										Abstract due	Abstract accepted			Finishing point		
Research activities		Reviewing literature, identifying niche	Forming research questions	Designing research methodology	Applying for research ethics	Collecting data	Analysing the data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results, referring back to literature	Concluding the research findings	Writing an abstract			Writing a draft paper	Preparing powerpoint slides	Presenting the research	Publication	
Stage		**1**			**2**	**3**					**4**							
Step		St1	St2	St3	St4	St5	St6	St7	St8	St9	St10			St11	St12	St13	St14	Total hours
Experienced researcher	Activity Duration (in hours)	70	7	21	35	20	70	35	21	7	7			70(1)	7	✓	✓	370
Novice researcher	Activity Duration (in hours)	140	14	35	70	20	140	70	70	14	14			140(2)	14	✓	✓ / X	741

Notes: (1) An experienced researcher undertaking research in Australia may write a complete research paper for a publication before or after the conference presentation.
(2) A novice researcher undertaking research in Australia may/may not proceed to the end of the research spectrum to publication. If he/she does aim to publish his/her research, he/she may write a complete paper before or after the conference presentation.

The two models of research activities as exemplified in Table 6.5 provide an idea of how ELT teacher research proceeds in an Australian or western context, and the timeline involved. It is worth noting that the research in this context is typically completed before the researchers write an abstract for a conference (i.e. the abstract reports research that has been completed), and a preliminary research paper is often drafted before the research is made public at any conference.

6.1.2 Typology of teacher research

In addition to the processes of teacher research reviewed above, it is also worth noting the most recognised characteristics of teacher research, especially the types of teacher research most commonly undertaken by ELT professionals. These characteristics can be viewed in Freeman's (1998) modified typology of teacher research in a quadrant format as displayed in Figure 6.1. In this modified typology, teacher research projects are generally classified into four categories, comprising controlling, asking/doing, measuring, and watching. These categories are different from each other in terms of the level of intervention and organisation of the teaching setting in order for the research to be undertaken. Each category will now be considered in more detail.

Teacher research category 1 (Controlling): This type of teacher research involves more restructuring and reorganising, and more intervention. That is, the teacher researcher restructures and reorganises their teaching and students' learning to achieve their purpose in doing research. In this research they experiment with some new ideas about teaching and learning that they want to investigate. According to van Lier, cited in Freeman (1998, p. 32), this type of teacher research is mainly concerned with "controlling" such as in experiments and quasi-experiments.

Teacher research category 2 (Asking/Doing): This type of teacher research requires more intervention in the teaching environment in order to fulfill the research purpose, but requires less restructuring and reorganising of teaching. For instance, in Freeman's (1998, p. 25) example of this kind of teacher research, a beginning teacher researcher examined which

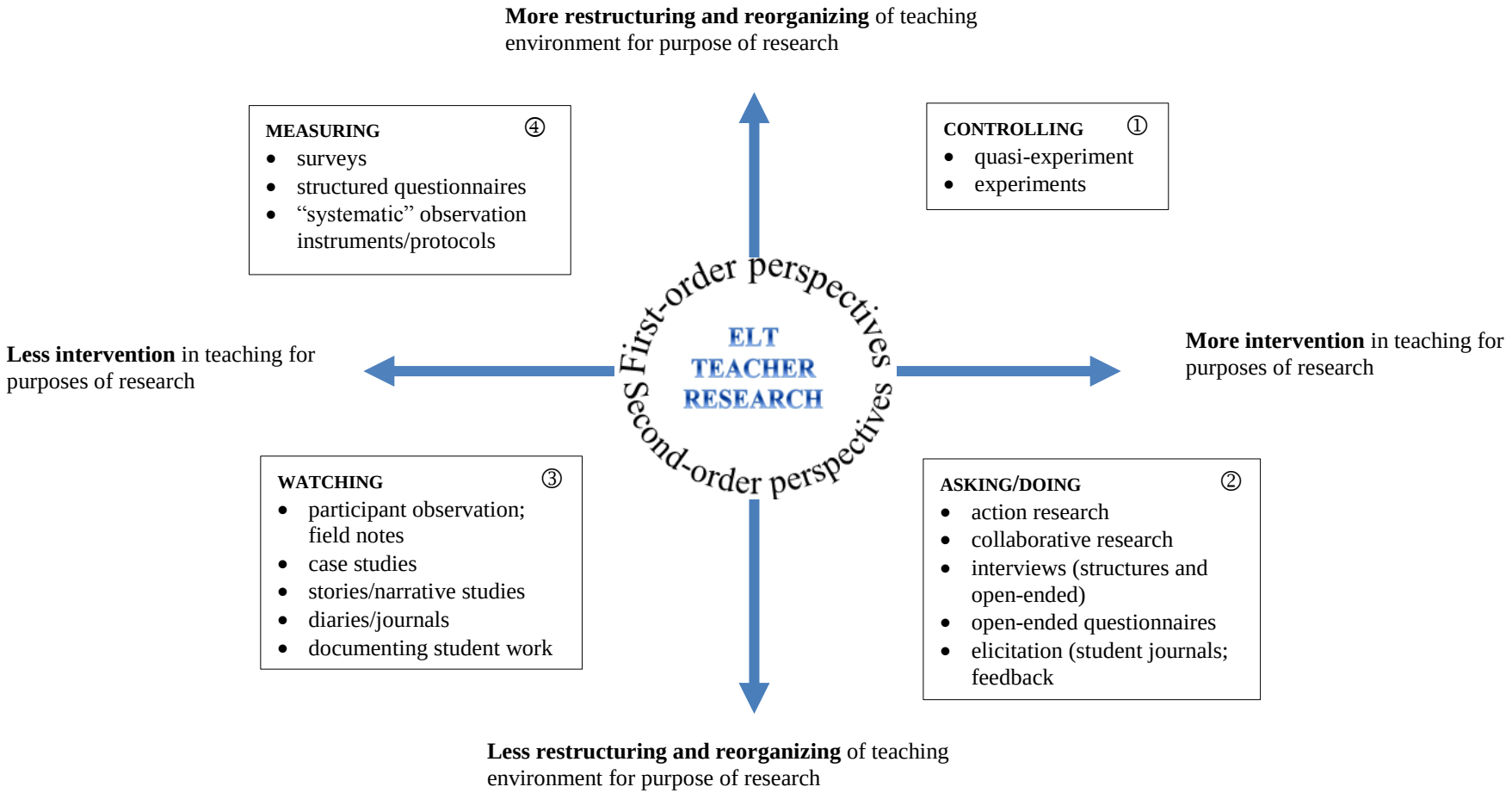

Figure 6.1: Teacher research categories, ***reproduced from Freeman's (1998, p. 32) modified typology of teacher research***

Note: The original typology of teacher research was proposed by Leo van Lier, who has written about the educational research processes (Freeman, 1998, pp. 24-30)

type of instructional formats her students found easiest to understand and the rationale for their choice. van Lier, cited in Freeman (1998), described this kind of teacher research as belonging to a "asking and/or doing" category as found in action research and collaborative research which use interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and elicitation (Freeman, 1998).

Teacher research category 3 (Watching): As depicted in Figure 6.1, this kind of teacher research requires both less intervention and less restructuring and reorganising of teaching. According to van Lier, cited in (Freeman, 1998), this teacher research principally involves "watching", as found in participant observation, field notes, case studies, stories or narrative studies, diaries and journals, and documenting student work (Freeman, 1998, p. 32).

Teacher research category 4 (Measuring): In this teacher research category, teaching is restructured and reorganised for the purpose of undertaking teacher research projects. That is, the teacher researcher designs his or her teaching and students' learning to suit a research purpose in the classroom. van Lier, as cited in Freeman (1998, p. 24), asserted that this teacher research is "more restructuring and reorganising", but "less intervention". This type of teacher research is principally concerned with "measuring", as seen in surveys, and uses such research instruments as structured questionnaires and systematic observation instruments or protocols (Figure 6.1).

6.1.3 Investigative perspectives in teacher research

My review of teacher research literature indicates that another important characteristic of teacher research is manifested through what kind of perspectives a teacher researcher investigates in their research activities. Freeman (1998) asserts that there are two kinds of perspectives that a teacher researcher might investigate, namely first-order and second-order perspectives. According to Freeman, the first-order perspective in teacher research is primarily concerned with "what people are doing", while the second-order perspective is concerned with "how people perceive what they do" (Freeman, 1998, p. 65). As Freeman argues, the typology of teacher research and the particular perspectives (i.e. first-order or second-order) a teacher researcher investigates in his or her research, provide a useful

framework to examine how a teacher researcher might structure their research processes. Indeed, teacher research should investigate both first-order and second-order perspectives because both of these investigative perspectives taken together can provide rich and deep data for an investigation. Therefore, these investigative perspectives are able to supplement and provide more probing elements into the teacher research processes examined in this chapter.

Having reviewed the processes and categories of ELT teacher research, along with research design as well as methods and investigative perspectives, I will now present a case study, comprising four sub-cases of research projects undertaken by five Cambodian ELT practitioners in the context of the 2013 CamTESOL conference.

6.2 CASE STUDY

As stated in Chapter 4, Section 2, Phase 2 data collection comprises a case study of four research projects (i.e. four sub-cases) conducted by five Cambodian ELT lecturers, named A1, B1, B2, B3, and B4, all from the IFL. The timeframe of the projects was principally motivated by the context of the CamTESOL conference series. These lecturers submitted research abstracts to the 2013 CamTESOL conference in September 2012. Apart from A1, who would present his Master's thesis at this conference, the research activities of the other Phase 2 participants commenced when their abstracts were accepted (i.e. in October 2012), and their activities were completed just prior to presenting their research at the conference (i.e. in February 2013).

As stated in Chapter 4, Section 2.2, the data used for analysis in this chapter were drawn from group discussions, individual interviews, conference research abstracts, PPT presentation slides, drafts of research papers, and occasional notes that I took when I informally talked with the participants about the progress of their research or during their presentations at the conference. All these data were collected during my fieldwork which covered the period from September 2012 to February 2013. It is important to acknowledge that the data for this analysis were originally planned to be supplemented through the

participants' maintaining a diary of their research activities. However, the information recorded in their research diaries was not sufficient or systematic enough to provide a meaningful contribution to understanding their research activities. To compensate for this shortcoming, further data were collected mainly based on subsequent discussions conducted via Skype, Email, Facebook, and face-to-face communication. Given this scenario, the data collected for understanding actual research processes undertaken in this context were more retrospective accounts than ethnographic studies.

It is also important to note that for local researchers conducting research in contemporary Cambodian ELT institutions, there is no requirement to apply for or receive ethics approval. Thus, Stage 2 of the research spectrum, as outlined in the research timeline in Tables 6.4 and 6.5 is not applicable in the processes of these four research projects. Nonetheless, in some cases (for example, in the case of B2's use of the students' scores), the researchers are required to request official permission to use certain information.

For ease of reference, and to avoid any confusion with the participants' past research experiences, I will present these four sub-case studies as being 2013 CamTESOL research. I will also use 'research' or 'research project' synonymously with '2013 CamTESOL research' in this section. Let us now begin with a brief description of the research participants' profiles because such a description will help clarify their level of research experience and better contextualise their actual research activities.

6.2.1 Participants' profiles

As displayed in Table 4.3, all the participants hold postgraduate Master degrees. All participants, apart from B2, were full-time teaching staff members at the IFL. B2 was a part-time member of the teaching staff, but a full-time IT staff member. (In this latter role, he assisted students with accessing the internet and using computers to undertake and print assignments). Full-time lecturers were required to teach three different subjects for an average total of 27 contact hours per week. Besides teaching and preparing lessons and teaching materials, they were also required to assess their students' learning achievements. Thus, most

of the participants' working hours were spent on teaching, preparing lessons and teaching materials, and assessing their students' learning. B2, however, as a part-time lecturer, was required to teach only 15 hours per week and, unlike the other participants, he taught in the evening shift[8]. Apart from teaching, B2 was required to work in the computer room an average of 40 hours per week (i.e. four hours in the morning, and four hours in the afternoon).

The participants were asked in individual interviews to recount their research experiences. They all reported having been engaged in doing research activities in addition to their teaching, and some of them (A1, B3, B4) had presented their past research at previous CamTESOL conferences. B4 had undertaken four research projects; B3 had conducted two research projects; A1 had been a voluntary research assistant when he was a student and had conducted one collaborative research project when he became a lecturer at the IFL. B1 and B2 had only conducted research in their Master degree programs (see Appendix 6.1).

Table 6.6 briefly describes the four research projects that the participants undertook in Phase 2 of my study, and it also shows that they all investigated issues related to English language teaching and learning at the IFL. A1's project was his Master degree research project. B1 and B2's projects were replication research projects of their respective Master degree theses. B3/B4's research, which was a joint research project, was new research.

Deconstructing these participants' accounts of research experiences shows that their research projects followed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The most commonly used research instruments were questionnaires and interviews, and their research projects were all investigations of English language teaching and learning in the contexts of their classrooms as well as institutions (see Appendix 6.1).

This brief description of the participants' research experience shows their level of engagement in doing research within their own classrooms and institute and of presenting their research at CamTESOL conferences. However, this engagement was manifested only from a surface view, i.e. from the amount and the kind of research they reported they had

[8] The IFL's English Department has implemented English programs (BA and BEd) in three different shifts – morning, afternoon, and evening.

Table 6.6: A summary of Phase 2 participants' 2013 research projects

Research project	Research topic	Research methodology		Participants
		Research method	Research instrument	
A1 (Master project)	Investigating the perspectives and challenges of English language in an English-medium degree program	A survey, following a mixed method approach.	Questionnaire and a focus group interview	Cambodian students in the Bachelor of International Studies at the IFL.
B1 (Replication of Master project)	Student's interest and writing achievement	A correlational study, following a quantitative approach.	Questionnaire	Year 2 students in the English major programs at the IFL.
B2 (Replication of Master project)	Strategies IFL students use to learn vocabulary through reading	A survey, following a quantitative approach.	Questionnaire	Year 3 students in the English major programs at the IFL.
B3/B4 (Fresh research project)	Students' written mistakes and preference for teacher feedback	An experiment of corrective feedback, following a mixed-method approach.	Error analysis and a focus group interview	Year 3 students in the English major programs at the IFL.

done in the past. Thus, it does not reveal what exactly they did in the research activities nor the quality of research they actually achieved and presented at the CamTESOL conferences, which are the main concern of this chapter. These are examined further in the following sections.

6.2.2 Research processes

In this section, I will examine the four 2013 CamTESOL research projects to discern the research processes by which the participants undertook the research activities along the timeline of approximately six months, between when the abstracts were accepted and the presentations of the research were given at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. This analysis will help us better understand the actual research processes involved and, importantly, how these lecturers managed their research activities.

The four research projects presented in this chapter were expected to have been undertaken by way of similar processes to those in the composite models (Table 6.5). However, an analysis of the data collected concerning these research projects reveals that they were only similar in terms of the surface structures, and shows varying degrees of alignment with the two composite models. Let us now examine the research activities of each sub-case study laid out across the research timeline.

6.2.2.1 Sub-case Study A1

As stated in Chapter 4, Section 2.1, participant A1 had already conducted his research and submitted an abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference prior to receiving my invitation to participate in this study. The data from A1's research nevertheless had the potential to contribute useful information to characterise a certain kind of ELT teacher research conducted and presented at the annual CamTESOL conference series, hence their inclusion in my study.

A1 conducted his research project individually, and the research was undertaken to fulfill the requirements for his Master of Arts in TESOL degree at the IFL. The data that A1 provided to me were mostly retrospective comments given in an interview, group discussion, and subsequent discussions via Skype, Facebook, and Email communication. Other sources of

information about how he carried out the research consisted of other documents such as his research proposal and draft research paper. A1's reported research activities are displayed in Table 6.A1. On the surface, A1's research activities appear to have been processed in a similar way to those research activities demonstrated in the composite models (Table 6.5). For example, they were processed from Step 1 (identifying research topic and reviewing literature) through to Step 13 (presenting the research at the 2013 CamTESOL conference), but omitted Stage 2 (applying for research ethics).

A deeper analysis of A1's research activities, however, suggests some serious issues concerning the quality of his research project. The first serious issue of concern is the time span. My analysis of A1's data shows that the time span over which A1 undertook the research activities was very limited. A1 could only do his research activities when he had free time from teaching and doing other required work-related tasks as mentioned earlier. He stated that he did research two weekdays (around three hours each day) and two weekend days (around four hours each day). In a subsequent discussion of his research activities, A1 stated:

> "... yes I was also working. That's why I just you know use the free time that I had from work you know in order to do that research ..." *(A1, Subsequent discussion)*

> "... no not every day, just some free time slots ... three or four hours for two weekdays and then some you know like four or five hours more at the weekends, so I actually did not manage to work every day..." *(A1, Subsequent discussion)*

Moreover, Table 6.A1 shows that the estimated total time span that A1 reported to have spent undertaking his research project is 286 hours. In a subsequent discussion of his research activities, A1 stated that he wrote his draft paper of the research as his research activities progressed across the timeline and, therefore, he could not estimate the real time for this activity as a separate event. Compared to the research time spans that the experienced ELT researcher and the novice researcher in the two composite models (Table 6.5) spent

Table 6.A1: A summary of the processes of A1's 2013 CamTESOL research activities

Research timeline	**Starting point**											**Conference Abstract due**	**Abstract accepted**		**Finishing point**		
Research activities	Reviewing literature, identifying niche	Forming research questions	Designing research methodology	Applying for research ethics	Collecting data	Analysing the data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results, referring back to literature	Concluding the research findings	Writing a draft paper	Writing and Submitting an abstract	(3)	(3)	Preparing powerpoint slides	Presenting the research	Publication	
Stage	**1**			**2**	**3**						**4**						
Step	St1	St2	St3	St4	St5	St6	St7	St8	St9	St10	St11			St12	St13	St14	**Total hours**
Activity Duration in hours(1)	56	14	56	X	20	56	56				14(2)			14	✓	X	286

Notes:
(1) This time was based on A1's estimated duration that he reported to have spent on the research activities. A1 mostly spent two weekdays (around 3 hours each day) and two weekend days (around 4 hours each day) doing research activities.
(2) This time period, as A1 reported, was time that he spent writing the abstract of his research proposal that he submitted to the IFL MA (TESOL) coordinator. For the 2013 CamTESOL conference, A1 stated that he only copied this abstract and submitted it to the conference.
(3) No research activities took place in this period.

doing their research activities (370 hours and 741 hours, respectively), the time span that A1, as a novice teacher researcher, spent doing his research manifests insufficient and poor time management for a formal research project, and this seems to have impacted on the quality of the research. For example, this limited time span reflects the lack of research rigor, which can be seen in the design of the questionnaire set, preparation of the PPT slides, and investigative perspectives, points which I will now focus on in this analysis.

Reviewing A1's PPT slides and his draft research paper[9] shows that his investigation sought to answer three research questions: (1) What are the students' perceptions toward the roles of English in the EMI (English as a medium of instruction) program?; (2) What are the most common challenges encountered by the ISP (International Studies Program) at each year level (Years 2, 3, and 4)?; and (3) Among six categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, social, affective, and memory, which one has been used the most and the least by the ISP students to deal with their learning problems? (Appendix 6.A1, Slide 10). The analysis of A1's design of a questionnaire to collect data to respond to the three research questions points to a lack of research rigor. For example, the questionnaire items (i.e. items 1 to 12) mismatched the research focus set out in Research Question 1. More evidence of a problematic nature relating to A1's design of the questionnaire items can be seen in the construction of the items in the other two sections (i.e. the questionnaire items designed for Research Questions 2 and 3) (Appendix 6.A1, Slides 17 and 18). Instead of exploring the students' own experiences in encountering learning difficulties in the ISP program using the EMI approach (Research Question 2) and in using particular learning strategies to deal with the challenges (Research Question 3), A1's study required the student participants to select from the given lists of learning difficulties and strategies rather than provide this information in their own words. This manifestation, according to Freeman (1998), reflects a lack of richness in data collected for the study, thus

[9] I used my knowledge and experience as a reviewer for the *Language Education in Asia* Journal to review the final draft of A1's research paper.

affecting the quality of the research findings in a way that they are not so informative and useful for implementation of the ISP program, which the researcher aimed to achieve.

A further examination of A1's PPT presentation slides shows another instance concerning this lack of the research rigor. Although A1 mentioned that he used a structured questionnaire and a focus group interview to collect the data for his study (Appendix 6.A1, Slide 13), in reporting the research findings at the conference A1 did not include the focus group interview data. When asked in the subsequent discussion why he had not included the focus group interview data, A1 stated he had not realised the omission until after he finished the presentation. This instance might reflect A1's lack of time for preparing the appropriate PPT presentation slides. He stated:

> "... one or two days before that *(the presentation day)* ... I think I had been preparing for up to the time that I had to do [my] presentation." *(A1, Subsequent discussion)*

The second serious issue of concern about A1's research activities might be related to how A1 faced the challenges of conducting research as an inexperienced researcher. This was evidenced, for example, in the way that A1 selected samples for his research. He simultaneously selected the student participants for administering the questionnaires and participating in a focus group interview. When interviewed, he was not sure whether the student participants who joined the focus group interview had also completed the questionnaires. While this participant configuration was used to claim that the data collection was triangulated, the method itself could mismatch the purpose of triangulation which it was to examine whether the different data provided by the same participants were consistent. This state of being inexperienced in research was also evidenced in A1's particular way of seeing the role of literature as being to simply endorse his research results when he discussed the research results by reference back to the literature. Further analysis of A1's research activities that tracks between A1's conference research abstract and his PPT presentation is provided in Section 6.2.5.

To sum up, A1's 2013 CamTESOL research activities were undertaken across the research timeline in a similar way to the research activities demonstrated in the two composite models. However, the analysis of the data reveals that A1's research activities lacked research rigor due in part to the limited amount of time that he spent on the research activities and his lack of research knowledge and skills. Despite its shortcomings as research, this sub-case study represents one kind of research project presented in the context of CamTESOL conference series. No doubt other Cambodian ELT professionals also present this kind of research as well. To extend our understanding of other ELT teacher research done in this context, I will now examine a second individual sub-case study, that of B1.

6.2.2.2 Sub-case Study B1

In this second sub-case study, B1 replicated his Master's thesis by way of the research methods used, but with a new topic. I will now analyse the research processes and related issues of concern about B1's 2013 CamTESOL research.

The analysis of B1's research activities was based on retrospective data obtained from B1's individual interview, group discussions, and subsequent discussions via Skype, Facebook, and Email communication, and the data drawn from his limited diary. The analysis reveals that B1's research activities were laid out differently across the research timeline from those noted in A1's sub-case study and those of the two composite models.

As depicted in Table 6.B1, Steps 1 to 5 of B1's research activities were similar to the early steps of the research activities mentioned in A1's research activities and the two composite models. However, B1's process for conducting research was different after the data collection step. That is, after Step 5, B1 continued with writing an abstract and submitting it to the 2013 CamTESOL conference (St6). Between the abstract due date (i.e. in September 2012), and abstract acceptance date (i.e. in October 2012) and January 2013 there were big time gaps in which B1 did not undertake any research activities. B1's research activities actually resumed only in February 2013, the month of the conference, with the undertaking of the other research activity steps (i.e. Steps 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). In a subsequent discussion,

Table 6.B1: A summary of the processes of B1's 2013 CamTESOL research activities[1]

Research timeline	**Starting point**						**Abstract due**	**Abstract accepted**						**Finishing Point**				
	June 2012				August 2012	September 2012		October 2012	November 2012	January 2013	February 2013							
Research activities	Reviewing literature, identifying niche	Forming research questions	Designing research methodology	Applying for research ethics	Collecting data	Writing an abstract and submitting it to 2013 CamTESOL	(3)	(3)	(3)		Analysing the data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results, referring back to literature	Drawing a Conclusion of the research findings	Preparing powerpoint slides	Presenting the research at 2013 CamTESOL conference	Writing a draft paper	Publication
Stage	**1**			**2**							**3**				**4**			
Step	St1	St2	St3	St4	St5	St6					St7	St8	St9	St10	St11	St12	St13	St14
Activity duration in hours[2]	42			X	10	4					35				4	✓	98	✓

Total hour
193

Note: (1) B1 replicated his Master's thesis with a change of the research topic.
(2) B1 spent only up to two hours of each non-teaching day (i.e. usually weekends, holidays, and semester break) on these research activities.
(3) No research activities took place in this period.

B1 stated that he also wrote a draft of his research paper a few months after the conference presentation (i.e. in April 2013), and his paper was then published in the CRLLT (IFL's in-house journal) (St14). See Section 6.2.5 for further tracking between B1's conference abstract and the PPT slides of his actual presentation of the research activities.

On the basis of the PowerPoint slides (Appendix 6.B1) and his actual presentation, B1's 2013 CamTESOL research seemed to be rigorously designed and undertaken. It displays a quantitative type of research (a correlational study of several variables), especially seeking to find out whether the students' interest in writing journals in Writing Skills class is correlated with their actual writing achievements. However, taking into consideration the time that B1 had for doing this research, the quality of research might be undermined, and the reliability and validity of the research results called into question. First, as displayed in Table 6.B1, there was a large time gap between collecting data (St5) and analysing the data (St7). Second, in our subsequent discussions, B1 mentioned that he was able to carry out his research activities only at weekends, on holidays, and during semester breaks. Moreover, he spent only up to two hours each of the days that he spent on the research and, as indicated above, he was research inactive for virtually 4 months (i.e. September to January). This indicates that B1's time spent on this research was widely dispersed along the research timeline, and his research activities were fragmented. However, in relation to the time span that a full-time researcher (i.e. the senior lecturer and a novice researcher mentioned in the two composite models) would use to do his or her research, B1's research faced a severe shortage of time. As shown in Table 6.B1, the total time that B1 had spent doing the whole research project constituted 193 hours, compared to the total time of 370 hours spent by the experienced researcher and 741 hours by the novice researcher in the composite models (Table 6.5).

The big gap in B1's duration of time spent on research activities could have affected his undertaking this research in a way that his research focus could easily be distracted, and he

might eventually have felt demotivated, as he stated in his diary (noted on December 11, 2012) that he had little motivation to do research.

> "My research has been stalled. Too busy with my teaching, preparation of lessons and marking. Too little motivation to do research." *(B1, Diary note)*

Moreover, the serious shortage of time for the research activities indicates that this research was not robust or rigorously designed. Table 6.B1 shows that when it was close to the presentation date (i.e. in February 2013, the month of the conference presentation) the research activities were conducted hastily (i.e. B1 spent only 35 hours doing Steps 7, 8, 9, and 10). This manifests B1's inattentive and, possibly, inappropriate focus on doing these research activities. That is, he might have quickly and carelessly concluded the research results so that he could prepare the PPT slides for presentation. As he stated:

> "... I interpreted [the] main results for CamTESOL [conference] because it was already close to the conference, so I interpreted [just the] main results ... and then after the conference I stopped for a while. I did not work on that until I had to submit [the draft paper] for publication at IFL." *(B1, Subsequent discussion)*

In addition to the severe shortage of time that B1 had for managing his research activities, a lack of richness in the data that B1 collected for this research also seriously affected the research quality. The data, as only objectively collected through questionnaires, were not rich or deep. In other words, the data lacked some useful information such as why the student participants were (or were not) interested in writing skills and journal writing, what contributions they would think that writing skills and journal writing could bring to their actual learning achievement in writing skills, and how such contributions could be achieved. By extending the data collection instruments of B1's research project to include interviews would probably make such research more useful to inform teaching practices. It could potentially yield the students' beliefs about their interest in writing skills and journal writing, which could in turn inform a theoretical framework in this area for organising students' journal writing as an effective and practical learning activity in teaching writing skills.

Sub-case Study B1 has provided some different characteristics of ELT teacher research undertaken in Cambodia in the context of the CamTESOL conference series to those found in Sub-case study A1. These characteristics were a different set of research processes, by which this research was undertaken; and a large time gap in research activities and a severe shortage of time that B1 had for doing this research. These characteristics seriously affected the quality of his research.

Sub-case Studies A1 and B1 represent two different approaches for conducting research presented at the CamTESOL conference, again likely to be representative of other Cambodian ELT teacher researchers. Let us now examine the characteristics of a research project conducted by B2 to provide a further example of ELT teacher research in Cambodia conducted in the context of the CamTESOL conference series.

6.2.2.3 Sub-case Study B2

In this sub-case study, B2's research was a replication of his Master's thesis. As stated in Chapter 4, Section 2.2, the data were collected from the research abstract B2 submitted to the 2013 CamTESOL conference, the PPT slides he used for presenting his research at the conference, an individual interview, group discussions, subsequent discussions, his limited diary, and his research paper published in the CRLLT journal.

My analysis of the various data reveals that B2's research activities proceeded from a different starting point from those set out in the two composite models. Table 6.B2 illustrates B2's research activities and process, which began with his submission of a research abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference and, when the abstract was accepted, the process continued through until his presentation of the research at the conference and then ended with a publication of the research.

Table 6.B2 shows that at an early stage (Stage 1) in the research process, B2 did not spend much time on those research activities. For example, he had spent only 28 hours reviewing relevant literature (St1), half an hour forming research questions (St2), and seven

Table 6.B2: A summary of the processes of B2's 2013 CamTESOL research activities[1]

Research timeline	**Starting point**	**Abstract due**	**Abstract accepted**														**Finishing point**	
	September 2012		October 2012	November 2012				December 2012	January 2013					February 2013		April 2013	June 2013	
Research activities	Writing an abstract			Reviewing literature	Forming research questions	Designing research methodology	Applying for Ethics	Collecting data	Analysing data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results	Concluding the results	Preparing PPT slides	Presenting the research	Writing a draft of paper	Publication		
Stage				**1**			**2**	**3**					**4**					
Step	St1			St2	St3	St4	St5	St6	St7	St8	St9	St10	St11	St12	St13	St14	**Total hours**	
Activity duration in hours[2]	7			28	½ hour	7	X	20	84	56	42	42	7	✓	84	✓	377:30	

Note: (1) B2 totally replicated his MA (TESOL) thesis research project.
(2) For ease of analysis, the time span displayed in this table is reported in hours.

hours designing his research methodology (St3). In an interview mid-way through his research timeline, B2 mentioned that he only added one extra open-ended item to the questionnaire that he had previously used in his MA research project. This indicates that at this stage B2 only reviewed and revised his past research project, and he did not face many challenges with time constraints.

In the later stages (Stages 3 and 4) of this research, B2 spent a little more time doing research activities in Steps 7, 8, 9 and 10 than he did in Stage 1. For instance, he had spent approximately 84 hours analysing the data (St7), 56 hours interpreting the data (St8), 42 hours discussing the results (St9), and the other 42 hours drawing conclusions of the research results (St10). Table 6.B2 illustrates that B2, as a novice teacher researcher undertaking research, reported to have spent 377 hours in total undertaking the whole process of his research activities. This time span is nearly equal to the time (i.e. 370 hours) that the experienced researcher set out in the composite model used. In this respect, B2 seemed to have considerable time to conduct the research, especially compared with A1 and B1. The subsequent discussions with B2 indicates that unlike A1 and B1, who conducted their research activities on non-teaching days, B2 undertook some of his research activities during his office work time in the IFL's computer room. B2 stated that he used four hours per day of his office work in the IFL's computer room (i.e. two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon) to do his research activities. In what follows, I will examine the research processes that B2 actually performed in his research project.

Let us first examine B2's construction of the research instrument to collect data for his research and analysis of the data. Unlike A1, who constructed his own questionnaire, and B1, who extracted questionnaire items from various research articles, B2 constructed his questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. In his presentation of this research as well as in his PPT slides, B2 compared the results of his current research with the results of Schmitt's (1997) survey, and he also discussed the research results with reference to Schmitt's (1997) and others' research results (see Appendix

6.B2, Slides 13-21). This approach appears to achieve one of McDonough and McDonough's (1997, p. 65) characteristics of good teacher research in terms of "replicability". In other words, as Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies and his research results have been recognised worldwide, conceptualising his research following this taxonomy and comparison of the research results could help B2 achieve validity and reliability in undertaking his research. His aim to compare the research results was to see whether or not they were similar to those results of Schmitt's (1997) survey and of other research available in the literature. He stated in an email response:

> "... the reason why I compared my research results with [the research results of] Schmitt and others is that I would like to prove the results of my research whether they are significantly different or similar to the results of others' studies conducted in different countries mentioned in the literature review." *(B2, email interview)*

However, in the same email communication, B2 stated that he did not aim to compare the results of his 2013 CamTESOL research with the results of his Master's research because he thought that both research projects were conducted in the same institute and with Cambodian students, which might not be significant. This seems a strange omission, and shows B2 as an inexperienced ELT teacher researcher, not fully appreciating the rationale of replication research and the role that literature plays in his research.

Although B2's research design appeared to be robust, his research lacks richness in the data collected. The analysis of B2's PPT slides reveals that the research investigated only students' most and least used vocabulary learning strategies in reading, collected through the students' responses to the questionnaires. There was no triangulation, so the research may not yield interpretable results to inform teaching practices. See Sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 for further analysis of investigative perspectives in B2's research and the tracking between his abstract and PPT slides, respectively.

Overall, Sub-case Study B2 has provided additional characteristics of ELT teacher research undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series. Such additional

characteristics include B2's approach to undertaking his research, which was different from those noted in Sub-case studies A1, B1 and the two composite models. The analysis above indicates these different characteristics comprising (1) B2's total replication of his MA (TESOL) research project; (2) adaptation of Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies in conceptualising his research domain and designing the questionnaire; and interpretation of the research results by comparing his own research results with those of Schmitt's (1997) and others' surveys. Apart from these particular characteristics, B2's research manifested some common characteristics, i.e. it was research undertaken with a shortage of time; and there was a lack of richness in the data collected.

Sub-case Studies A1, B1, and B2 each represents different approaches to undertaking research activities in the context of CamTESOL. I will now proceed to examine the last sub-case study, that of B3/B4, in order to provide one further example of an ELT teacher research project undertaken by IFL lecturers within the context of CamTESOL conference series.

6.2.2.4 Sub-case Study B3/B4

In this sub-case study, B3 and B4 undertook a joint research project, and, as noted earlier, it was a new research project. Initially, B3 and B4 each had their own individual plan for undertaking research to participate in my Phase 2 data collection, but after the Phase 2 introductory meeting, they realised that they had the same interest in researching their own practices regarding "corrective feedback in teaching writing skills". They therefore decided to do a collaborative project on this topic.

Given that B3/B4's research was a new research project to investigate teaching practices, in Freeman (1998) terms, this sub-case study manifests an instance of inquiry-based research, i.e. teachers researching their own settings of English language teaching and learning, undertaken in the timeframe of the CamTESOL conference series. Let us now examine the research process that B3 and B4 undertook in their research and the related issues of concern about their project.

It is important to acknowledge that B3 and B4 did not record their research activities in their diaries, so the data for this sub-case study were retrospectively gathered from individual interviews, group discussions, subsequent online and face-to-face discussions, the research abstract they submitted to the conference and the PPT slides from their 2013 CamTESOL conference presentation (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2 for details).

Unlike the research processes reported in the previous sub-case studies (A1, B1, B2), and the two composite models, B3/B4's research activities began with identifying a research niche and formulating research questions (St1) and then writing a research abstract and submitting it to the 2013 CamTESOL conference (St2). When the abstract was accepted, they began to conduct the literature review (St3) (see Table 6.B3/B4). This strategy for undertaking research at the early stage may have seemed appropriate, but it actually appears to have undermined the quality of this research project. The researchers had not studied the relevant literature attentively and sufficiently to be able to problematise the research topic and properly conceptualise the research framework. This could be seen through B3 and B4's unclear research framework, and the issue of whether they explored their students' common written errors or they focused on providing corrective feedback to their students' written drafts of an argumentative essay (see Appendix 6.B3/B4 for their PPT slides). In the case of the former, they would not have selected only five students because these five students' written essays would not necessarily reveal any common errors in their writing performances. A much larger sample of students would be needed in this case. In the case of the latter, it was questionable what type of corrective feedback they should use to provide feedback on their students' written essays and what type of errors they needed to focus on. This confusion suggests that their research activities were not properly planned. There were a lot of inconsistencies between the information included in the research abstract and the information covered in the actual conference presentation. See Section 6.2.5 for further tracking between the conference abstract and the PPT presentation slides.

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The time that both B3 and B4 spent on their research activities was another factor having an impact on the quality of their research project. As shown in Table 6.B3/B4, they had spent only up to 12 hours identifying the research niche, forming the research questions (St1), writing a conference research abstract and submitting it to the conference (St2). They had only spent up to 28 hours reviewing the relevant literature (St3), and had reviewed possibly only two relevant articles, as set out in their references list (see Appendix 6.B3/B4, Slide 21). They had only spent half an hour designing the research method for their study (St4). Actually, the research method had already been pre-determined in Steps 1 and 2, and was stated in the research abstract they submitted to the conference, showing that they were going to use error analysis and corrective feedback, and a focus group interview to investigate which type of teachers' corrective feedback was preferred by the students. They had also only spent around 10 hours collecting the data, 16 hours analysing the data (St7), and four hours each interpreting the results (St8), and discussing the results and referring back to the literature (St9). In total, B3 and B4 had spent up to 80 hours undertaking all of the activities for the whole research project. This limited time span, as experienced researchers would almost certainly agree, would not be sufficient to allow this research project to be robust and rigorous.

The reported research timeline shows further evidence of a lack of sufficient time for B3/B4's 2013 CamTESOL research. As stated earlier, unlike the other research projects (of A1, B1, and B2), which were only surveys (i.e. administering questionnaires to collect data), B3/B4's research required a considerable amount of time for implementing the corrective feedback and multiple drafts of written essays. Table 6.B3/B4 shows that when B3 and B4 collected the data, it was already January 2013, a month before the IFL's semester examinations, so students and lecturers were busy with the submission and marking of major assignments, progress tests, and semester examinations. The students involved in the project's data collection would have found it hard to contribute multiple drafts of essays. Furthermore, when B3 and B4 began to analyse the data it was February 2013, the month of the

Table 6.B3/B4: A summary of the processes of B3/B4's 2013 CamTESOL research activities

Research timeline	**Starting point**		**Abstract due**	**Abstract accepted**											**Finishing point**			
	September 2012			October 2012	November 2012			December 2012	January 2013					February 2013				
Research activities	Identifying research niche and forming research questions	Writing an abstract	(2)	(2)	Reviewing literature	Designing research method	Applying for Ethics	(2)	Collecting data	Analysing data	Interpreting the results	Discussing the results	Concluding the results	Preparing PPT slides	Presenting the research	Writing a paper	Publication	
Stage					**1**		**2**		**3**					**4**				
Step	St1	St2			St3	St4	St5		St6	St7	St8	St9	St10	St11	St12	St13	St14	**Total hours**
Activity duration (in hours)[(1)]	12				28	½ hour	X		10	16	4	4		4	✓	X	X	78:30

Note: (1) B3 and B4 reported to have spent around two hours at night, especially between 10PM and midnight. As this is a collaborative project, the duration of time, apart from the duration of time they spent collecting the data, was multiplied by two to reflect the total amount of time that both of them spent on research activities.
(2) No research activities took place in this period.

CamTESOL conference, so their research activities were hastily undertaken (i.e. in seven nights, for up to two hours each night, for Steps 7, 8, 9, and 10) to obtain the research findings to be included in the presentation.

In addition, the way that B3 and B4 undertook this collaborative research project reveals another distinguishing characteristic of this research. Instead of doing the research activities together, they divided up the research tasks and then undertook them individually. This means that B3 and B4 only implemented corrective feedback with their own students (i.e. three students recruited from B3's classes; two students recruited from B4's classes). They did not work together across all the student participants' multiple drafts of the essays. This practice reveals their beliefs that undertaking a collaborative research project would reduce the research workload through sharing individual research tasks and responsibilities. B4 stated:

> "... for example if we conduct interviews of many participants, we would share responsibility of transcribing the interviews. We would share responsibility for conducting the interviews also. Normally I took the lead in writing up a research report, but the paper you know was distributed among the members so that we can know the feedback from them." *(B4, Individual interview)*
>
> "... we believe that we're going to share responsibility and we're going to update each other as it's going to be you know the joint product." *(B4, Individual interview)*

This practice significantly affected the research quality in the way that both B3 and B4 reported the findings of the research. They combined their individual findings together in reporting the overall research findings (see Appendix 6.B3/B4, Slides 11-18). B3 reported the students' language errors that he found in his own student participants' drafts of essays, while B4 reported the students' problems about content and organisation, teachers' feedback and students' preferred teacher feedback that he analysed in his own student participants' drafts of essays. As they did not work together to achieve the foci (i.e. as set out in all three research questions) across all participants' drafts of essays, the findings they reported were fragmented and not of the whole group of participants. Therefore, these findings were not sufficient for

interpretation. Moreover, this way of collaboration does not promote interaction and opportunities for learning and sharing of knowledge (Cesareni et al., 2011).

The collaboration of B3 and B4 was strongly influenced by their beliefs about doable teacher research, and this might reveal a distinguishing characteristic of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. First, they believed that teachers should research a topic with a narrow scope, which was achieved by reducing the number of participants. This was evidenced through their aim to find out students' common errors in multiple *(three)* drafts of *one* argumentative essay written by only *five* students. Second, collaborating a research project (i.e. two or more teachers work on the same research project) in order to reduce the research workload was B4's strong intention, and perhaps his principle, to promote teacher research practice at the IFL. He mentioned that this could be done through dividing research tasks among members according to their expertise. He expressed his confidence that ELT professionals could do such "light-work load" research. In their own words:

> "... one thing is to do with the workload. When we work together we can somehow reduce the workload. For example, transcribing is a heavy workload. If we share we could somehow reduce [the workload]. Secondly, it's important to have you know two or three brains, so working together, we can help we can learn from each other and this is I think a part of culture that we want to build collaborative work in doing small or big projects. This is important." *(B4, Individual interview)*

> "... so compared to my partner, he worked more on the literature review..., but in collecting data and analysing the data, I worked out with quantitative data while my partner worked with his own dimension on qualitative." *(B3, Individual interview)*

While this strategy of collaboration made the conduct of their research activities easier and more enjoyable, it has a serious impact on the inquiry-based teacher research practice. For instance, as noted in the analysis above, the research was improperly conceptualised and unrealistically planned and conducted, including the approach taken to analyse the data.

To sum up this section, we have seen in detail how each of four different research projects were undertaken for presentation at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. A1's research, essentially being an MA (TESOL) research project, was undertaken in a way similar to other

formal research activities (i.e. other than not having to apply for ethics approval, the research activities begin with developing a research plan; collecting and analysing data; and going public) (see Tables 6.4 and 6.A1). Moreover, A1's research was completed before he submitted his research abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference. The other three research projects (B1, B2, and B3/B4) were undertaken after the research abstracts were accepted. B1's and B2's research were replications of their Master's theses, however B3/B4's research was actually undertaken from scratch after the abstract was accepted, and suffered from the most severe shortage of time available for conducting the research activities.

In the next section, we turn to examine a typology of teacher research in order to supplement the characteristics of research found in the four sub-case studies.

6.2.3 Typology of teacher research

This section reports other important characteristics of teacher research by reference to the four research projects just discussed. The analysis, grounded in Freeman's (1998) typology of teacher research as set out in Figure 6.1, reveals that the four research projects do not appear to comply with the four teacher research categories stated in the typology of teacher research (Freeman, 1998) (see Section 6.1.2). Let us now examine this variation to further discern the nature of teacher research undertaken by the participants in the context of the CamTESOL conference series.

My analysis of the four sub-case studies shows that three research projects (A1, B1, and B2) required neither restructuring nor reorganising nor intervention in the lecturers' teaching setting to fulfill the purposes for undertaking research. In this regard, drawing from Freeman's (1998) revised typology of teacher research (Figure 6.1), the research undertaken by A1, B1, and B2 seem to fit in Teacher Research Category 3 "watching". However, the accounts of their research activities cannot be classified into this category. For instance, while Teacher Research Category 3 requires teacher researchers to observe learning phenomena within a classroom boundary, as illustrated in Table 6.6, A1, B1, and B2's research projects surveyed students' perspectives of English language learning across a particular group of

students across the institution. A1's research investigated students' perspectives of English language learning in an English-as-Medium-of-Instruction undergraduate program; B1's research investigated students' perceptions about learning writing skills to find out whether students' achievement in writing skills was correlated to their interest in writing, especially writing journals; and B2's research investigated students' strategies used to learn vocabulary through reading.

In a similar vein, B3/B4's research project, which examined students' common errors and their preferred teacher feedback, seemed to require both restructuring and reorganising of and intervention into the teaching environment to achieve the aims of the research, i.e. providing instruction of writing an argumentative essay and of corrective feedback, and implementing corrective feedback on students' multiple essays to a classroom. This appears to be in Teacher Research Category 1 "controlling". However, the account of B3/B4's research project shows that their research activities did not seem to comply with such practice. As we have seen, B3 and B4 recruited five students from different classes (three from B3's classes; two from B4's classes) who had received the instructions of writing an argumentative essay in their respective classrooms to participate in their research project. In the project, which was undertaken outside of their classrooms, these five students were informed about the research procedure and instructed to write multiple drafts of an argumentative essay subsequently following the teachers' feedback. Although B3/B4's research seemed to be an experimental study, it was not, due to that fact that the treatment of the sample was not properly planned and implemented. Thus, B3/B4's research did not fit well in Teacher Research Category 1 (see Figure 6.1).

According to Freeman (1998), this analysis of Phase 2's four research projects in terms of teacher research typology allows a better understanding about the nature of these research projects. In other words, it indicates that these research projects did not fit properly in the teacher research discipline found in the literature (Freeman, 1998) and, if the research

was undertaken in a classroom context to improve teaching quality (i.e. in the case of B3/B4's research project), it could not therefore have been properly planned.

6.2.4 Investigative perspectives

In addition to the typological features of teacher research found in the four sub-case studies above, according to Freeman (1998), examining the investigative perspectives that each research project actually followed will help better discern the nature of the teacher research undertaken in this context. Let us first examine the participants' rationale for researching the topics as stated in each sub-case study.

When asked why they researched the topics and presented them at the 2013 CamTESOL conference, the participants stated their interests in the topics and the perceived usefulness that the research findings would contribute (1) to better English language teaching and learning within their classrooms as well as more widely at the IFL (B1, B2, B3 and B4), and (2) to the implementation of the EMI approach (A1). According to McDonough and McDonough (1997, p. 62), these participants' research activities manifest "sensitivity" to an issue specifically concerned with classroom teaching and learning. This is an indicative characteristic of good teacher research as McDonough and McDonough argue undertaking such research would maximise this sensitivity. However, with respect to the quality of teacher research, the achievement of sensitivity in doing research requires obtaining quality data. My analysis of the four research projects (see Section 6.2.2) indicates that the four research projects lack such quality data.

My analysis reveals that the research mostly investigated students' first-order perspectives, i.e. what students actually do in learning English language and particular subjects. For example, A1's research investigated students' experiences in learning various subjects in an International Studies Program, following an EMI approach and which learning strategies were most and least used by the students. B2's research only investigated students' most and least used vocabulary learning strategies in reading. This shows that the research did

not investigate deeply why the groups of students preferred certain learning strategies to other strategies and how they actually used such preferred strategies. Thus, it did not provide rich and deep data which would contribute towards insightful analysis and interpretation, as well as being useful for teaching and learning.

B1's research, on the other hand, required the student participants to rate their interest in writing skills, as a core subject, and interest in journal writing, as a learning activity. That is, their rating of interest in this subject and learning activity would be influenced by their opinions about them. Thus, a strong relationship, or significant correlation, between their interest in this subject and learning activity with their actual learning achievement in this subject, which B1's research was aiming to ascertain, would inform the practice by way of promoting the students' interest in writing skills, and journal writing which would likely increase the students' achievement in this subject. Again, although B1's research seems to investigate students' second-order perspectives about their experiences in learning writing, given that the data were collected only from questionnaires, there was no triangulation, leading to a lack of credible interpretability.

B3/B4's research examined students' linguistic errors in five students' essays, and feedback on the linguistic errors, including content and text organisation, was provided to the first and subsequent drafts of essays. However, B3 and B4 did not conduct a focus group interview to investigate the students' perceptions about corrective feedback they had originally planned, i.e. whether or not the students found corrective feedback useful, and, if they found it useful, which corrective feedback form they would prefer and why they preferred it. Thus, B3/B4's research could not reach students' second-order perspectives of corrective feedback.

Overall, the four research projects lack the quality data that allow the researchers to achieve their set aims and maximise the 'sensitivity' issue of teaching and learning that teacher research can yield (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

Let us now track between the participants' conference abstracts and the PPT slides to see what adaptations were made in realising the abstract as a piece of research that could be reported at the CamTESOL conference.

6.2.5 Tracking participants' research between abstracts and PowerPoint slides

This section will provide further evidence about ELT teacher research undertaken and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference and a means of triangulating the analysis of the Phase 2 data in order to provide a deeper interpretation of the nature of ELT teacher research undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference. By tracking between the participants' conference research abstracts and PowerPoint slides used for presentation, we can examine the extent to which what the participants promised in their conference research abstracts was actually undertaken and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. The point of departure of this analysis is a conference abstract framework adapted from Hyland's (2009) and Swales and Feak's (2009) conference abstract structure, in which a conference research abstract needs to fulfill the rhetorical generic structure shown in Table 6.7. In general, a conference research abstract should comprise four main moves, including research problem or purpose, research method, research findings, and conclusion.

Table 6.7: Framework of the rhetorical generic structure of conference abstracts, *adapted from Hyland (2009, pp. 81-82) and Swales and Feak (2009, pp. 43-65)*

Text type	Generic structure (in moves)	Description
Conference abstract	(1) Problem or purpose	The author framed or problematised his or her research topic. Alternatively, the author described his or her research objectives.
	(2) Research method	The author articulated research methods (i.e. research instruments used for collecting data, number of participants, and data analysis) that he or she used in his or her research.
	(3) Findings	The author reported the main findings of his or her research.
	(4) Conclusion	The author concluded his or her research findings, and provided implications or recommendations for English language teaching and learning in the related research area.

Using the framework of the rhetorical generic structure of conference research abstracts displayed in Table 6.7, my analysis of the abstracts that the participants submitted to the 2013 CamTESOL conference shows that they did not achieve the four 'moves'.

In fact, they achieved only the first two moves, i.e. addressing a research problem or purpose (Move 1) and addressing research methods (Move 2). A1's conference abstract only covered Move 1 (problematising his research topic and addressing his research objective), and B1's, B2's and B3/B4's conference abstracts only covered Moves 1 and 2. (See Appendix 6.2 for more details of these abstracts).

As we now know, the participants' conference research abstracts were only proposals for research activities to be approved, and the acceptance of these abstracts would trigger the research to be undertaken and therefore mark the beginning of the relevant research activities and processes. This indicates what Swales and Feak (2009, p. 55) have termed as "promissory abstracts", which only illustrate what will be completed by the time of presentation at the conference. Although A1's 2013 CamTESOL research was his already completed Master's thesis, the abstract he submitted to the 2013 CamTESOL conference was also only the original proposal for his thesis. When asked about his submission of the research abstract to the CamTESOL conference, A1 mentioned that he only copied this abstract and submitted it to the conference. He admitted that he was not aware that it was only the initial abstract that he had written for his Master's thesis proposal, rather than the final abstract summarising his completed thesis.

My tracking between abstract and PPT slides highlights what the Cambodian researchers promised and did not promise in the abstracts and what they actually presented at the conference. As shown in Table 6.8, a lot of information, especially related to research methods, data analyses, research findings, and conclusions were not articulated in the abstracts, but were revealed in the PPT slides. Moreover, this tracking also reveals what the participants promised in the abstracts, but could not deliver in the presentations. This issue shows inconsistencies in the information provided about the research activities. For example,

Table 6.8: A summary of the tracking of the participants' research activities

	Abstracts	PowerPoint presentation slides
A1's research project	***In the abstract, A1 stated .....,***	***and in the PowerPoint slides, A1....***
	the current development of English language in Cambodia and general problems of using EMI approach to teach a content-based subject	covered these themes in his literature review (Slides 2-8)
	the objectives of his research	stated these objectives as well as research questions (Slides 9, 10)
	In the abstract, A1 ...,	***but in the PowerPoint slides, A1 .....***
	did not articulate the research method	stated the research method – a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative (Slide 11)
	did not articulate the research instruments	included the research instruments, using questionnaires and a focus group interview for a purpose of triangulation (Slide 13)
	did not articulate the recruitment of participants	stated both the number of student participants recruited for the questionnaire and the focus group interview (Slides 11-12)
	did not address the research findings	reported the research findings as responses to each research question, and interpreted the findings and discussed them by referring back to the literature (Slides 14-29)
	did not conclude the research findings	concluded the research findings and discussed the limitations of the research. A1 also provided the references he reviewed (Slides 30-32)
B1's research project	***In the abstract, B1 stated ....***	***and in the PowerPoint slides, B1 ....***
	a general problem about the relation between students' interest and learning achievements	stated this general problem but specific about students' interest in journal writing, having influenced academic achievement (Slide 2)
	In the abstract, B1 stated that ...	***but in the PowerPoint slides, B1 stated that ...***
	200 students from the English Department would be recruited for this study	of 300 students who were asked to fill in the questionnaires, 244 students returned their questionnaires (Slides 11-12)
	In the abstract, B1 ...	***but in the PowerPoint slides, B1 ....***
	did not articulate the research method	stated the research method – measurements of several variables such as interest in writing skills, interest in journal writing, students' scores (Slides 13-16)
	did not address the research findings	reported the findings using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression (Slides 19-23)
	did not provide a conclusion of the research findings	concluded the research findings and discussed the limitations of the research (Slides 24-26)

Table 6.8 (Cont.): A summary of the tracking of the participants' research activities

	Abstracts	PowerPoint presentation slides
B2's research project	***In the abstract, B2 stated .....,***	***and in the PowerPoint slides, B2....***
	two aims of the research project	stated these two aims after he reviewed the literature (Slides 2, 4, 5, 7), but did not state research questions
	In the abstract, B2 ...	***but in the PowerPoint slides, B2 ...***
	stated that **90** students would be recruited for the data collection	mentioned that **84** students participated in responding to the questionnaires (Slide 6)
	did not address the research method and instruments for data collection	mentioned that questionnaire, adapted from Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of voc. learning strategies, was administered (Slides 10, 12)
	did not articulate an approach to analysis of the data	stated the approach to data analysis (Slide 13)
	did not report the research findings	reported the findings, using descriptive statistics, and comparing the findings with those of Schmitt (1997) and other research he had in the literature review (Slides 14-23)
	did not draw a conclusion of the research findings	drew a conclusion, provided an implication of the findings, and discussed the limitations of the study (Slides 24-25)
B3/B4's research project	***In the abstract, B3/B4 stated ...***	***and in the PowerPoint slides, B3/B4 ...***
	the aims of the paper in terms of three research questions	stated these aims in a form of these the three research questions (Slide 8)
	five student participants would be recruited for the study	mentioned the purposeful selection of these five participants (Slide 9)
	the participants' essays would be checked for common mistakes	reported their findings of the students' mistakes (Slides 11-19)
	In the abstract, B3/B4 ...	***but in the PowerPoint slides, B3/B4 ...***
	stated they would give corrective feedback of *four* drafts	only gave corrective feedback of *three* drafts (Subsequent discussion)[(1)]
	stated the corrective feedback would be practiced within a *10-week period*	only gave corrective feedback within around *five weeks* (Subsequent discussion) [(1)]
	stated they would *meet* with the students *face-to-face* for providing corrective feedback three times	only provided corrective feedback through *distance mode* (Subsequent discussion) [(1)]
	stated they would use a *focus group interview* to explore the students' preference of corrective feedback	did *not* conduct this focus group interview (Subsequent discussion) [(1)]
	stated they would detect the students' final draft for learning improvement	did not compare the students' performances in the first and last drafts (Slide 11)
	did not articulate the clear foci of students' common mistakes	reported three focus areas of mistakes – language, content, organisation (Slides 11-17)
	did not draw a conclusion of the research findings	drew a conclusion, discussed the limitations, and provided references (Slides 19-21)

Note: B3/B4 did not state clearly in their PowerPoint slides; this information was received from their subsequent discussion.

while in both B1's and B2's research, the inconsistency was evidenced through the different number of participants recruited for their research activities, in B3/B4's research, four inconsistencies were revealed. First, in the abstract, B3 and B4 promised to provide corrective feedback on *four* drafts, but in fact they only provided feedback on *three* drafts. Second, in their abstract, they planned to provide corrective feedback within *10* weeks, but in the actual research they only did it within *five* weeks. Third, in the abstract they planned to provide corrective feedback *face-to-face*, but in the presentation of their actual research activities they stated that they did it *by distance*. Finally, in the abstract they promised to conduct a focus group interview to investigate the students' preference of teacher corrective feedback, but they actually did not do it. These inconsistencies show that the participants' actual research activities deviated in relation to the number of participants actually recruited for the study (Sub-case Studies B1 and B2) and the research methods utilised (Sub-case Study B3/B4) (see Table 6.9 for more detail).

Table 6.9: Inconsistencies in information about the research activities(1)

	In the abstract, they stated that .....,	***but in the powerpoint slides or in the subsequent discussion, they stated that ...***	***Therefore, their actual research activities deviated in relation to***
Research project B1	200 students would be recruited for this study	of 300 students who were asked to fill in the questionnaires, 244 students returned their questionnaires.	**the number of participants needed**
Research project B2	90 students would be recruited for this study.	only 84 students returned the questionnaires.	**the number of participants needed**
Research project B3/B4	they would give corrective feedback of four drafts	they only gave corrective feedback of three drafts (2)	**research methods**
	the corrective feedback would be practiced within a 10-week period	they only practice giving corrective feedback within around five weeks(2)	**research methods**
	they would meet with the students face-to-face for providing corrective feedback three times	they only provided corrective feedback through distance mode(2)	**research methods**
	they would use a focus group to explore the students' preference of corrective feedback	they did not conduct this focus group(2)	**research methods**

Note: (1) A1's conference research abstract was not included in this table because his abstract only included a brief description of English language in Cambodia and aims of the study.
(2) This information was given by both B3 and B4 in the subsequent discussion.

Thus, what the participants promised in their conference abstracts, particularly in the case of B3/B4's research, was not fulfilled in their actual research activities. In the case of B3/B4, the fact of conducting new research rather than presenting a thesis or replication study appears to have taken the highest toll in broken promises, undoubtedly due to a mismatch between ambition and experience.

Besides these inconsistencies, there is evidence of the participants' lack of awareness of what an appropriate conference abstract should contain. As noted earlier, A1 submitted his conference abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference after his thesis project had been completed. Moreover, and by accident, the abstract he submitted to the conference was only a thesis proposal abstract. In a similar vein, B1's submission of his research abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference was done after his data collection. Nevertheless, the abstract he submitted to the conference suggested a different number of participants needed for his study. When asked why he submitted such an abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference series, A1 expressed his lack of awareness of submitting the wrong abstract to the conference. He stated:

> "... well, the abstract that I submitted to CamTESOL was the one that I had at the beginning, not the one after I had [when I] finished the research project ... I didn't notice [it]. I finished my whole research paper in around July 2012 ..." *(A1, Subsequent discussion)*

The issue of abstract quality raises concerns about the quality of research activities undertaken and presented at the CamTESOL conference by these lecturer participants. For one, it indicates their inappropriate planning for research from the earliest stage of research activities, meaning when they were primarily motivated and interested in presenting research at the CamTESOL conference, and in response to the conference call for papers, they quickly drafted an abstract and submitted it to the conference. As evidenced in B3/B4's 2013 CamTESOL research activities, a lot of what were originally planned research activities were unable to be undertaken properly and some, especially the focus group interview, were eventually omitted from the actual research activities. Secondly, flawed abstracts reflect in part the practices of the CamTESOL conference series, which claim to promote Cambodian

ELT professionals' presentation of research at the conference but do not seem to pay attention to the quality of the research they are promoting.

6.2.6 Challenges in doing research

This section reports another common aspect of the research involved in the sub-case studies. This aspect is concerned with the challenges the participants reported facing in doing the research as inexperienced ELT teacher researchers. An analysis of the data reveals that the most commonly reported challenges were the researchers' lack of research knowledge and skills (A1, B2, and B3); lack of disciplinary knowledge about the topic of their research (A1 and B1); lack of time for doing research (A1, B1, B2, B3, and B4); lack of access to relevant resources for literature reviews (A1, B1, B2, and B3); and lack of sufficient support in terms of encouragement and technical assistance from colleagues and their institution (B1, B2, B3, and B4). In the participants' own words:

Challenges – research disciplinary knowledge:

> "... I just remember one more challenge that I faced in my research. [It] is the knowledge about research even though I had some experience of doing research when I was a student ..." *(A1, Individual interview)*

> "... for example, usually the knowledge [of] variables that I am studying and ... I don't think anyone that I know have [expertise] in this area." *(B1, Individual interview)*

Challenges – content disciplinary knowledge (topic):

> "... I faced a lot of challenges in this research project. First, ... I have very little knowledge about [the topic]." *(A1, Individual interview)*

Challenges – time constraints:

> "... the first main problem of course time. Yes I actually taught so many hours in this semester, and really had little time to look into the research until it was close to the presentation [date] ..." *(B1, Final group discussion)*

> "... we both don't have enough time because we are very busy." *(B3, Individual interview)*

> *"*... we don't have time to help each other to strengthen each other's weaknesses ... because we are very busy like we had different projects not only research we have to teach and besides teaching we have other voluntary work as well." *(B3, Final group discussion)*

Challenges – resources:

> "... The second challenge is access to the materials ... it was really difficult for me to find the relevant materials ..." *(A1, Individual interview)*

> "... the first thing is finding literature although I got some affiliations *(referring to his scholarship alumni)*, there are some articles that I cannot access, so it it's [a] difficult part in conducting research ..." *(B1, Individual interview)*

> "... it is difficult for me to find the literature review that is relevant to the topic that I have chosen ..." *(B2, Final group discussion)*

Challenges – support:

> "... I think one of the most important things is also about motivation [and] incentive. I didn't notice much incentive around ... there was not much talking about research among lecturers [and] even among the management ..." *(B1, Final group discussion)*

> "... the challenge is that [when] I asked some lecturers to help me deliver the questionnaires to the students, they did not seem to be so satisfied with what I asked ..." *(B2, Individual interview)*

> "... at first I decided to analyse the data by using SPSS but after I have tried many times and I searched the internet how to do this one and I have asked some other people who have done research with SPSS but I found out that I cannot do it ..." *(B2,Final group discussion)*

Taking into consideration these challenges, the quality of the research activities must have been seriously affected. These challenges represented a lot of critical moments that the participants encountered in doing their research. Thus, it is important to examine how these participants dealt with such challenges to be able to complete their research activities.

A1 approached different people for different assistance. Besides his academic supervisor's assistance with problematisation of the research topic, conceptualisation of the research framework, formulating the research questions, designing the questionnaire, and analysing the data, A1 received his colleagues' assistance with such issues as training on the use of SPSS software and providing research articles that he could not access. He also approached his students for assistance with inputting the questionnaire data into SPSS software and transcribing the focus group interview data. He stated:

> "I basically approached them and introduced them to my research study and then asked them whether they could help me with SPSS." *(A1, Individual interview)*

> "... we do not have enough resources in our *institute* and in our country, so I got to ask for help from my friends *who were studying* abroad ..." *(A1, Individual interview)*

B1, unlike A1 who received assistance from his colleagues, was not able to receive any assistance. He stated:

> "... I don't think I can find that one *(referring to variables related to his research topic)*. I don't think anyone that I know has the [expertise] in this area ..." *(B1, Individual interview)*

Similarly, B2, who did not receive his colleagues' assistance with administering the questionnaires, approached class monitors and sub-monitors for such assistance. He stated:

> "... when I asked some lecturers to help me deliver the questionnaires to the students, they did not seem to be so satisfied with what I have asked. That's why, I turned to ask the [class monitors and] sub-monitors." *(B2, Individual interview)*

B2 also approached several colleagues for some advice on what to include in the PPT presentation slides. B3 and B4, on the other hand, decided to conduct a joint research project so that the research workload could be reduced. Indeed, they also reduced the number of participants needed in their study. They believed that this way of conducting research is what a doable teacher research project should be. In the participants' own words:

> "... and then you have to understand what nature of research you want to do, so you have to like limit the number of your sampling ..." *(B3, Individual interview)*

> *"*... the problem is with the transcription, but if I did it alone it would be a big burden. 45 minutes interviewing with six participants is going to be like around 100 pages, which is rather burden, but since we have three members so that's ok." *(B4, Individual interview)*

Significantly, B3 appeared to be satisfied with his collaboration with B4 in doing this research. He mentioned that he had learned a lot from B4 in terms of research knowledge and skills. In his own words:

> "... when I did research in the past, I didn't know what I was doing was right or wrong. So I really want to get some ideas from other people ... but for this one *(referring to his 2013 CamTESOL research)* I think I'm very happy

> because my partner B4 did show that what I have done is on the right track and ... he confirmed what I was not sure about doing research ... he scaffolded me a lot ... and because of him I got an idea and I felt like the way we collected data is so simple ...” *(B3, Final group discussion)*

B3 seemed to have more confidence in undertaking research from his experience of this joint research project. Of these five participants, B3 was the only one who subsequently conducted a research project and presented it at the 2014 CamTESOL conference.

6.3 DISCUSSION

As seen in the analyses and their interpretation presented in this chapter, the four 2013 CamTESOL research projects followed the research processes as set out in the formal ELT teacher research activity specification (see Table 6.4). However, in terms of their actual context – i.e. as a set of research activities undertaken within the context of the CamTESOL conference series – these four research projects represent different kinds of research that ‘count’ as research in Cambodia. Apart from A1’s research which was his previously completed Master’s thesis, the other three research projects (B1, B2, B3/B4) took place by way of different processes across the CamTESOL-regulated research timeline. The varieties of research activities, especially those found in B3/B4’s research, can be seen as exemplifying different yet specific norms of research activities presented at the annual CamTESOL conference series.

The specifications of these four research projects indicate that the majority followed a quantitative research approach, and a questionnaire was the most popular research instrument used by these lecturer participants (see Table 6.6 for a summary of these four research activities). This is congruent with what Moore’s (2011a) survey (in the Cambodian context) and Borg’s (2009) survey (in the worldwide context) found as ELT teacher reported common characteristics of good research.

However, based on the analyses and interpretation of these four research projects, serious concerns are raised about the quality of the research undertaken. The time span that

the participants had for undertaking research activities was probably insufficient to produce high quality research. The participants did not do research activities on an on-going basis although they did appear to perform the research activities systematically. There was often a big time lag between the various research activities and, when it was close to the presentation, the research activities were undertaken hastily and often inappropriately. This indicates that the participants' research activities are impacted negatively by their circumstances of full-time teaching and related activities. Furthermore, and perhaps more seriously, the research activities were only considered supplementary to their main concern of teaching.

We have seen clear evidence that the participants did not plan their research activities accurately from the beginning and across the research timeline. When they planned their research, especially designing their research methodology, and particularly in the case of B3/B4's research project, they chose what appears to be the easiest way to complete the tasks. Thus, this increases the risk of producing low quality research outcomes. The research abstracts set out only the first two 'moves', typical of conference abstracts (i.e. addressing the research problem or objective, and articulating research methods), and omitted the remaining moves (i.e. articulating the research findings and drawing a conclusion). Instead of proposing to report a research project which had already been undertaken, their abstracts proposed research activities to be approved. This practice is consistent with what Swales and Feak (2009) identify as 'promissory abstracts'. It is not clear whether CamTESOL's organising committee are aware of this distinction in abstract types and, if so, whether they give any consideration to the quality of research likely to arise from promissory abstracts. Thus, some of the inconsistencies between the research plan and the actual research could clearly be evidenced, and some important research features, especially of research design, as in the case of B3/B4's research, were dropped from the original plan.

The analyses and interpretations also indicate deficiencies that impacted on the undertaking of research. These included the relative inexperience of the teacher researchers, especially caused by these participants' lack of research knowledge and skill sets for doing

research, as well as other challenges such as a lack of resources and institutional support. These factors appear to have prevented the teacher researchers from being able to properly problematise and conceptualise their research in order to conduct robust and rigorous research. B2's research manifested the most robust research design, especially in constructing a questionnaire, following Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. However, B2's aim of comparing the results of his 2013 CamTESOL research with the results of Schmitt's (1997) survey was not to validate Cambodian students' vocabulary learning strategies through reading, but to gauge whether his research results were similar to or different from Schmitt's (1997) and others' survey results. This reflected the way B2 saw the role of relevant literature simply to endorse and confirm his research findings.

The deficiency in undertaking research is also revealed in the way two participants viewed and conducted a joint research project. According to Bruce and Easley-Jr (2000), collaboration in doing research means the way in which teachers bring together different expertise in and experiences of doing research to deal with common problems they encounter in teaching. However, in B3 and B4's collaborative research, the way they divided research tasks between themselves to lighten the research workload does not reflect this notion of collaborative research. Therefore, it does not promote active learning to do research.

The barriers to undertaking research mentioned above, which might partly prevent Cambodian ELT professionals from being engaged in doing research, call our attention to the importance of properly and practically yet also effectively organising ELT teacher research activities. This is especially the case if the aim is to promote tertiary ELT professionals' engagement in doing research. This issue will be taken up in Chapters 7 and 8.

6.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has helped us better understand ELT teacher research undertaken in Cambodia in the context of the CamTESOL conference series. The four sub-case studies presented suggest four different kinds of ELT teacher research undertaken by the

IFL lecturers, in particular, and probably by Cambodian ELT professionals, in general, all in the context of CamTESOL's conference series. It reveals the general ELT teacher research landscape in this context, in that the research projects presented at the annual CamTESOL conference ranged from the presenters' former postgraduate thesis research (i.e. Master thesis research), to replications of their postgraduate thesis research, and to fresh inquiry-based teacher research. In most cases, as noted in the analysis of the participants' conference research abstracts, these research projects were neither pre-planned nor completely undertaken before the researchers submitted their abstracts to the conference. In other words, when they were interested in presenting some research at the conference, they began roughly planning their research, drafted an abstract and submitted it to the conference. Their research activities continued only if their abstract was accepted. This practice naturally resulted in inconsistencies between the research abstract and actual research findings.

In light of the findings reported in this chapter, the quality of the four research projects conducted for and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference was low. As noted, the four research projects do not appear to fit well in any teacher research category in Freeman's (1998) typology of teacher research, thus producing a variation of teacher research undertaken in this context. Such a variation of teacher research mainly investigated students' first-order perspectives of the subject matters of the research, meaning they lacked richness and complexity in the data they collected, leading to a lack of rigor in the research. This appears to have resulted from the participants' lack of research knowledge and skill sets, a severe shortage of time for undertaking the research, unrealistic planning of research activities, a lack of relevant resources for building up robust literature reviews, and a lack of peer and institutional support.

Overall, this chapter has revealed the 'rhythm' of the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia created by the CamTESOL conference series. Considered as a platform for showcasing ELT teacher research in Cambodia, CamTESOL has encouraged and endorsed Cambodian ELT teachers' research presentations at the conference, but has not seriously

promoted the quality of such research. The five participant lecturers were encouraged to do research, but they were never assisted or guided to do the research properly. Though they had previously been involved in undertaking various research activities, they undertook their projects in ways that exposed their inexperience as researchers.

In the next chapter, we will examine whether or not these five lecturer participants undertook their research activities within a framework of a community of practice. That investigation will suggest possibilities regarding a proper and practical, but effective, framework to initiate ELT teacher research activities in the context of the CamTESOL conference series, in particular, and in the context of contemporary Cambodian ELT education more generally.

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CHAPTER 7

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCHERS IN CAMBODIA

7.0 INTRODUCTION

So far this thesis has portrayed the current landscape of ELT teacher research in Cambodia in the context of the CamTESOL conference series from two perspectives: macro and micro. In Chapter 5, we viewed Cambodian ELT professionals' conceptions of ELT teacher research from a macro perspective. Conceptions of ELT teacher research were viewed by way of six Cambodian English lecturers from six different tertiary institutions in Phnom Penh. In contrast, Chapter 6 provided a micro perspective by focusing on four actual research projects undertaken by five Cambodian ELT lecturers from the IFL and presented at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. To briefly reiterate, from a macro perspective, Cambodian ELT professionals appear to have conceptualised 'ELT teacher research' with some variability. However, in their conceptualisations, 'ELT teacher research' seems to be distinguished from the concept of 'research' in general. From a micro perspective, the four 2013 CamTESOL research projects were undertaken with similar research activities to those of the two composite models of formal research described in Chapter 6 (Table 6.5), but these research activities proceeded through different research timelines. We also noted that the quality of these four research projects was called into question given their shortcomings as research that met international standards. In the present chapter we will explore Cambodian ELT research activities in terms of 'communities of practice' in order to better understand how they currently function and identify what might need to be changed to improve current practices. The discussion will introduce a third perspective, the 'meso' view that operates between the macro and the micro, namely at an institutional level.

Wenger et al. (2002) describe communities of practice as follows:

> Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. (p. 4)

Such a description would seem to fit well with the activities of Cambodian ELT teacher researchers, and it is worth considering whether there are any actual communities of practice functioning in contemporary ELT teacher research in Cambodia. Three levels of activity will be examined for evidence of a functioning community of practice: (1) at CamTESOL (i.e. macro level); (2) at the IFL (i.e. meso level); and (3) among individual ELT professionals (i.e. micro level). The analysis in this chapter draws on the data collected in Phase 1 (i.e. through a focus group discussion and individual interviews) and Phase 2 (i.e. through four individual sub-case studies), as reported in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively, and relevant documents that were collected from the IFL (e.g. the IFL information handbook) and from CamTESOL (e.g. conference program handbooks and website). As a long-standing academic staff member of the IFL, my personal knowledge and understanding regarding the practices of ELT teacher research at CamTESOL and the IFL also inform this analysis. The analysis and interpretation draw on the notion of a community of practice (CoP) as presented in Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002). This chapter ultimately lays the ground work for proposing a workable framework for an initiative to effectively promote the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, which will be presented in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 7, I will first present a review of the literature relevant to communities of practice in order to theoretically conceptualise the CoP framework. I will then suggest a way of modelling a CoP of ELT teacher researchers which will enable a deeper analysis of my data at macro, meso, and micro levels. Lastly, I will use this modelling to present an analysis and interpretation of my data to clarify the practice of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia.

7.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

7.1.1 Communities of practice

Communities of practice are believed to create connections for people who have a similar passion to interactively work together regularly to achieve their set goals which are generated along their actual shared activities. Along the journey of undertaking a CoP's activities, a CoP's members exchange with each other their expertise, experiences, and background knowledge to help each other achieve those activities (Snyder et al., 2003; Wenger, 1998, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). For a CoP to successfully emerge and sustain itself, it must comprise three dimensions, as set out in detail in Table 7.1, namely domain, community, and practice, which are fundamental yet coherently interdependent (Wenger et al., 2002).

The **domain** of a community of practice comprises first and foremost the community's *members*. In some communities, members may possess similar competence, expertise, backgrounds, and are from within the community's boundaries. In contrast, in some communities, members may possess diverse competence, expertise, backgrounds, and are from across different communities' boundaries. The former builds a homogenous CoP, while the latter builds a heterogeneous CoP. Some members are core; some are peripheral; and some are marginal (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). As shown in Table 7.1, a CoP's members share visions, topics, resources, interests, issues, problems and solutions, and competence, among other traits (Wenger, 1998, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). In other words, however diverse these CoP members are, they share the domain of the community to which they belong. According to Wenger (2006) this shared domain, when it has operated along the trajectory of the practice within a community, produces an identity that makes members of the community different from others. Wenger (1998, p. 77) calls this domain "joint enterprise", resulting from the members' "collective process of negotiation" of meaning. Members' awareness about and appreciation of these elements of the domain, and their commitment to be held accountable for these elements are keys to success for a CoP (Wenger et al., 2002).

Table 7.1: Characteristics of a community of practice, *adapted from Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002)*

	Characteristics			Description	Remark
A Community of Practice must comprise these interrelated elements.	**Domain**	**Joint enterprise**	Members	A group of people who form this community of practice.	When the CoP members share the community's domain and are attentively accountable for achieving this domain, they have developed their **identity** and sense of belonging in the community.
			Goals/visions	They share goals and have an interest, passion and concern about achieving these goals.	
			Topics	They raise topics that they desire to discuss to develop the community.	
			Problems and solutions	They raise problems that they have encountered, and they help each other to deal with these problems.	
			Competence	They possess different abilities and expertise.	
			Artifacts/ reified elements	These are a CoP's resources, comprising the community's website, printed documents, publication, meeting reports, notes on bulletin board, and diaries.	
			Members' awareness, appreciation, and commitment to accountability to achieve the domain.	They are aware of the domain and committed to being held accountable to achieve this domain.	

Table 7.1 (Cont.): Characteristics of a community of practice, *adapted from Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002)*

	Characteristics				Description	Remark
A Community of Practice must comprise these interrelated elements.	**Community**	**Mutual engagement**	Participation	Marginal	This kind of participation is seen through those people who are interested in the CoP's domain but reluctant to join the CoP's activities.	When the CoP members share the CoP domain, are accountable for achieving this domain, and are doing the CoP activities together on a regular basis, they have created opportunities for **learning**. When peripheral members are mutually engaged in the CoP activities, they become core members. These core members inspire other members who are marginal to the CoP by presenting and sharing their CoP's products.
				Peripheral	This kind of participation is manifested through members' not having an ongoing engagement in the CoP's activities.	
				Principal	This kind of participation is revealed through members' regular engagement in the CoP's activities.	
			Space		Events are physically or virtually organised to bring members together on an ongoing basis.	
			Brokers		They are useful and resourceful agents who assist CoP's members, especially newcomers, in various ways. Sometimes they are not CoP members.	
			Coordinators		These people organise events and connect the CoP members to bring them to work together on a regular basis.	
	Practice	**Shared repertoires**	Produced artifacts	Theories/rules/ principles/ frameworks/ models/genres Cases and stories Tools/articles/ discourses Concepts Lessons learned Best practice	The CoP has developed "a set of common approaches and shared standards (i.e. specific ways of doing things within the CoP) which form a baseline for action, communication, problem solving, performances, and accountability" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38) These CoP's products along the trajectory of development, in turn, will become the CoP's artifacts or reified elements which are very useful for further development of the community.	When the CoP members are mutually engaged in doing the CoP activities and doing the activities together, their shared practice contributes to their shared repertoires. These shared repertoires become the CoP's **common knowledge.**

They are reified elements that serve as 'boundary objects' (e.g. "artifacts including documents, terms, and concepts" (Wenger, 1998, p. 105)) for the CoP members to make interconnections.

Having a clear shared domain of a community is crucial for developing a CoP, as Wenger et al. state, "[the domain] is what brings people together and guides their learning. It defines the identity of the community, its place in the world, and the value of its achievements to members and to others" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 31). Wenger (1998) argues that when the CoP members share this domain, they are accountable for achieving it by mutually engaging in various activities in the CoP. They have consequently developed a sense of belonging to and a special *identity* in the CoP.

As noted in Table 7.1, another fundamental dimension of a community of practice is the **community**. To achieve the CoP's shared domain, members need to be mutually engaged in undertaking the community work. Wenger (1998, p. 73) calls this participation "mutual engagement". On a regular basis, they are involved in combined activities, sharing information and specialised knowledge, discussing problems and offering solutions, and helping each other achieve the domain (Wenger, 2006). This involvement, once sustained along the trajectory of the community work, develops relationships and builds trust among the community members (Wenger et al., 2002) and ensures community maintenance (Wenger, 1998). Along the trajectory of engagement in the CoP's activities, members change their status, i.e. they move from peripheral to principal membership and become actively involved in promoting the community to attract other marginal members to participate in the CoP (Borzillo, Aznar, & Schmitt, 2011). When newcomers begin participating in the CoP's activities, they meet CoP's 'brokers' who are either CoP core members (who make connections by introducing new CoP activities) or CoP external members (with specific expertise, competence, and resources to help these newcomers with various kinds of assistance to achieve their activities). Therefore, a CoP creates opportunities for *learning* within a community. As Lave and Wenger (1991) argue, learning takes place through learner's participation in activities variously situated within 'communities of practice'. Along

the participatory process, what Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 29) labelled "peripheral legitimate participation", peripheral members (i.e. newcomers) interact as well as collaboratively work with core members (i.e. old-timers) of the community, and possibly with CoP external brokers, to acquire knowledge and skills they desire in order to move from the peripheral stage to full membership. Lave and Wenger state:

> Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29)

Wenger et al. (2002) point out the important role of a CoP coordinator in organising various events and networks to bring CoP's members together to discuss problems and help find solutions, and share their experiences, knowledge and expertise. As Wenger argues, what makes this mutual engagement possible within a community varies from members' face-to-face interaction to any means of virtual communication such as "talking on the phone, exchanging an electronic email, or being connected by radio" (Wenger, 1998, p. 74).

The last fundamental dimension of a CoP, again depicted in Table 7.1, is **practice**. The CoP members are not general observers or spectators; they are 'practitioners' (Wenger, 2006, p. 2). Once they are regularly engaged in combined activities within their community, they have accumulated and established "shared repertoires" (Wenger, 1998, p. 82), which form "a baseline of common knowledge" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38) within a community, encompassing various types of knowledge such as "cases and stories, theories, rules, frameworks, models, principles, tools, experts, articles, lessons learned, best practice, and heuristics." (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38). In addition to this common knowledge built upon through day-to-day practice, the CoP members have also created a discourse of practice and different styles to express their memberships and identity within their community (Wenger, 1998).

In sum, a CoP should have three basic constitutive dimensions – domain, community, and practice – which are interdependent and encourage coherent practice within a community. Figure 7.1 illustrates these three interconnected CoP dimensions and provides a summary of characteristics of these three dimensions. If a community does not possess these three interconnected dimensions, it cannot be a CoP but rather is some other entity or structure, which Wenger et al. (2002) list and describe as a business or functional unit, a project or operational team, an informal network, or a professional association. Table 7.2, reproduced from Wenger et al. (2002, p. 42), provides more information about these entities, each of which possesses its own particular characteristics, and to which we shall return later in this chapter.

7.1.2 Communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers

The CoP framework was first used by researchers in the social sciences and professional disciplines to describe how specific occupational groups of people negotiated meaning and reflected on it in their practices (Wesley & Buysse, 2001). In educational research, researchers have used a CoP framework to examine teachers' learning within communities, collaboration in educational reforms, and professional development (Nishino, 2012). In this section, I will conceptualise the notion of a CoP as it might apply to ELT teacher researchers, drawing on Wenger (1998, 2006), Wenger et al. (2002), and other relevant literature (Aguilar & Krasny, 2011; Gardner & Miller, 2013; Koliba & Gajda, 2009; Wesley & Buysse, 2001), and then use it to examine the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia at three levels, i.e. macro, meso, and micro.

In recent years, some scholars have reconceptualised educational practice in applied linguistics. For example, almost two decades ago, Freeman and Johnson (1998a) argued for a reconceptualisation of language teacher's 'learning to teach', which, in traditional education practice, refers to teachers learning about teaching theories in one context, practising teaching in another context, and developing effective teaching in yet a further different professional context. That is, in this traditional education practice, to become a teacher one needs to

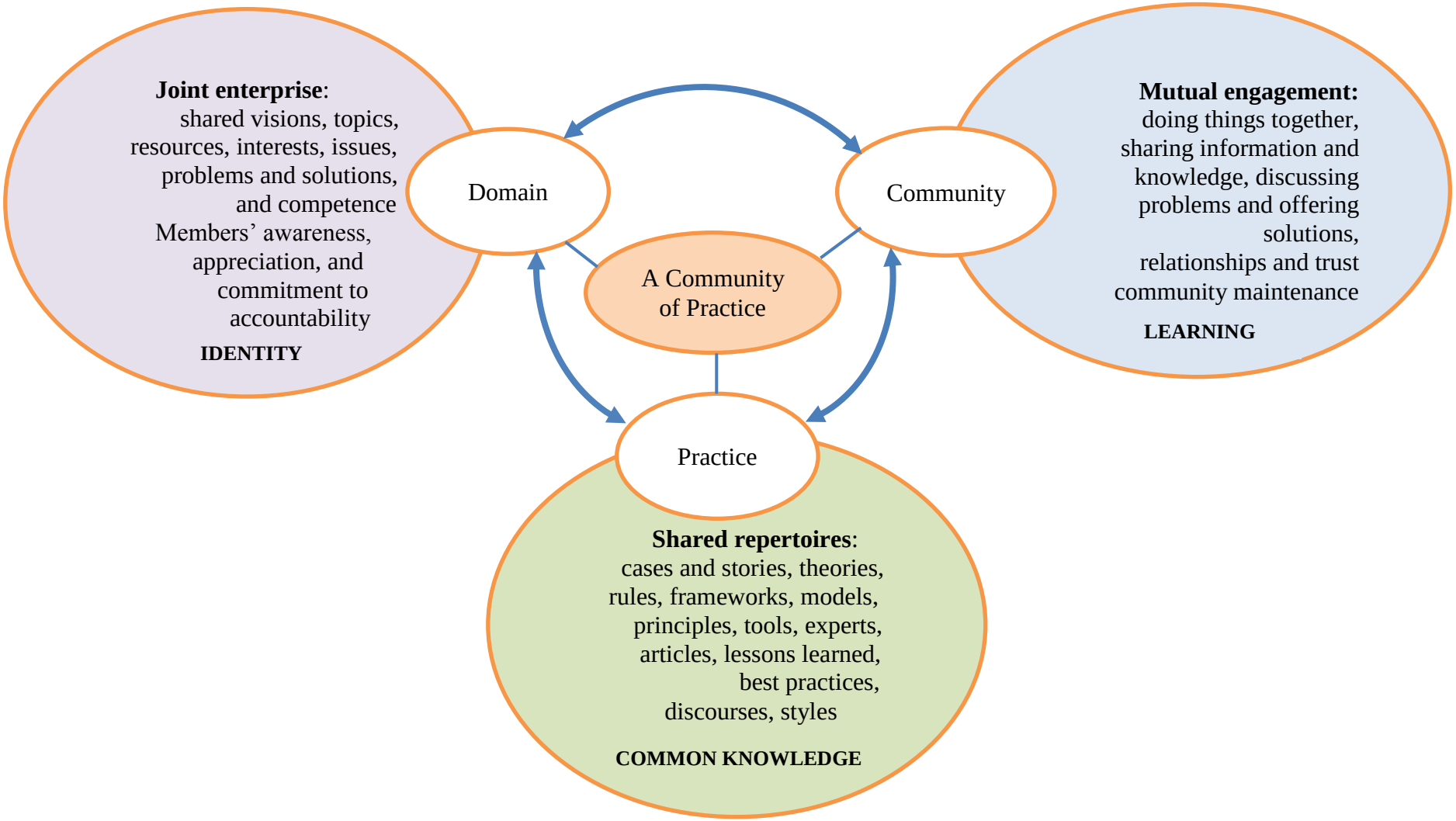


Figure 7.1: A model of characteristics of a community of practice, ***adapted from Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002)***

Table 7.2: Key information about Communities of Practice and other entities, *reproduced from Wenger et al. (2002, pp. 41-42)*

	What's the purpose?	Who belongs?	How clear are the boundaries?	What holds them together?	How long do they last?
Communities of practice	To create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and to develop individual capabilities	Self-selection based on expertise or passion for a topic	Fuzzy	Passion, commitment, and identification with the group and its expertise	Evolve and end organically (last as long as there is relevance to the topic and value and interest in learning together).
Business/functional units or formal departments	To deliver a product or service	Everyone who reports to the group's manager	Clear	Job requirements and common goals	Intended to be permanent (but last until the next reorganisation)
Operational teams	To take care of an ongoing operation or process	Membership assigned by management	Clear	Shared responsibility for the operation	Intended to be ongoing (but last as long as the operation is needed)
Project teams	To accomplish a specified task	People who have a direct role in accompanying the task	Clear	The project's goals and milestones	Predetermined ending (when the project has been completed)
Informal networks	To receive and pass on information, to know who is who	Friends and business acquaintances, friends of friends	Undefined	Mutual need and relationships	Never really start or end (exist as long as people keep in touch or remember each other)
Communities of interest	To be informed	Whoever is interested	Fuzzy	Access to information and sense of likemindedness	Evolve and end organically

proceed through three different rather disconnected educational ‘vacuums’. Freeman and Johnson argue that this traditional education practice assumes that a teacher needs to possess “discrete amounts of knowledge, usually in the form of general theories and methods that were assumed to be applicable to any teaching context" (p. 399). In reconceptualising the knowledge-based teacher education, Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 401) assert that a teacher’s learning to teach is influenced by his or her personal experiences and requires “the acquisition and interaction of knowledge and beliefs about oneself as a teacher, of the content to be taught, of one’s students, and of classroom life." Freeman and Johnson argue that such learning to teach should be located within processes of professional teacher education and that these processes are socially negotiated and constructed by the teacher, collaboratively working with students, parents, as well as with other colleagues. They state:

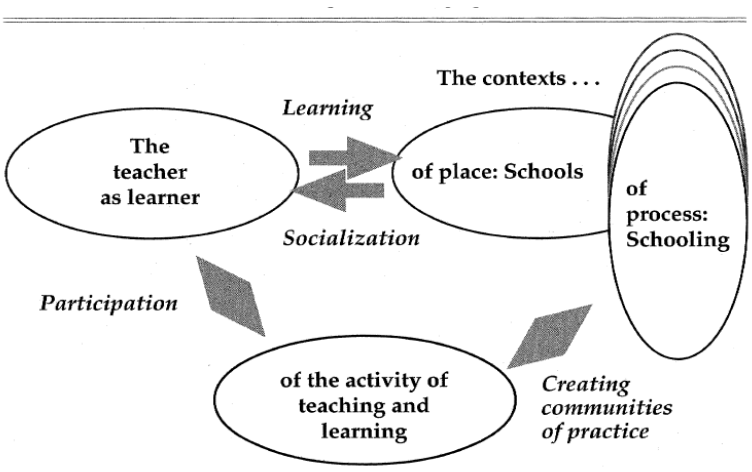
> We therefore have to acknowledge that the process is a socially negotiated one, because teachers' knowledge of teaching is constructed through experiences in and with students, parents, and administrators as well as other members of the teaching profession. (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a, p. 401)

Therefore, communities of practice appear to be an important force in Freeman and Johnson’s model of knowledge-based language[10] teacher education, in which teachers as learners learn to teach in the context of their schools, through the process of schooling, and within the activity of teaching and learning. In other words, teachers learn to teach by participating in the activity of teaching and learning situated within their schools. This kind of learning to teach – seeing teachers as learners – operates in a “tripartite system”– comprising “the teacher-learner, the social context, and the pedagogical process”, within which language teachers learn and practise their profession (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a, p. 406). This model of knowledge-based language teacher education is reproduced in Figure 7.2.

Applied linguistics scholars Sarangi and Leeuwen argue for a new direction of applied linguistics – a new approach that applied linguistics functions as communities of practice

[10] In their reconceptualisation, Freeman and Johnson (1998) focused on knowledge-based teacher education in general, although this notion seems particularly relevant to English language teaching education. Thus, in this chapter it shall refer to knowledge-based language teacher education.

(Sarangi & Leeuwen, 2002). Their arguments are grounded in the change of roles of applied linguistics and applied linguists as well as new challenges that applied linguists encounter.



Note. Domains are in boldface; processes are in italics.

Figure 7.2: Model of knowledge-based language teacher education, *reproduced from Freeman and Johnson (1998a, p. 406)*

According to Corder (1973, cited in Sarangi and Leeuwen, 2002), applied linguistics is seen as an activity, not a theoretical study. Similarly, applied linguists are no longer producers of theories but consumers or users of such theories. Given this conceptualisation, Sarangi and Leeuwen argue that applied linguistics should develop new ways of building a long-term working relationship across professional boundaries, in which applied linguistic members are appropriately scaffolded so that they can move from the peripheral to the center of the practice of any particular community. That is, applied linguistics needs to build up a "community-specific practice" in order to deal with real world problems (p.5).

Given this reasoning, and the notion of knowledge-based language teacher education, ELT practitioners' undertaking research should also be perceived as operating within the CoP framework. ELT teacher research could thus be viewed as essentially a CoP within the field of applied linguistics.

My review of the literature related to communities of practice shows that some researchers, having perceived the benefits that the CoP framework can provide, argue for implementing a CoP framework in the workplace, including in organisations, early education centres, schools and universities (Buysse et al., 2003; Fraga-Cañadas, 2011; Wesley &

Buysse, 2001). With their assumptions that communities of practice exist within the workplace, schools, and universities, researchers have examined those communities of practice in various ways. For example, Aguilar and Krasny (2011) used Wenger's (1998) dimensions of a CoP (i.e. mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire) to guide their focus group interviews in order to examine whether environmental clubs were communities of practice. In addition, Gardner and Miller (2013) examined emerging communities of practice of self-access managers in universities in Hong Kong by way of investigating their roles.

If a CoP of ELT teacher researchers actually exists in the workplaces and current practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, it should possess specific characteristics that match criteria specified by Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002), as illustrated in Table 7.1, and align with other communities of practice of teacher researchers. The model I have conceptualised of an ELT CoP of teacher researchers is set out in Table 7.3.

7.1.2.1 Domain

As stated earlier, the most fundamental component of the CoP's domain is the members. In the present context, the CoP members are English teachers or lecturers (i.e. ELT professionals) who are interested in improving their own teaching practices by undertaking research and dealing with problems that they encounter in teaching; ELT program managers; research coordinators; and (external and internal) ELT researchers, to name the main categories of members (see Table 7.3). These members have accumulated a variety of disciplinary knowledge and expertise related to English language teaching and learning and research, from both their educational and working experiences. These members' disciplinary knowledge and expertise, which form a crucial asset of their competence, together with resources (e.g. textbooks, articles, notes and diaries, and dialogues) become necessary artifacts of the community (Nishino, 2012; Tummons, 2012). To use Bourdieu's notions, these CoP's artifacts are examples of the CoP members' habitus and social capital, which are

Table 7.3: A model of a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers

	Characteristics				Description	Remark
A Community of Practice must comprise these interrelated elements.	**Domain**	**Joint enterprise**	Members		ELT program managers, research coordinator, internal and external researchers, and ELT lecturers who are interested in research and have been engaged in doing research. These members can be marginal, peripheral, or principal to the community.	When these members share the CoP domain and are attentively committed to achieving this domain, they have developed a sense of belonging to the community and **identity** as ELT professionals as well as ELT teacher researchers.
			Goals/visions		These members share the same goals, i.e. undertaking research to improve the quality of teaching English.	
			Topics		They raise topics for discussion and for conducting research. These topics stem from their own interest and perceived benefits that undertaking research of these topics will provide to them.	
			Problems and solutions		They share problems that they encounter in teaching and help each other find solutions to the problems through undertaking research.	
			Competence		They possess various kinds and levels of research disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge, experience, and expertise.	
			Artifacts/ reified elements		They share resources such as textbooks, papers, articles, diaries, and documents that are related to their research.	
			Members' awareness, appreciation, and commitment to accountability to achieve the domain.		They are aware of the CoP domain and are striving to achieve this domain by undertaking research.	
	Community	**Mutual engagement**	Participation	Marginal	Some ELT professionals are interested in research but are reluctant to join the community.	When peripheral members are regularly engaged in the community activities, they move from peripheral to principal and become core members. These core members inspire other members who are marginal to the community by sharing their CoP's products.
				Peripheral	Some ELT professionals have begun to undertake research, but they have not subsequently completed research.	
				Principal	They are core members of the community. They help promote the CoP activities and develop the community by inspiring other ELT lecturers as well as administrators and directors to participate in the activities.	

Table 7.3 (Cont.): A model of a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers

	Characteristics				Description	Remark
A Community of Practice must comprise these inter related elements.	**Community**	**Mutual engagement**	Spaces		The community provides spaces, either physically or virtually, to its members (i.e. for ELT lecturers to undertake research). These spaces create opportunities for these members to work together, have dialogues, exchange their expertise, experience, and knowledge and help each other to undertake the research.	When these members share the CoP domain, are aware of and accountable for achieving this domain, and are doing the CoP activities together on an ongoing basis, they have created opportunities for **learning –** learning to do research and learning to teach effectively.
			Brokers		Brokers are experienced researchers, teacher researchers, and applied linguists. They are resourceful agents and usually are core members who assist CoP's members, especially newcomers, with various kinds of assistance. Sometimes they are not CoP's members.	
			Coordinators		Research coordinators organise events and connect the CoP's members in order to bring them to work together on a regular basis.	
	Practice	**Shared repertoires**	Produced artifacts	Theories/rules/ principles/ frameworks/ models/genres Cases and stories Tools/articles/ discourses Concepts Lessons learned Best practice	The community has developed a set of common approaches and shared concepts and standards (i.e. specific ways of doing ELT research within the CoP) which form a baseline for "action, communication, problem solving, performances, and accountability." (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38) They disseminate their research stories, cases and findings, which can inform best practices of English language teaching. Some of these research outcomes are published in ELT and ELT-related journals. They have created a special discourse of their community. These CoP's products along the trajectory of engagement, in turn, will become the CoP's artifacts which are very useful for further development of the community.	When these members are mutually engaged in doing research and doing the research activities together, their shared practice has contributed to their shared repertoires. These shared repertoires become the CoP's **common knowledge.**

valuable resources and conditions for creating, sharing, and using knowledge (Lesser & Prusak, 2000, cited in Koliba & Gajda, 2009).

In addition to CoP's members and artifacts as mentioned above, Table 7.3 shows a CoP's goals that the CoP members, working in a group or groups, set out for their communities. These goals are often stated as "vision", which becomes part of the CoP's artifacts. Taking into consideration the benefits of language teacher research (Borg, 2010; Freeman, 1998), the goals that a CoP of ELT teacher researchers strives for would mainly be to improve professional knowledge gained through actually undertaking research. Other goals of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers could be to improve teaching quality, to become autonomous ELT practitioners, to create their own theories in teaching English as a foreign or second language. Thus, those ELT professionals who share their concerns to achieve these goals will join communities, raising topics, issues, or problems and sharing resources and jointly conducting research in order to find workable solutions to their problems.

A CoP also has topics commonly shared by its members in order to conduct research. For instance, a CoP's members raise topics that they want to research, and usually such topics derive from the members' shared problems and solutions in the classrooms (see Table 7.3). As members, they are aware of their community's domain, especially their shared goals, and are determined to conduct research to achieve these goals. When they are actively engaged in research activities, they will develop a special identity, i.e. as ELT researchers as well as ELT professionals.

7.1.2.2 Community

A CoP of ELT teacher researchers can effectively function when members of the community learn to undertake research and undertake the research activities together on a regular basis to achieve mutual engagement. Thus, the CoP members' participation in undertaking research is crucial for developing and maintaining the community. Table 7.3 illustrates three types of participation that ELT teacher researchers are involved in a CoP – marginal, peripheral, and principal.

In Tummons' (2012) account of his own research trajectory, moving from being a novice researcher to an experienced researcher, undertaking research in his institution as well as for his doctoral degree, he stated that he acquired competence in research disciplinary knowledge and also built up his expertise in doing research. Hodkinson (2004) argues that academic knowledge is not individually constructed; it is socially constructed. According to Tummons (2012), CoP members' participation in the CoP activities is heterogeneous because CoP members may undertake research activities in different ways, including focusing on different research topics, asking different research questions to find out different solutions to different problems in their teaching and students' learning, following different research paradigms and approaches. Nonetheless, this participation, though different in various degrees, should be consistent with the CoP domain (i.e. joint enterprise). Tummons states:

> Because working together always, therefore, creates differences as well as similarities, mutual engagement is never homogenous. Things can be done in various ways so long as these are reconcilable to the joint enterprise of the community of practice. (Tummons, 2012, p. 301)

CoP members' participation in the CoP activities explains their level of membership in the community. However, it is also worth considering whether members have embraced the community with enthusiasm or reluctance. (E. M. Rogers, 2003) suggests five adoption categories for any innovative practice in the workplace, and it is a useful tool to use in terms of a CoP. The five adoption categories encompass innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (see Chapter 3, Section 5). Similarly, active and regularly participating members in the community move from peripheral to core membership. Wenger (1998) asserts that a CoP's membership may change. That is, newcomers actively participate in a CoP's activities and become core members; some old-timers may withdraw themselves from the communities; and some other members are only marginal. This change of membership is echoed by Borzillo et al. (2011), who examined a process of participation of peripheral members of nine communities of practice, which were established between 1998 and 2002 within a consortium of multinational organisations in Central Europe (i.e.

comprising seven European and US multinational corporations). The study reveals that in their participation in CoP activities these peripheral members moved from their peripheral to core memberships through five fundamental phases. These five phases include (1) the *awareness phase*, in which the peripheral members are aware of some special issues they desire to learn about and are interested in taking action to deal with those issues; (2) the *allocation phase*, in which the peripheral members who regularly join the CoP activities and contribute their knowledge to various discussions within the CoP to help develop and improve the community are recognised by the CoP's core members; (3) the *accountability phase*, in which peripheral members, when becoming active members, present their practice and expertise at any sharing as well as learning events; (4) the *architecture phase*, where active members are legitimised as core members of the communities and become new core members; and (5) the *advertising phase*, where the new core members begin to inspire other members by publicising their activities in order to attract other marginal members to participate in the CoP's activities. These five fundamental phases form an on-going participatory process cycle of the members' participation in and maintenance of the community and are illustrated in Figure 7.3.

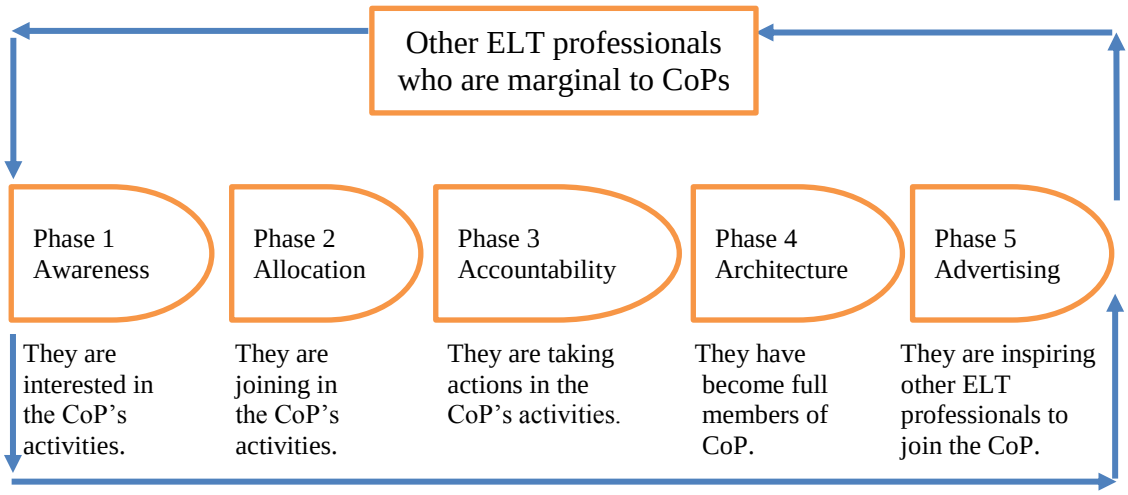


Figure 7.3: A participatory process cycle within a CoP of ELT teacher researchers, *adapted from (Borzillo et al., 2011, pp. 33-37)*

Along the trajectory of participation, novice teacher researchers have been engaged in doing research individually or collaboratively, interacting with experienced (teacher) researchers, and accumulated new knowledge, i.e. knowledge about doing research. Cochran-

Smith and Lytle (1999a, pp. 272-274) called this "knowledge of practice". As well, core members help develop and maintain the communities by inspiring other teachers who are marginal or lagging in various ways, including presenting the research outcomes, exchanging new knowledge or theories that they have created, and offering solutions to problems encountered by their colleagues.

Some research has shown that active participation in a CoP allows members to learn what is termed "craft knowledge"[11], i.e. knowledge about doing research that teachers accumulate along a journey of engagement in (doing) research within a CoP. In Jurasaite-Harbison and Rex's (2005) investigation of one teacher's learning in and through research participation by means of discursive interactions with a researcher, the teacher participant viewed herself as a teacher investigating her own practice. Florén (2003) implemented a CoP framework involving a collaborative approach to management learning, in which owner-managers of 15 small manufacturing companies (6 to 100 employees) were formed into four different networks in two phases (i.e. two networks in each phase). The owner-managers in each network met once a month to discuss relevant issues such as information technology (case 1), implementation of semi-autonomous workgroups (case 2), touring the production (case 3), and evaluating purchasing routines (case 4). In their meetings, the owner-managers exchanged knowledge and experiences. Florén (2003, p. 215) argues that involving executives and academics in dialogue in a long-term network collaboration appears to enable the development of an "executive learning system" within smaller enterprises.

In English language teaching, Nishino (2012) refers to the benefits gained by his research participant from multi-membership in various communities of practice, and argues that such multi-membership allows members opportunities to meet other brokers in those various communities, learn new practices, make new meanings, and develop new identities. In his examination of a Japanese English language high school teacher learning to teach, this

[11] This notion of craft knowledge follows Cooper and McIntyre's (1996, p. 76) notion of professional craft knowledge, referring to "the knowledge that teachers develop through the processes of reflection and practical problem-solving that they engage in to carry out the demands of their jobs."

Japanese teacher, having joined in various ELT associations and met important brokers within those associations, had become aware of communicative language teaching and desired to further explore this teaching approach.

As ELT teacher researchers' participation matures, they do not only make use of a CoP's artifacts (i.e. in a CoP's domain) but they also actively "unpack and deconstruct them and even create new artifacts" (Tummons, 2012, p. 306). As Hodkinson (2004) argues, the best way that teachers learn to do research is by undertaking research. Thus, active participation in the CoP's activities provides the CoP members opportunities for learning, i.e. learning to do research in order to improve teaching quality in their own classrooms.

Wenger et al. (2002) point out the important role of a CoP's coordinator, i.e. research coordinator, in facilitating the process of participation. As displayed in Table 7.3, the coordinator creates spaces, physically or virtually that can bring a CoP's members together on a regular basis (Wenger et al., 2002). These spaces, comprising research-related events such as face-to-face or online meetings, workshops, seminars, trainings, to name major events, will help the CoP to achieve its members' mutual engagement and shared practice in doing research. One can question, therefore, the availability within ELT institutions, in which communities of practice of teacher researchers are supposed to form in such physical or virtual spaces for ELT professionals to interact as well as mutually engage in undertaking research systematically and having dialogue on an on-going basis. Thus, CoP coordinators (Wenger et al., 2002) as well as ELT institutions, including ELT program managers (Borg, 2010, 2013) play very important roles in facilitating ELT teacher researchers to be actively and regularly engaged in doing research.

7.1.2.3 Practice

Having described in detail the first two dimensions of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers, I will now describe the third dimension, namely **practice** (see Table 7.3). As noted earlier, when ELT teacher researchers' participation in the CoP's activities becomes full (as opposed to peripheral), they develop new artifacts, which in turn become conditions and

resources for creating new artifacts. Drawing from Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002), these produced artifacts include cases and stories of teacher researchers' research, knowledge related to research discipline and English language teaching and learning (i.e. theories, principles, rules, frameworks, models, tools, and style), conference presentations and research papers. Taking into consideration Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) metaphor of a field (i.e. of ELT teacher research) as a game, ELT teacher researchers' engagement in doing research within a CoP is somewhat like joining in a game, in which some rules are explicitly written, while others are implicit. Along the trajectory of participation, newcomers acquire understanding of these existing rules and other CoP's artifacts, and simultaneously begin to be engaged in developing new rules and artifacts for these communities. These artifacts then become a CoP's common knowledge and best practice, functioning as social capital which allows members to become fully confident in undertaking their own research and helping develop a solid and healthy CoP of ELT teacher researchers with productive contributions to their profession.

The three dimensions of a CoP (i.e. domain, community, and practice) are mutually interrelated in order to build up a true community of practice. The CoP of ELT teacher researchers cannot only comprise a group of ELT professionals, researchers, ELT program managers, research coordinators who share the same goals, interests, concerns, and other CoP's artifacts, but also requires these members to be mutually engaged in undertaking research (i.e. actively and intentionally participating in the practice of ELT teacher research within the CoP). Only when these CoP dimensions interdependently operate will the CoP of ELT teacher researchers create a 'rhythm' of practice of ELT teacher research which allows ELT professionals opportunities for 'learning' to do research in order to improve teaching quality and constructing new 'identity' as teacher researchers as well as ELT professionals.

Having reviewed the literature related to communities of practice and conceptualised a model of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers, I will now examine from the three different

perspectives (macro, meso and micro) whether such communities of practice actually exist in current ELT teacher research practices at a leading university in contemporary Cambodia.

7.2 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCHERS IN CAMBODIA

Before applying the notion of communities of practice to current ELT teacher research practice, let us briefly recall the kinds of communities we encountered in this context. We noted that the practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia can be viewed from three perspectives, (i.e. macro, meso, and micro) as indicated in Figure 2.1, which is reproduced as Figure 7.4 for ease of reference.

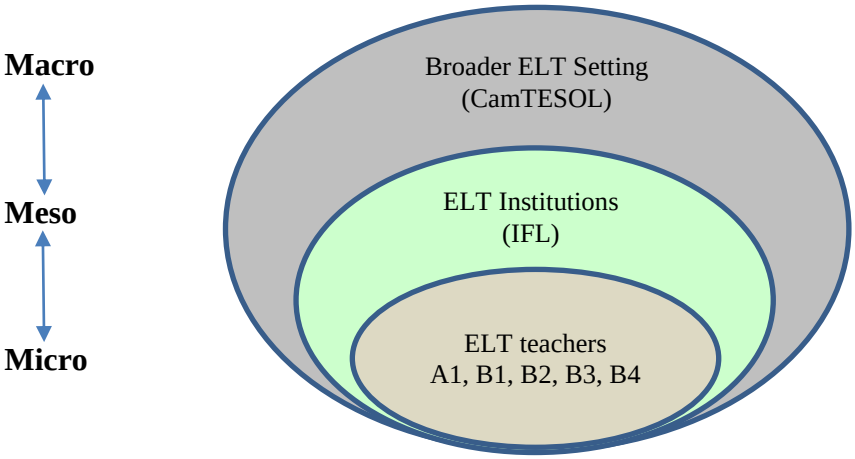


Figure 7.4: An overview of ELT teacher research in Cambodia through three perspectives (micro, meso, and macro), *reproduced from Figure 2.1*

Viewed from each of these perspectives, we can discern three orders of 'communities of practice': a 'community of practice' at CamTESOL; a 'community of practice' at individual ELT institutions; and a 'community of practice' of individual ELT practitioners. Figure 7.5 illustrates these notional communities of practice in a linear relationship from macro to meso to micro levels.

At a macro level, the notion of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers can legitimately be viewed in terms of the CamTESOL conference series, given its all-encompassing reach across public and private sectors, and all levels of education from primary to tertiary. In this PhD

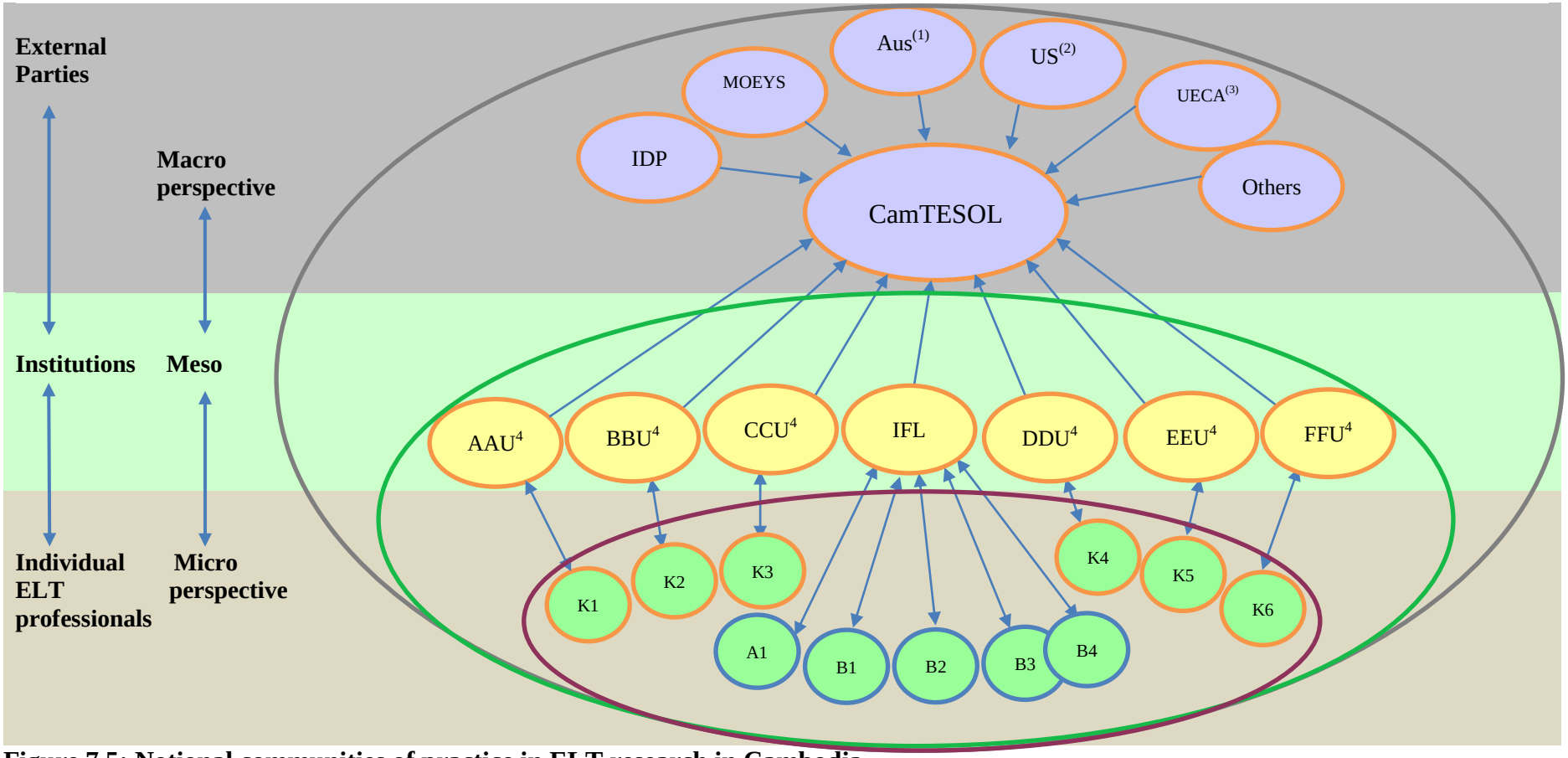


Figure 7.5: Notional communities of practice in ELT research in Cambodia

Notes: (1) Aus refers to Australian Embassy.
(2) US refers to American Embassy.
(3) UECA refers to University English Centres Australia, a network of 30 Australian universities offering *English Australia* accredited language courses for overseas students, ELICOS, and IELTS preparation.
(4) These represent individual tertiary ELT institutions, from which the six participants (K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, and K6) were invited to join Phase 1 data collection.

thesis, we have seen the power of CamTESOL to regulate the timeframe within which many Cambodian ELT teacher researchers undertake research or otherwise prepare to present their research projects in a well-attended public forum. The macro view has also been understood through statements made by individual ELT teacher researchers. Six Cambodian ELT lecturers, representing six different tertiary ELT institutions (i.e. in Phase 1 of this thesis) and five Cambodian ELT professionals, representing the IFL (i.e. in Phase 2) provided this perspective.

At a meso level, the notion of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers has been represented through accounts of the ELT teacher research practices at seven individual tertiary ELT institutions, including six tertiary ELT institutions (Phase 1), and the IFL, (which involved five Cambodian ELT lecturers who undertook teacher research projects and presented them at the 2013 CamTESOL conference (i.e. in Phase 2)). The IFL's five participants also informed the third level of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers (i.e. the micro level) by way of their actual research practices.

7.2.1 A macro view

We have so far viewed CamTESOL as an important and growing forum which organises and orchestrates research activities in English language education in Cambodia. To help us better understand whether CamTESOL functions as a true CoP, I will now briefly describe the historical development of CamTESOL from 2005 to 2014, which is illustrated in Figure 7.6.

CamTESOL was established in 2005 (Mahony, 2011; S. Moore, 2011b) as an initiative of IDP, a consortium of Australian universities. Its main purpose was to support English language teaching and research in Cambodia (see details of the initial aims of CamTESOL in 2005 in Figure 7.6). The success of its early conferences led the organisers to consolidate and extend CamTESOL's mission. For instance, in 2009, in addition to its main focus on developing quality ELT education in Cambodia, promoting ELT research in Cambodia was initiated when two research grants were awarded to Cambodian ELT teachers

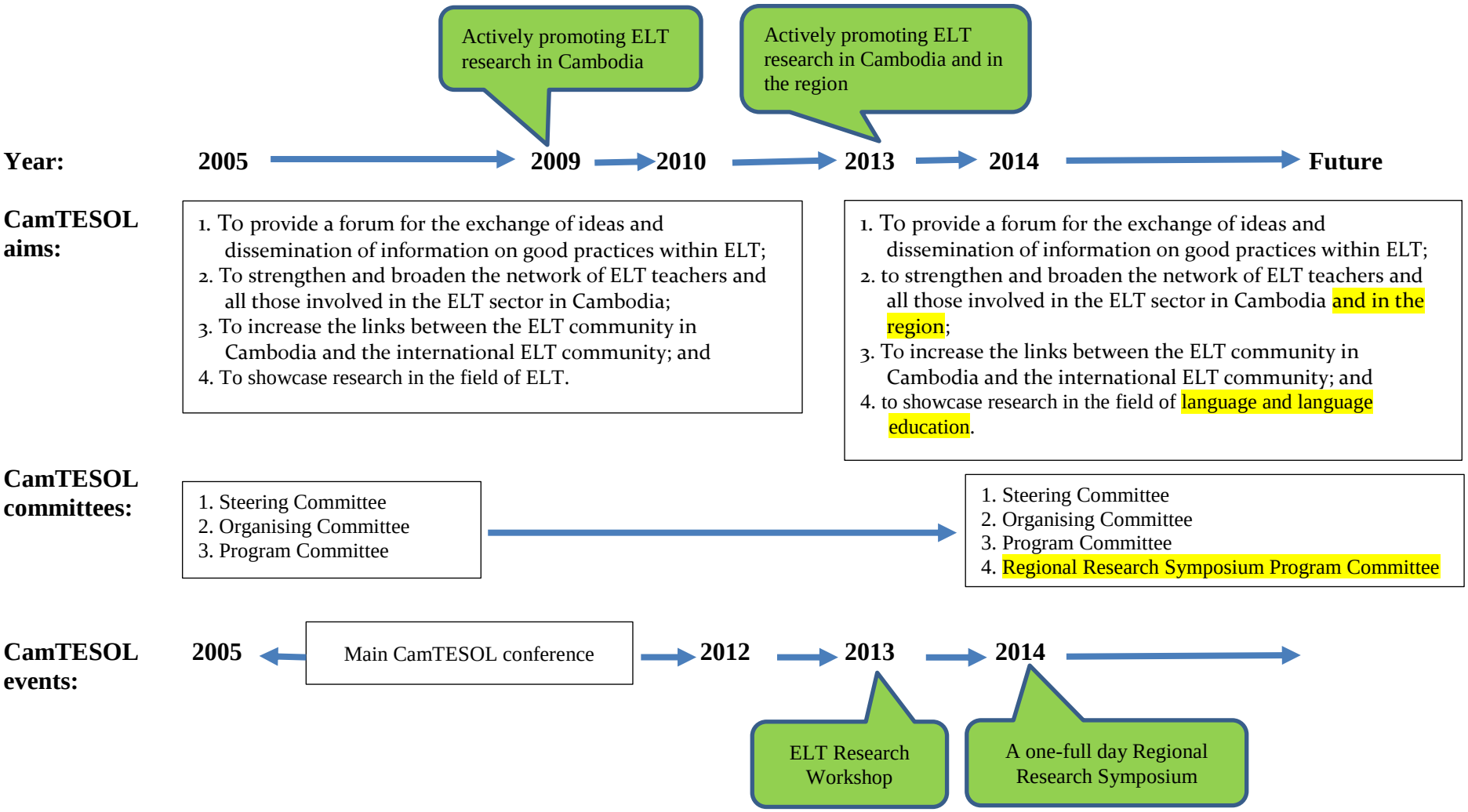


Figure 7.6: The historical development of CamTESOL from 2005 to 2014

Note: The highlighted parts indicate CamTESOL's extended aims and committees along its journey of development.

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with the expectation of them giving research-based presentations about English language teaching and learning in Cambodia at the subsequent conference (2009 CamTESOL conference program). Consistent with CamTESOL's expectations, as indicated in Table 2.4, the number of research-based presentations by Cambodian ELT teachers gradually increased to 12 (2010), 15 (2011), 12 (2012), 15 (2013) and to 20 (2014), compared to only 2 (2005), 1 (2006), 6 (2007), 6 (2008) and 9 (2009). Alongside this increase in Cambodian teachers' research-based presentations, in 2013 CamTESOL featured a half-day ELT Research Workshop, and in 2014 subsequently held a full-day Regional Research Symposium, a pre-conference forum to the main CamTESOL conference. In 2013, CamTESOL also created another program committee, the 'Regional Research Symposium Program Committee' in response to this development. As illustrated in Figure 7.6, CamTESOL has also increased its scope in terms of its aims from focusing on the quality of ELT and ELT research in Cambodia to ELT and ELT research in the region. The CamTESOL conference series (2013 and 2014) featured this increasing scope by way of providing research grants to Cambodian teachers and some other regionally-based teachers. CamTESOL has also sponsored Cambodian teachers and teachers from other countries in the region to attend the conference. CamTESOL has also broadened its aim from striving to showcase research in the field of ELT to striving to showcase research in the field of language and language education (i.e. Aim 4), which invites a wide variety of research practice to be included in the CamTESOL conference series.

If CamTESOL has functioned as a CoP amongst ELT teacher researchers, according to Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002), it should possess three important elements, namely domain, community and practice. These have been conceptualised in the model of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers displayed in Table 7.3. Let us now use this model to explore how CamTESOL measures up as a true CoP. The characteristics of CamTESOL in terms of CoP features are illustrated in Table 7.4. If, on the other hand, it has not functioned as a true CoP, then it will not likely achieve its full potential nor have the impact in Cambodia that its founders envisaged.

Table 7.4: ELT teacher research at CamTESOL (i.e. at macro level)

	Characteristics		Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)		***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would need ...***
If CamTESOL functions as a Community of Practice, it must comprise these three interrelated elements.	**Domain**	Members	CamTESOL's committees: steering committee; main conference program committee; organising committee; and regional research symposium program committee. Domestic ELT institutions that are involved in CamTESOL's committees. External bodies which support CamTESOL.	✓
		Goals/visions	CamTESOL has developed four main aims (see Figure 7.6)	An actual CoP needs CamTESOL's domestic affiliates to share these goals and to be involved in achieving these goals, especially promoting ELT research.
		Topics	The themes and topics for the main conference are discussed by CamTESOL's committee members at the end of each conference. The themes of the regional research symposium are discussed online by the committee members.	An actual CoP topics and activities are based on the common problems that teachers actually encounter in their own classrooms and institutions.
		Artifacts	CamTESOL website; CamTESOL publication (an online journal); and CamTESOL research workshops and research grants.	✓
		Role/identity	External bodies appear to hold a strong commitment to developing ELT education and research practice in Cambodia by way of sponsorship of Cambodian teachers' conference attendance, research grants, and mentoring assistance.	✓
			CamTESOL's domestic affiliates may adopt a kind of role that connects with as well as endorses this conference series.	An actual CoP needs these domestic affiliates to play an active role in promoting ELT research within their own institutions and within CamTESOL boundaries.
		Members' awareness, appreciation and commitment	CamTESOL's domestic affiliates have sponsored their ELT professionals to attend the conference series, delegated their representatives to attend the annual meeting(s).	✓
			International research mentorship is provided by CamTESOL's international affiliates (i.e. UECA).	✓

Table 7.4 (Cont.): ELT teacher research at CamTESOL (i.e. at macro level)

	Characteristics			Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)			***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would also need ...***
If CamTESOL functions as a Community of Practice, it must comprise these three interrelated elements.	**Community**	Participation	Marginal	CamTESOL's committee members discuss the themes of the main conference and research symposium face-to-face or online once a year. They have created criteria for selection of research abstracts and been involved in selecting the research abstracts for these two forums of the conference.	An actual CoP needs a kind of participation that develops mutual engagement and shared practice in doing research.
			Peripheral		
			Principal		
		Spaces		Main CamTESOL conference and Regional Research Symposium.	An actual CoP would organise a variety of events for Cambodian teacher research recipients as well as other teachers interested in doing research to come together on a regular basis to discuss their problems, share solutions, and undertake research.
				Virtual space has been created by way of international mentors who interact with the Cambodian teacher research grant recipients via social media communication.	
		Brokers		Cambodian teacher research grant recipients interact with brokers (international mentors) via social media communication.	
		Coordinator		CamTESOL's coordinator, with a CamTESOL's assistant, has organised CamTESOL events, research workshops, programs, and discussions of the themes of the main conference and research symposium, and the selection of the conference research abstracts. The coordinator also nominates, decides and invites the plenary speakers.	The role of the coordinator is not only to manage the main conference and research symposium, but also to create opportunities for researchers to work together on a regular basis.
	Practice	Produced artifacts	Theories/rules/ principles/ frameworks/ models/genres Cases and stories Tools/articles/ discourses Concepts Lessons learned Best practice	CamTESOL has coordinated international mentorships to provide Cambodian ELT practitioners who are recipients of research grants with assistance in order to complete their research projects.	An actual CoP's practice needs to be shared by CamTESOL's members so that the community will be able to produce common knowledge and best practice. An actual CoP needs to document the common knowledge and best practice.

We will now begin our examination with the notion of a CoP's **domain**. One of the key elements of the domain is members. CamTESOL, although it was established by IDP, has involved other external parties and domestic and international ELT institutional affiliations. As shown in Figure 7.5, CamTESOL's external bodies include the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) in Cambodia, the Australian Embassy, the United States of America Embassy, the University English Centres of Australia (UECA), IDP and others. While the MoEYS role in CamTESOL concerns making, implementing, and administrating policies for higher education in Cambodia, the role of the other external bodies is concerned with supporting the CamTESOL conference series financially, and through other means. The opening ceremony of each CamTESOL conference event always includes speeches from the Minister of the MoEYS and senior officials from the embassies of Australia and the United States. The following are opening paragraphs of their welcoming letters published in the 2014 CamTESOL conference handbook.

> The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia is proud to be associated with the CamTESOL Conference Series which is now commencing its 10th Anniversary this year. *(Letter from MOEYS)*
>
> Welcome to the 10th Annual CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching. The Australian Government has always been deeply committed to education in Cambodia and in the region, and is once again proud to be involved in the CamTESOL Conference Series on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. *(Letter from the Australian Ambassador)*
>
> The U.S. Embassy is proud to support CamTESOL again this year by sponsoring the registration fees for 250 Cambodian English language professionals, including 125 provincial high school teachers and eight researchers from within the ASEAN region. *(Letter from U.S. Ambassador)*

The extracts above exemplify how external parties publicly support the CamTESOL conference series. Besides these external institutions and organisations, CamTESOL has relations with various domestic ELT institutions, six of which participated in Phase 1, and one in Phase 2 of this study to provide insights on the practices of ELT teacher research at this macro level. Most of these domestic and international ELT institutional affiliates participate in CamTESOL's various committees: Steering Committee; Main Conference

Program Committee; Regional Research Symposium Program Committee; and Organising Committee. Each of these committees comprises members from various ELT settings, both international and domestic, thus forming a heterogeneous notional CoP. While some external bodies such as IDP, the Australian Embassy, the American Embassy and other international organisations sponsor registration fees for Cambodian English teachers, UECA (and some other international organisations) sponsors and organises international mentorship assistance to Cambodian teacher research grant recipients. An overview of CamTESOL's members[12] is displayed in Figure 7.7.

Another element of a CoP's domain is goals. As shown in Table 7.4 and Figure 7.6, CamTESOL has also articulated the aims it hopes to achieve. As we have seen, along the journey of its development CamTESOL has extended its aims from supporting ELT and research in Cambodia to supporting ELT and research in the region. Given these aims, CamTESOL, together with its committees populated by representatives of various international and domestic tertiary ELT institutions, and with support from the external parties as mentioned above, seems to primarily function to provide an annual one and a half-day CamTESOL conference event, which attracts both international and domestic presenters and attendees. A research-based stream has recently been included in the conference program and, in 2014, a full-day CamTESOL Regional Research Symposium as a pre-conference forum was established to reflect one of CamTESOL's principal aims (i.e. focusing on ELT research).

A CoP's artifacts comprise another element of its domain. In this context, the notional CoP artifacts include a website created for the conference, and publication of some peer-reviewed research papers (see Table 7.4). This publication was first known as *CamTESOL Selected Papers* and in 2010 was transformed into *Language Education in Asia* (*LEiA*) journal. *LEiA* is a peer-reviewed online journal which is available free to the public. It is

[12] There does not seem to be any official statement documenting CamTESOL membership but I consider various ELT institutions working with the CamTESOL conference series as its members as they have been involved in organising these events.

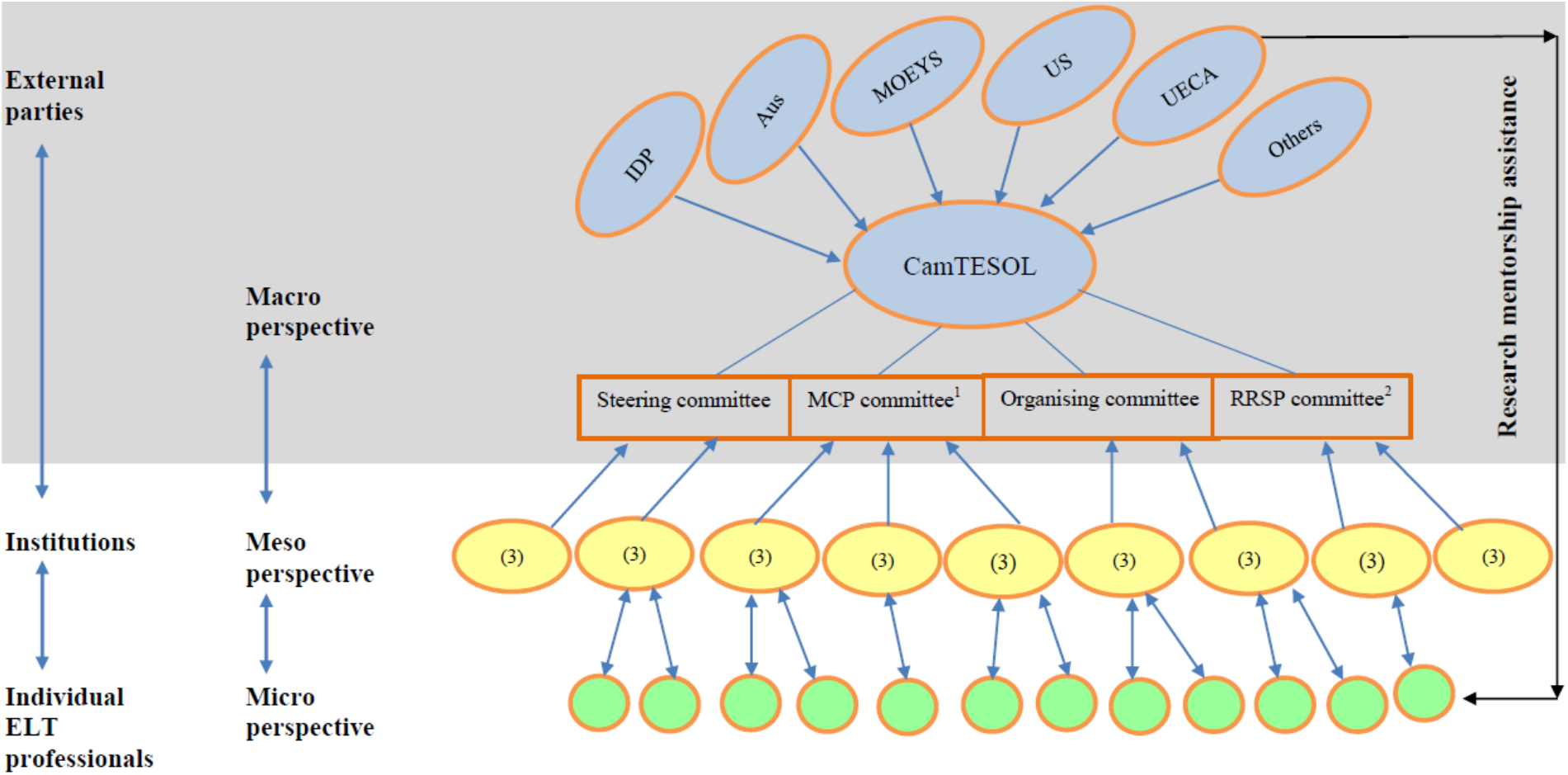

Figure 7.7: Members of a notional CoP at CamTESOL

Note: (1) MCP committee refers to Main Conference Program Committee.
(2) RRSP committee refers to Regional Research Symposium Program Committee.
(3) Domestic ELT institutions as well as individual ELT professionals are too numerous to name but refer to all domestic ELT institutions and individual ELT professionals that participate in CamTESOL's activities.

worth noting that the LEiA Editorial Board comprises a large number of international applied linguists, ELT/TESOL researchers and teachers, and Cambodian ELT professionals. These members review papers submitted to the journal and manage the publication, and provide constructive feedback to authors. It publishes two issues per volume. In addition, CamTESOL regularly organises research workshops throughout the year to provide Cambodian ELT professionals from various ELT institutions with an opportunity to learn research disciplinary knowledge. These events are often given by visiting scholars who happen to be in Cambodia at the time. Moreover, since 2009, CamTESOL, along with its international affiliates and supporters, especially UECA, has supported Cambodian ELT professionals who are interested in doing research by providing financial assistance (i.e. research grants) and international mentorships. The number of Cambodian ELT professionals supported in this way is small but has increased from two per year in 2009 to four per year in 2014.

The above analysis exemplifies the domain of the notional CoP at CamTESOL. As noted, the domain comprises members who form a heterogeneous community, the community's goals, topics, and various artifacts. However, as Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002) argue, if this notional community is to form a true CoP, this domain must be shared by its members. It is thus questionable whether this domain is truly shared among CamTESOL's affiliate members. My analysis shows that the majority of CamTESOL's affiliates have not yet shared the domain although they have shared their concerns to promote this domain. For example, MOEYS seems to function only to adopt a policy raising an agenda to promote research at Higher Education institutions (MOEYS, N.D). When this policy is being implemented, MOEYS only monitors but does not participate in the activities. Moreover, as viewed by some participants (B1, B2, and B3), who joined Phase 2 of the data collection of this study, most institutions cooperated with the annual CamTESOL conference events in order to use this growing forum as a site to advertise and promote their institutional brands. They also stated that the majority of individual Cambodian ELT professionals participating at CamTESOL appeared to expect to gain knowledge about language teaching

rather than knowledge about doing research. According to Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002), as depicted in Table 7.4, a true CoP would need these notional CoP's members to share the CoP domain. The omission of such sharing of the domain will result in a lack of the members' embracing the community as well as their commitment to being held accountable for achieving the CoP's activities. Let us now examine another dimension of the CoP – **community** – to discern how CamTESOL's affiliates' members participated in the community's activities.

As shown in Table 7.2, the purpose of communities of practice is to "create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and to develop individual capabilities" in doing and achieving routines in the domain of the community (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 42). The community members join in because they share the same passion and interest in the domain and have a commitment to learn to do things together with the group members or experts to accomplish them (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). In this regard, if ELT teacher research at CamTESOL is a true CoP, then one would expect that CamTESOL's affiliates' members are regularly involved in doing research and learn to do research together to achieve their shared domain. However, my analysis reveals that there was no such engagement in doing research at CamTESOL. As noted earlier in the CamTESOL's aims (Figure 7.6), CamTESOL has the function to create a forum, networks and links for applied linguists, ELT researchers, ELT program managers and administrators, and ELT professionals from various backgrounds and settings to make connections to support ELT and research in Cambodia and the region. It also has a function to showcase research in the ELT field.

This function was also commented on by participants in both Phases 1 and 2. K1, who joined Phase 1, viewed CamTESOL as a catalyst to help bring together teachers and researchers, especially to support Cambodian ELT professionals. He stated:

> "I think through the help from CamTESOL ... I mean [as] a catalyst for researchers to network so that they can push Cambodian [ELT teachers] through network so they can have support for us... we need network ..." *(K1, Focus group)*

Similarly, B2 and B4, who joined Phase 2, perceived CamTESOL as an excellent forum where people who are interested in ELT come together to share their teaching experiences and/or research findings. In B4's own words:

> "I think CamTESOL is an excellent forum where people who are passionate about ELT come together in particular in order to share output results of their research, share experiences to improve teaching and learning and classroom management." *(B4, Group discussion)*

As stated in Table 7.4, CamTESOL coordinates conference-related activities through four committees. CamTESOL's committee members meet to discuss conference-related issues at the end of the conference (i.e. the meeting is held on the last day of the conference), and determine the theme of the subsequent conference event[13]. With the Regional Research Symposium committee[14], a CamTESOL assistant[15] organises an online discussion of the themes and criteria for assessing the conference research abstracts submitted to CamTESOL's Regional Research Symposium. This kind of 'one-off' meeting amongst CamTESOL's committee members, as well as the CamTESOL conference events being held annually, therefore, does not actually develop mutual engagement in doing research. However, an examination of the space that CamTESOL has created for the Cambodian teacher research grant recipients reveals an initial stage of mutual engagement in research in the way that Cambodian research grant recipients interact with international mentors through social media communication. We may understand that through this mentor-mentee relationship, there will be collaboration between mentors (i.e. brokers) and mentees by way of consultation, discussion, negotiation, and exchanges of knowledge during the practice, thus encouraging mutual engagement, as Wenger et al. state:

> Whatever it takes to make mutual engagement possible is an essential component of any practice.... Given the right context, talking on the phone, exchanging electronic mails, or being connected on radio can all be part of what makes mutual engagement possible. (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 74)

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[13] I was invited to join this meeting when I was a member of CamTESOL's Abstract Selection Committee.
[14] I am also a member of this committee and represent all Cambodian ELT professionals.
[15] In my conversations with this local staff member from the Australian Centre of Education (ACE) (which is owned by IDP) who organised such online discussions, he identified himself as a CamTESOL assistant.

Nevertheless, this initial step has only been undertaken between international mentors and a small handful of Cambodian teacher research grant recipients. As displayed in Table7.4, for this notional CoP to become an actual CoP, CamTESOL would need to create a variety of research-related events and preferably a research centre, which provide opportunities for Cambodian ELT practitioners interested in doing research to come to learn to do research and do research together on an ongoing basis. Thus, CamTESOL's coordinator needs to create such opportunities rather than aiming to achieve only provision of CamTESOL's main conferences and Research Symposiums.

I will now turn to the third dimension of a CoP to examine whether there is a **shared practice** of ELT teacher research at CamTESOL. As noted earlier, CamTESOL, in cooperation with its international supporters, has provided funds for many Cambodian ELT teachers to attend the conference so that they can learn from the conference's events. In addition, they have provided research workshops for its domestic ELT institutional affiliates' members to enrich their research knowledge, and provided research grants as well as mentorship assistance to facilitate Cambodian ELT teachers' research activities.

I will now briefly describe the procedure of this research practice at CamTESOL. It is important to clarify that my description of this practice is based on my experience in collaborating with two Cambodian teacher grant recipients of UECA's sponsorship program in 2014.

First, CamTESOL's assistant disseminates an expression of interest (EoI) notice among its domestic affiliates regarding the CamTESOL research grants opportunity and invites applications for the grants. The domestic ELT institutions also pass along this research grant opportunity information to their staff members. For example, in my own experience, the IFL usually places this EoI announcement in its staff rooms. The EoI can also be accessed at the CamTESOL website. Second, the Cambodian teachers whose applications are approved will be provided with the grant and recommended international mentors to work with. As shown in Figure 7.7, UECA, one of the external parties that support CamTESOL, holds an

important role in organising mentorship for Cambodian and regionally-based research grant recipients. The international mentors and Cambodian mentees work together through the project until the Cambodian mentees are ready to present the research. Third, the research grant recipients are required to present the research outcomes at the CamTESOL Regional Research Symposium. They are also encouraged to submit their research papers to *LEiA* journal.

This practice of providing international mentorship to Cambodian ELT teacher researchers indicates the need for establishing more mutual engagement in (doing) research among Cambodian ELT professionals if the practice of ELT teacher research at this level aims to achieve mutual engagement in research and shared practice of ELT research. A true CoP requires this practice of mentorship to be more widely available across CamTESOL's domestic ELT institutional affiliates. Moreover, CamTESOL's members need to share this practice in order to produce a CoP's artifacts, i.e. producing common knowledge and best practice, especially involving the doing of research to improve teaching quality. Although CamTESOL has its publication (i.e. *LEiA* journal), the published papers authored by Cambodian ELT professionals have been very limited in number. Besides ad hoc research workshops, there is no ongoing and regular space organised for Cambodian ELT professionals to meet together to talk about and share their research stories.

To sum up, we have seen that at a macro level, CamTESOL **has not yet functioned as a true CoP**. Rather, with the domain revealed by the analysis above, CamTESOL appears to be a 'functional unit' (see Table 7.2) which, along with its international and domestic affiliates and supporters, tries to achieve its set goals. This functional unit strives to create a forum, networks, and links for applied linguists, ELT researchers, ELT program managers and administrators, and ELT professionals to exchange good practice in language teaching and showcase research in this field in Cambodia and the region. Nonetheless, it has not (yet) developed mutual engagement in and shared practice of undertaking ELT teacher research among Cambodian ELT practitioners. Although the international mentorship is provided to

assist Cambodian ELT teachers' research activities, which might encourage mutual engagement in (doing) research through social media communication, this practice has not yet operated widely across ELT institutions in Cambodia. Whilst at a surface level, and when considering particular events such as the annual CamTESOL conference, CamTESOL seems to have the appearance of a thriving community of practice, in reality and measured against Wenger's theoretical framework of a CoP, it is clear that at a deeper level, there is insufficient ongoing research-focused activity that could fulfill the expectations of a true CoP.

Let us now turn our attention to examine the CoPs of ELT teacher researchers at a meso level.

7.2.2 A meso view

A meso level perspective displays how domestic individual ELT institutions function to nurture, support and showcase ELT teacher research within each institution. As shown in Figure 7.5, for this PhD study, seven individual tertiary ELT institutions were involved in the data collection. Of these seven institutions, six were involved in Phase 1, and one (i.e. the IFL) was involved in Phase 2. These ELT institutions are intermediary agents in promoting ELT teacher research in terms of initiating research activities, encouraging staff members to participate in research, scaffolding and sustaining the staff members' research engagement, and organising research dissemination. As intermediaries, these institutions have also been involved in helping CamTESOL organise the conference series and related activities by having representatives participate in various committees. If communities of practice truly exist at a meso level, one would expect that these institutions might create joint research activities with other institutions, or otherwise at least organise research activities within their own institutions. Thriving CoPs at this level would be of great benefit to ELT throughout Cambodia. Let us now look at the data collected from each individual institution in order to determine whether those institutions function as actual communities of practice with regard to ELT teacher research.

In Chapter 5, my analysis of Phase 1 data provided by the participants K1, K2, K3, K4, K5 and K6 indicates that there have not yet been any sustained, ongoing research practices at their respective institutions. In the participants' own words:

> "...they are not practicing now. In [the] Cambodian context ... we usually teach many hours. We rarely conduct research in teaching institutions in Cambodia." *(K2, Focus group discussion)*
>
> "I think the ELT research practice in my institution is currently taken for granted. Actually we never think about our teaching methods or teaching approaches to improve the quality of language learning in our institution. The management as well [is] also taking [research] for granted..." *(K4, Focus group discussion)*
>
> "... for example even our private university is big as you see, our research still needs to be improved." *(K6, Individual interview)*

K5 mentioned that ELT teacher research practice at her institution only took place with postgraduate students (i.e. Master degree students), in particular when these students were required to undertake their thesis research. Otherwise, there was no practice of ELT teacher research at her institution. Similarly, research practice did not take place at K3's institution. As stated by K3, there was only team-work, in which a team leader who had more experience of teaching helped those who had problems in their teaching. K1's institution had just begun providing its teaching staff members with some workshops on English language teaching, which would appear not to count as 'research'. In brief, there was no institutionally-organised research practice for teachers at six key tertiary ELT institutions in Cambodia.

I will now focus on the institutional practice of the IFL as seen from a meso perspective. Table 7.5 summarises the characteristics of ELT teacher research at the IFL as a notional CoP.

My analysis shows that there is almost a complete and functioning **domain** of a CoP at the IFL. The first element of this domain is members. Table 7.5 shows that the IFL has a management team and staff members holding postgraduate degrees from either domestic or overseas universities (e.g. MA in TESOL or MEd, and BEd in TEFL). These members, holding different levels of experience and research competence, form the constituent

Table 7.5: ELT teacher research at the IFL (i.e. at meso level)

	Characteristics		Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)		***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would also need ...***
If IFL functions as a Community of Practice, it must comprise these three interrelated elements.	**Domain**	Members	• The IFL's management team, comprising head and deputy head of the department, MA (TESOL) coordinator, BA/BEd coordinator, and Quality Assurance and Research unit coordinator. • The IFL's ELT professionals, both full-time and part-time staff members.	✓
		Goals/visions	• IFL's vision statement, in which building quality research in ELT is an important component part.	✓
		Topics	• No topics or themes have been discussed.	• An actual CoP needs topics or themes which are the IFL lecturers' common needs and motivation to undertake research.
		Artifacts	• Research methodology course. • A research unit. • CRLLT journal (IFL's in-house journal). • Research grants. • Research workshops and seminars.	✓
		Role/identity	• The IFL's management team and its staff members are expected to take actions to achieve the stated institutional vision.	✓
		Competence	• The IFL's ELT professionals possess different levels of competence in research. The majority of these professionals have attained this competence from their educational degrees, while some of them have accumulated this competence from being involved in doing research.	✓
		Members' awareness, appreciation and commitment	• The IFL's staff members who are interested in undertaking research submit their research proposals for consideration. Once their proposals are accepted, they can begin their research projects.	✓
			• The IFL's management team provides grants for its staff members to attend and/or present research at CamTESOL conference series and some regional ELT conferences.	A true CoP also needs the management team to be engaged in undertaking research.

Table 7.5 (Cont.): ELT teacher research at the IFL (i.e. at meso level)

	Characteristics			Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)			***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would also need ...***
If IFL functions as a Community of Practice, it must comprise these three interrelated elements. (Cont.)	**Community**	Participation	Marginal	• A lot of staff members, including the management team, are marginal to this research unit.	• The participation of the management team and staff members is needed.
			Peripheral	• A number of members have been involved in doing research and presenting it at the CamTESOL conference series, but not subsequently undertaking research.	• The staff members' ongoing participation in (doing) research is important for building a CoP.
			Principal	• A small number of the ELT professionals have actively been engaged in doing research and presenting it at the CamTESOL conference series.	• Their active engagement needs recognition and can be used to promote the CoP's activities.
		Spaces		• The IFL only provides research grants to its staff members who want to do research and organises an in-house journal to publish its staff members' research papers.	• A CoP space, physically or virtually, (e.g. meetings, discussions, seminars, interviews, and time allocation) needs to be organised to provide opportunities for the CoP members to learn to do research together.
		Brokers		• Some of the IFL's staff members are not engaged in doing research, but they possess special expertise in research. They may be able to provide the CoP's members who are doing research with assistance.	• The brokery assistance is important to a CoP, so the CoP coordinator needs to organise events to give the CoP members opportunities to meet the brokers inside and outside the community.
		Coordinator		• The coordinator only passes the information about the research grants, decides the research proposals, organises research workshops, and manages an in-house publication.	• A CoP needs the coordinator's active role in organising events to bring the members together on a regular basis to discuss the problems and provide solutions.
	Practice	Produced artifacts	Cases/ stories Theories/rules/ frameworks/genres Tools/ articles/ discourse/ Concepts Lessons learned Best practices	• Some research projects are disseminated at the annual CamTESOL conference, and some at regional ELT conferences.	✓
				• Some research projects, especially those done with the IFL's research grants, are published in the CRLLT journal.	✓
				• The common knowledge and best practice has not been documented appropriately.	• A CoP needs to document the common knowledge and best practice that the members have found in the research undertaking.

members of a notional CoP at the IFL, which is displayed in Figure 7.8. Some members have joined the IFL's research unit and have undertaken research; some have done their own research and presented it at CamTESOL conferences; and some others are marginal to the practice.

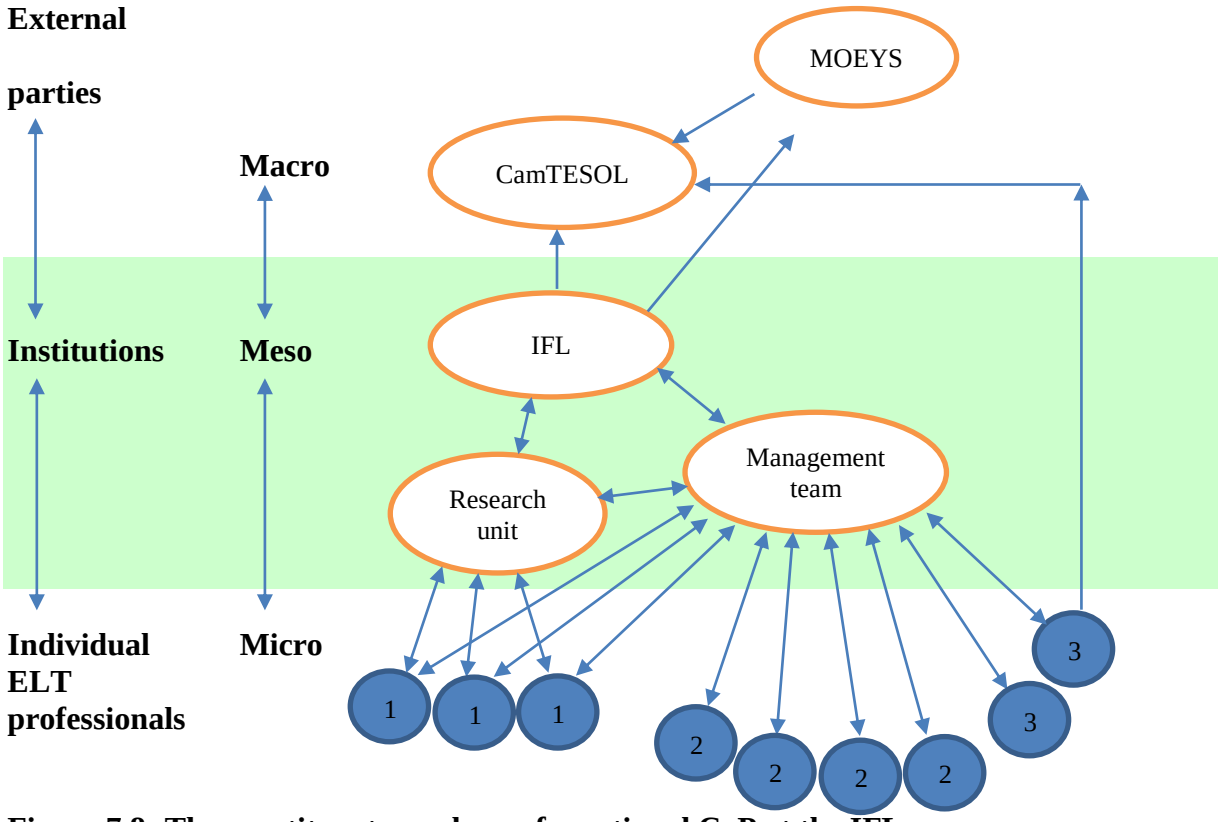

Figure 7.8: The constituent members of a notional CoP at the IFL

Note: (1) These IFL lecturers joined the research unit at the IFL.
(2) These IFL lecturers did not join the research activities at the IFL; they are marginal members to a CoP, but some of them were brokers of the CoP.
(3) These IFL lecturers did not join the research unit at the IFL, but they had previously undertaken research projects and presented them at the CamTESOL conference series.

The second element of the domain is a notional CoP's goals. The IFL has adopted an institutional vision that aims to value ELT teacher research, and support its practice at the IFL. In my experience as a full-time staff member, the management team and staff have been involved in articulating this vision at staff meetings. This vision has been printed annually in the IFL's information handbook, stating that the institute aims to be "a national leader in English language, education, and research with regional and international quality standards" *(Information Handbook, 2013, p.3).*

The third element of the domain is a CoP's artifacts. Table 7.5 shows a number of CoP's artifacts, comprising a research methodology course in the undergraduate curriculum, a

research unit led by a research coordinator, and research workshops and seminars which are often organised by the research unit as well as by the IFL's MA (TESOL) program. The workshops and seminars are often conducted by experienced international ELT researchers (usually visiting professors), and aimed at providing IFL lecturers with research disciplinary knowledge and some training such as on the use of software (e.g. SPSS and EndNote). The IFL also has annual research grants to facilitate the undertaking of research by the lecturers. Those who are interested in doing research can submit their research proposal and if their proposal is approved, they can receive funding to conduct the research. Moreover, if these teacher researchers want to present their research at the annual CamTESOL conference, they are sponsored by the IFL to do so. The IFL has also sponsored some lecturers, whose conference research abstracts are accepted, to present their research projects at international conferences, especially in the South-East Asian region. This research unit also has an in-house publication, the *Cambodia Review of Language Learning and Teaching* (*CRLLT*)[16] which, since 2010, has published three volumes of 14 research papers in total, undertaken by IFL lecturers. Of the four case studies discussed in Chapter 6, Case studies B1 and B2 were funded by an IFL research grant, and the corresponding research papers were published in the CRLLT journal. Recently, the IFL research coordinator has required lecturers to undertake joint research projects, preferably with one of the co-researchers being more experienced in doing research and able to mentor the other one.

The information given above shows the highly developed CoP domain of ELT teacher research that the IFL possesses. Nonetheless, it is questionable whether this domain is *shared* by its academic staff members and the management team. When asked to share his thoughts about this domain, B2 mentioned that all of the academic staff members were English lecturers, and when they met each other they often talked about teaching and other related issues. They rarely talked about research or doing research. A1 had a similar view, stating

[16] My personal talk with a research coordinator reveals that each volume of this journal is distributed in the IFL's teacher resource library (TRL) and self-access centre (SAC), RUPP's Hun Sen Library and the Cambodian National Library.

that there were no actual members in this research unit. He reiterated that those lecturers who were interested in doing research applied for the research grants, and once their proposals were accepted, they could do the research. A1 emphasised that these academic staff members identified themselves as ELT lecturers rather than as ELT teacher researchers. A1 and B2 stated:

> *"*... I guess they've just known or learned about the research and usually they don't identify themselves as language teacher researchers." *(A1, Individual interview)*

> "... we meet each other but we rarely talk about what we are doing *[referring to doing research]* so we just talk about teaching because teaching [is] the main career that can help us..." *(B2, Group discussion)*

B1 mentioned that he had rarely heard the program management team or lecturers talk about research and their encouragement to conduct research. In his words:

> "... there was not much talking about research among lecturers even among the management ... so like for CamTESOL as well I also didn't see much encouragement from those management people for lecturers to present [at the conference]. Of course, they support lecturers to participate in the conference [event] by giving financial aid, but they didn't really encourage lecturers to conduct research..." *(B1, Group Discussion)*

These comments show that this notional CoP's domain has not been shared among the members. That is, this domain has not yet formed a joint enterprise at this meso level. It also indicates a lack of research engagement from the management team observed by the participants. A true CoP would require the management team to work with its staff members to generate common interests, i.e. common problems that they encounter in teaching and want to do research to deal with those problems. While administrative staff may not be involved in the CoP, the ELT management team should be involved in undertaking research within a CoP in order to lend their experience but also to stay engaged with the key issues that enhance or constrain ELT teacher researchers.

Further examination of other elements of the CoP's **community** indicates that this CoP has not achieved mutual engagement, which as Wenger (1998) argues, is an important element for making coherent practice within a community. In my personal view and

experience of working at the IFL, a lot of the IFL lecturers who were involved in discussing the undertaking of research projects did not subsequently do the research. This situation was partly due to the fact that some of the research projects presented at the CamTESOL conference series or published in the IFL's journal were their academic research previously undertaken to fulfill the requirements of their postgraduate programs. For instance, B2 had not undertaken any research subsequent to his graduation in 2009, but joined my data collection in 2012 by replicating his MA (TESOL) thesis research. Such activity results in the peripheral status of the CoP members' participation in the CoP activities. That is, the IFL lecturers' membership of the CoP was only peripheral and did not achieve a principal membership, which is argued to be an active and useful characteristic for further promoting and developing the CoP.

Although the IFL has a research unit and journal to publish research papers, and provides research workshops and research grants, there was no space for its ELT professionals to conduct research. In other words, there was neither a time allocation for the IFL lecturers to undertake research nor an opportunity for them to meet, discuss, and conduct research together. The research coordinator only passed along the information about research grants, invited applications for the grants, decided the successful proposals, and managed the publication process. In my experience, when the lecturers' research proposals were approved by the research coordinator, they began to conduct research on their own without any institutional facilitation or scaffolding. In other words, these lecturers have not been guided to do research properly. This was evidenced, as we have seen in Chapter 6, through the participants' 2013 CamTESOL research activities. Some participants (A1, B1, and B2) were encountering challenges in doing research, and they needed to seek assistance on their own. In fact, the IFL has some academic staff members who have accumulated research disciplinary knowledge and skills from their educational trajectories, and some staff members have been actively undertaking research and presenting their research at CamTESOL conferences. To use Wenger's (1998) notion of a 'broker' in a CoP, these members can

become brokers of the CoP and are useful agents for helping novice ELT teacher researchers achieve their research activities. Nonetheless, this did not happen in the case of the notional CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL. (What a true CoP at the IFL would need is provided in detail in Table 7.5).

In addition to the lack of mutual engagement within this practice of ELT teacher research at the IFL, the existence of a shared **practice** of this teacher research is also questionable. As we have seen, research activities at the IFL were usually individual, meaning undertaking research at this institute was an individual responsibility and usually the research activities were conducted in isolation. Even though they may conduct a joint research project, they generally divide research tasks among the team members and undertake the activities separately (see an individual sub-case B3/B4 in Chapter 6, Section 4.4). There did not seem to be any opportunities created to allow those research-active ELT lecturers to share stories of their research activities, research discourses and styles, except the participants' presentations of their research at the CamTESOL conferences. There was no chance for the IFL lecturers to learn about research and to learn to do research from each other, especially to share their research outcomes. B2 and B3 strongly emphasised that the teachers' research findings did not receive enough attention to result in action to improve teaching.

As stated in Table 7.5, a true CoP requires a coordinator to play an essential and facilitative role in building mutual engagement and shared practice within a community (Wenger et al., 2002). The CoP coordinator does not only pass information about the domain or topic of the community to its members and look forward to receiving the final outcomes, as was seen to be the case at the IFL, he or she needs to organise activities and spaces for its members to interact with each other, and to learn lessons and exchange experiences about research and doing research together. He or she also needs to be able to identify who among the CoP members and the external members has which specific expertise or specialisations in the field so that he or she can organise meetings among certain members to solve problems

about doing research and to promote a shared practice and mutual engagement in doing research within the CoP at the IFL. Moreover, Table 7.5 also indicates that a true CoP requires its members to develop common knowledge and best practice and to appropriately document them. Although the *CRLLT* journal is distributed in the IFL's TRL and SAC, it is not known whether the IFL lecturers have read those published papers.

In summary, like the practice of ELT teacher research at a macro level, the analysis above indicates that at a meso level, ELT teacher research **did not appear to have operated within an actual CoP framework**. The IFL has a substantial CoP domain, including a research unit with a research coordinator overseeing and monitoring research activities, an internal publication of research papers, and ELT professionals who are, to varying degrees, competent in doing research, as shown in the four sub-case studies in Chapter 6. However, although both the management team and lecturers were involved in creating the institutional vision, establishing a research unit and developing a research methodology course, the management team and lecturers did not seem to strongly commit to and hold accountability for achieving ELT teacher research. The practice has not yet developed mutual engagement in nor shared repertoires about doing research. Thus, following from Wenger et al. (2002), as displayed in Table 7.2, the IFL seems to have performed as a 'functional unit' rather than as a true community of practice. Once again, as in the case of CamTESOL at a macro level, there is a sense of an incomplete and underperforming enterprise here, one that seems to be a CoP when viewed from the outside, but which on closer inspection shows significant gaps in its capability to deliver high quality outputs.

Let us now examine the practice of ELT teacher research at a micro level.

7.2.3 A micro view

From a micro perspective, through which we can view how individual ELT teacher researchers are actually doing research within their own classrooms and institutions, the notion of a community of practice of ELT teacher researchers appears to be more of a reality compared to whether communities of practice exist at the macro or meso levels. As displayed

in Table 7.6, the notional CoP at this micro level possesses almost all the characteristics that a true CoP would need. This section investigates the IFL's ELT lecturers as a CoP.

First and foremost, this notional CoP has the **domain** that fits a true CoP. The most important element of this domain is a CoP's members, who are the IFL lecturers. These lecturers were interested in research and were involved in doing research and presenting their research at the CamTESOL's conference series. As seen in Phase 2, five lecturers undertook their research projects and presented them at the 2013 CamTESOL conference. Three of these lecturers (A1, B3, and B4) were also engaged in doing research projects and presenting them at past CamTESOL conferences (see Appendix 6.1 for the details of these lecturers' past research projects). Although these members are from the same institution, this community is heterogeneous (Tummons, 2012; Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002) because they have different educational backgrounds (i.e. holding Master degrees from various educational contexts), teaching and research experience, and notably different levels of research engagement.

Another important element of the domain is a CoP's goal, which in this case appears to be shared by many of the IFL lecturers, especially the Phase 2 participants. My analysis of the participants' rationales for doing research and presenting it at the 2013 CamTESOL conference reveals their awareness of this goal (see the IFL's vision statement in Section 7.2.2) and their commitment to being accountable for achieving this goal. For example, B1, B3, and B4, having understood the IFL's need for developing a research stream in the English department, began to teach a research methodology course (in the IFL's four-year Bachelor degree program) in order to prepare themselves for doing research. B3 stated that he had begun to be involved in undertaking research because he was aware that the IFL would need its staff members to do research.

B4 described his commitment to reading and doing research in order to achieve his aim to teach the research course in the IFL's MA (TESOL) program, which was also partly to fulfill the IFL's vision as mentioned above. In his own words:

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Table 7.6: ELT teacher research at micro level

	Characteristics		Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)		***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would also need ...***
If a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers exists in Cambodia, it must comprise these three interrelated elements.	**Domain**	Members	• IFL lecturers who were involved in doing research and presenting their research at the 2013 CamTESOL conference (Phase 2 participants).	✓
		Goals/visions	• They have shared their goals for undertaking research to improve teaching quality.	✓
		Topics	• They conduct research projects that interest them. Those lecturers with similar interests and concerns about their teaching join collaborative research.	✓
		Artifacts	• They possess research disciplinary knowledge from their academic trajectories as well as their previously undertaken research. They share textbooks, articles, and other various resources.	✓
		Role/identity	• Their identity as ELT professionals as well as ELT teacher researchers has emerged implicitly. They have perceived their emerging roles as university lecturers who need to conduct research.	✓
		Competence	• As mentioned above in “artifacts”.	✓
		Members’ awareness, appreciation and commitment	• They are aware that the IFL needs its staff members to do research, so they have begun to take action in this field.	✓

Table 7.6 (Cont.): ELT teacher research at micro level

	Characteristics			Description	
	Wenger (1998, 2006); Wenger et al. (2002)			***This notional CoP has ...***	***An actual CoP would also need ...***
If a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers exists in Cambodia, it must comprise these three interrelated elements.	**Community**	Participation	Marginal	• A lot of other IFL staff members are marginal to the practice of ELT teacher research.	• An actual CoP needs marginal members to participate in the community.
			Peripheral	• Some members' participation in ELT teacher research is peripheral; they have just begun to conduct research and presented it at the CamTESOL conferences.	• An actual CoP needs these peripheral members to participate in research on an ongoing basis so that they can move towards principal membership.
			Principal	• Some members' participation in ELT teacher research is as principal; they have undertaken several research projects and presented them at the CamTESOL conference series quite frequently over the past decade.	• An actual CoP needs to recognise these principal members' active participation in order to promote them as core members of the community.
		Spaces		• They have created their own network, physically and virtually, to help them deal with research challenges and complete their research projects. They know who knows what and who can offer them assistance.	✓
		Brokers		• They meet other lecturers who do not belong to the CoP, but have special expertise to offer them assistance. They have created networks and had conversations with those brokers to find ways to help them complete their research.	✓
		Coordinator		• The coordinator has not created opportunities that allow these members to meet together, share expertise, have conversations, and learn to do research together.	• An actual CoP coordinator needs to organise various activities and events to bring the CoP members together regularly.
	Practice	Produced artifacts	Cases/ stories Theories/rules/ frameworks/genres Tools/ articles/ discourse/ Concepts Lessons learned Best practices	• Some of the members' research projects were shared at the 2013 CamTESOL conference; some were published in the IFL's in-house journal. • These members have shared similar conceptions of teacher research that are consistent with Borg's (2010) definition of teacher research in language teaching and Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle. • Some members have built up new theories and frameworks, and recognise best practice from their own research.	• A true CoP needs to transform these produced artifacts into the common knowledge of the community. • The CoP members need to build momentum in the CoP's activities by 'experimenting' this common knowledge, 'assessing' its outcomes, 'reflecting' its process, and 'renewing' it (Wenger, 2000).

> *"*... six years ago I wanted to teach [the] research course for our MA (TESOL) program but [at] that time the former MA coordinator said that I could not teach [it] because I was not competent enough to teach research course in our MA program ... so I had [to] read so much in a period of two to three years ... and then without funding support I collected some data and analysed [the] data and presented them at the CamTESOL conferences..." *(B4, Individual interview)*

A CoP's shared goal is also depicted through the participants' building up their social status in an alignment with the IFL's goal. The analysis shows that the participants were attempting to build up their own research competence and confidence in doing research so as to raise their status as being university lecturers who are capable of conducting research and also building trust in the institution. They stated:

> "... for now what I think is that if I can get a lot more projects done then of course I can improve my own [research] ... a kind of self-improvement as well and at the same time I can get my name known somehow." *(B1, Individual interview)*

> "... if you have done a lot of research you [are] kind of advertising yourself and building more confidence in your teaching and then your teaching experience's going to be very diversified. You have broad knowledge rather than following the textbook..." *(B3, Individual interview)*

> "... the former MA coordinator ... advised me to build up my own research capacity, so that he could trust me and allow me to teach [research methodology]." *(B4, Individual interview)*

> "well a smaller objective is to gain more experience in doing research and present and contribute the research result at the CamTESOL [conference]." *(A1, Individual interview)*

In addition to the shared goals, this notional CoP's domain comprises another important element, CoP artifacts. As illustrated in Table 7.6, these artifacts include the lecturers' research disciplinary knowledge, textbooks, articles, and resources. As stated earlier, these lecturers have acquired research competence along the trajectory of their education and their undertaking of past research projects.

Table 7.6 also shows that this notional CoP possesses various topics about which the participants were interested in undertaking research (see Table 7.6). My analysis of the participants' research interests reveals a wide range of research topics, comprising learners'

strategies (A1, B2), independent learning (A1), the relationship between learners' interest and journal writing in classrooms (B1), improving students' academic writing performance by providing corrective feedback of students' multiple drafts (B3/B4), and other topics of their past research projects (see Appendix 6.1). Notably, the participants were willing to conduct a joint research project when they had similar interests, as seen in a Sub-case study B3/B4 (see Chapter 6, Section 4.4).

Identity is another important element of the domain of this notional CoP (Table 7.6) and my analysis also shows evidence of the participants' emerging identity as ELT teacher researchers. Many participants (B1, B2, B3, and B4) questioned teaching practice in their own context and perceived that the research findings would help them teach English language more effectively. In the participants' own words:

> "... actually a lot of students ... a lot of teachers complain about having too much work to mark so I want to find out whether students are really interested in those activities to see if teachers' commitment to their work is beneficial. So I actually want to use my results to inform teaching practices at IFL." *(B1, Individual interview)*
>
> "... I think that research [on] written mistakes and the form of feedback that students wish to get from [their] teachers on their written products is important at our school *[referring to IFL]*." *(B4, Individual interview)*
>
> "... I see that when I receive the first draft from my students ... or when I check the students' assignments if I don't ask them to revise several drafts I think their papers get a very low score. So I strongly encourage them to [revise the] drafts and then I see a lot of improvement. I would say people *[referring to students]* might learn a lot from [teachers'] comments..." *(B3, Individual interview)*

The participants' emerging identity as ELT teacher researchers was also revealed through their comments about their status as being university ELT lecturers as noted earlier in this section. This shows that these IFL lecturers are self-aware about the role of being ELT teacher researchers in addition to their main role as ELT lecturers. Particularly, B3 and B4 researched their own practice (i.e. providing corrective feedback in teaching writing skills), and desired to share their research findings with other ELT professionals.

To sum up, at a micro level, and drawing from Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et

al. (2002), a joint enterprise (i.e. a shared domain) that a true CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL would need can be substantially detected in the evidence provided in my study (see Table 7.6). This true CoP's domain encompasses members (i.e. IFL lecturers), goals, topics and various artifacts such as resources, issues, problems and solutions, and competence shared by the members. The members' responsibilities and commitment to completing their research activities (i.e. presenting them at a conference and/or having their research papers published) reveal a sense of perceiving ELT teacher research as part of their identity as ELT professionals.

Having examined a notional CoP of ELT teacher researchers at a micro level in terms of the CoP domain, I will now address the second fundamental dimension, **community**.

First of all, let us examine the IFL lecturers' participation in undertaking research. Table 2.2 (see Chapter 2, Section 1) shows the number of IFL lecturers who were involved in research in the context of the CamTESOL conference events. Within a period of ten years (2005-2014), 28 IFL lecturers, some of whom had presented their research projects several times across this period, had undertaken research projects and presented them at the CamTESOL conferences, which constituted 54 research presentations in total. Additionally, many of these IFL research-active lecturers had contributed to publication of their research papers in the *CRLLT* journal, which published 14 research papers in three volumes within a period of three years (2010-2013). In a survey conducted in 2012 to investigate how the IFL lecturers adopted the innovation of undertaking ELT teacher research (see Figure 2.1), when the lecturers were asked to categorise themselves into certain adoption categories (E. M. Rogers, 1995), 32 (of 37) lecturers categorised themselves into four adoption categories as follow as: innovators (3), early adopters (12), early majority (10), and late majority (7). Five additional lecturers placed themselves outside these four adoption categories (i.e. they identified themselves as laggards). This reveals something about the lecturers' membership status in the CoP of ELT teacher researchers: the core members comprise the 15 lecturers who were innovators and early adopters, whilst the remaining 22 were peripheral members.

This profile of research activities amongst IFL lecturers is a positive development and positions the IFL reasonably well for a research-active future.

Table 7.6 indicates three different kinds of lecturer participation in this notional IFL CoP. Some lecturers' participation (e.g. A1, B3 and B4) is 'principal' in terms of their active engagement in doing research and presenting their research at CamTESOL's conferences. Some lecturers' participation (e.g. B1 and B2) is 'peripheral', i.e. they have begun doing research but have not yet subsequently undertaken research. Some other lecturers are 'marginal' to the CoP. For this notional CoP to develop into a true CoP, as depicted in Table 7.6, the IFL lecturers' participation in research requires strengthening. For example, peripheral members should be encouraged and properly guided to subsequently conduct research so that their participation can develop into a core membership. Active members should be promoted as core members and enabled to further promote a CoP by way of inspiring marginal members to participate in the CoP.

The notional CoP's spaces that the IFL lecturers have created to undertake research projects have also informed a characteristic of a true CoP. These spaces, for example, encompass creating networks with individual colleagues for different kinds of assistance, i.e. resources, training SPSS, inputting data, and transcribing interview data (see Sub-case study A1 in Chapter 6, Section 4.1), asking for advice on data collection and PowerPoint slide preparation for the 2013 CamTESOL conference presentation (see Sub-case study B2 in Chapter 6, Section 4.3), and discussing their research activities with their peer researcher via social media communication (see Sub-case study B3/B4 in Chapter 6, Section 4.4).

In addition to a CoP's spaces, this notional CoP also has brokers that a true CoP would need. These brokers include a CoP's members (e.g. participant B4) and other IFL lecturers who are marginal to the CoP. My analysis of the data shows that A1, along his journey of undertaking the 2013 CamTESOL research project, met or contacted various brokers, comprising his MA (TESOL) supervisor and colleagues who were either working at the IFL or studying overseas, for different kinds of assistance. He stated:

> "... because I was involved in many parts of the research and each part has its own challenge, I usually approached many different individuals based on the idea of [how] much help they can give me ..." *(A1, Individual interview)*

> "Well, I basically approached them and introduced them to my research study and then asked them whether they could help me with SPSS... because the people I asked were my colleagues; we had the same office, so we usually did that during the break time." *(A1, Individual interview)*

B3 referred to B4, his co-researcher of the 2013 CamTESOL research project, as a mentor whose role was to advise him on various research activities. He stated:

> "... when I did [research] in the past I was doing it alone. I didn't know if what I was doing was right or wrong ... I only got feedback from the audience ... but for this one *[referring to his 2013 CamTESOL research]* I think I'm very happy because my partner B4 ... did show that what I have done is on the right track ... he clarified what I was not sure about in the past. But I still feel that I need to learn a lot from my partner and he is good as he scaffolded me a lot." *(B3, Group discussion)*

Indeed, for the 2014 CamTESOL conference, B3 individually conducted a subsequent research project and presented it at the conference. This could be attributed at least partly to his involvement in undertaking a collaborative research project which gave him motivation and confidence in doing research.

From a micro perspective, this analysis reveals that the practice of ELT teacher research at the IFL has reached, to a considerable extent, mutual engagement in undertaking research activities, which encourages opportunities for learning about research and simultaneously undertaking research activities together. Such mutual engagement has also built up strong relationships and trust among these Cambodian ELT lecturers when they are conducting research, especially getting to know who knows what and who can help deal with specific problems about doing research (Wenger et al., 2002). Although in principle, most of these Cambodian ELT teacher researchers undertook their research projects individually, they actually did not act alone to complete the projects. For this mutual engagement in doing research to be properly mature, a true CoP would need a coordinator's active and facilitative role in creating a wide range of CoP's activities, including face-to-face meetings, virtual communication, seminars, workshops, and training, to name some major activities, in order to

bring members together on an ongoing basis (see Table 7.6).

Furthermore, at a micro level, there is evidence of the existence of shared **practice** in the notional CoP of IFL lecturers. This shared practice can be evidenced through the individual lecturers' undertaking research activities. These lecturers approached different colleagues for different assistance. These interactions provide a space for the more competent ELT teacher researchers to share their expertise with the less competent. In other words, the less competent ELT teacher researchers have opportunities to learn to do research from actual practices. Such practices eventually will develop shared repertoires in this field among these practitioners, a characteristic required for a true CoP.

A CoP's artifacts are also evidenced in the practice. These artifacts comprise the IFL lecturers' presentations of their research projects at the CamTESOL conference series and their published papers in the *CRLLT* journal (see Sub-case studies B1 and B2). The artifacts also include common characteristics of teacher research, which are manifested in the lecturers' research accounts, in terms of research activities undertaken across a certain research timeline, specific type of conference research abstracts, and ways of undertaking research, to mention just some major characteristics (see Chapter 6, Sections 4 and 5). Apart from these characteristics, the lecturers' conceptions of 'teacher research' forms part of this notional CoP's artifacts. My analysis shows that the Phase 2 participants (i.e. IFL lecturers) hold consistent conceptions of "teacher research" that fall in line with Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research in language teaching (see Chapter 4, Section 1.3 for Borg's (2010) definition of teacher research) and Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle (see Chapter 6, Section 1).

In terms of undertaking research to improve their teaching quality, as stated in Chapter 6, Section 3, the Phase 2 participants undertook the 2013 CamTESOL research projects on the basis of their beliefs that the research findings would help them teach English better. For example, in the case of B3/B4's research project, B3 and B4 believed that providing corrective feedback on their students' multiple written drafts would help the

students improve their academic writing performance. They therefore undertook research on this topic. This kind of practice can help B3 and B4 develop best practice in teaching.

In summary, this notional CoP has produced artifacts including the way the CoP's members disseminate research stories (i.e. presenting research at CamTESOL's conferences), published research papers in the *CRLLT* journal, characteristics of research undertaken by the lecturers, and lecturers' conceptualisations of "teacher research". However, in the evidence of my study, the common knowledge informed by the participants' research projects are only recognised by individual lecturers. For this notional CoP to develop into a true CoP, these artifacts need to be transformed into the CoP's common knowledge and best practice, and the CoP's members need to build up a CoP's 'momentum' in undertaking research in their own classrooms (see Table 7.6).

Overall, viewed from a micro perspective, the notional community of practice of ELT teacher researchers has developed a shared domain, mutual engagement and shared practice. However, this kind of engagement and practice has not yet reached a mature stage that can inform the practice of ELT teacher research as a true community of practice. There were interactions among individual lecturers to exchange research knowledge with each other, experiences, expertise, and resources, but there was not a dual directionality in this engagement and practice. Such interactions happened only when those ELT professionals who were doing research sought assistance to deal with research-related problems they had encountered. Therefore, the practice of ELT teacher research at this level could be viewed **not as a true CoP, but rather as a "project unit[17]"** with strong potential to develop into a true CoP. As stated in Table 7.6, to become a true CoP, drawing from Wenger et al. (2002), a CoP's coordinator plays a very important role in organising CoP's activities to create spaces, physically and virtually, and opportunities to gather the CoP's members together on a regular basis. The coordinator also needs to find a practical, yet appropriate, way to document these

[17] The term "project unit" was adopted from Wenger et al.'s (2002) notion of "project team," referring to a project undertaken by a group of people "who have a direct role in accomplishing the task". Thus, a "project unit" was used to describe the IFL's research practice by which a research project was undertaken by individual teachers.

lecturers' research stories and findings in order to produce artifacts, especially common knowledge and best practice, which are useful and available for reference when similar problems are raised by other CoP members.

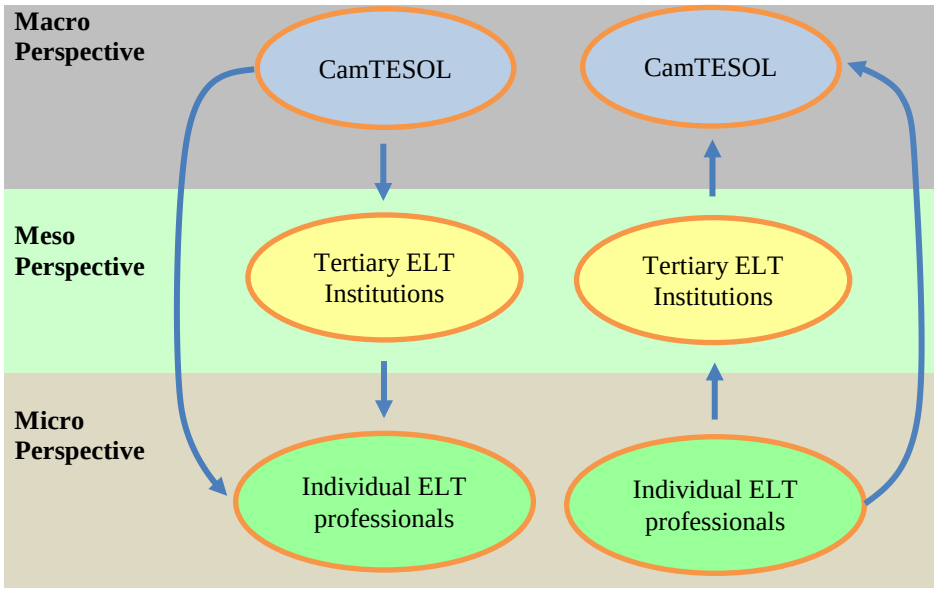
7.3 DISCUSSION

The analysis of the current practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia at the three levels of macro, meso, and micro has clearly revealed that at each level there are components missing that are needed in a true CoP. This section will first discuss and clarify the issue as to whether or not there is a 'true' CoP at each of the three levels and then argue why true ELT teacher-research CoPs are important for promoting the development of sound ELT teacher research practices in contemporary Cambodia.

7.3.1 Communities versus true CoPs

As stated above, the analysis of the data in this chapter has shown the missing components that the current practices of ELT teacher research at the three levels would need in order to become 'true' CoPs in accordance with the characteristics said to define CoPs by Wenger (1998, 2000, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002). It is also useful to think about the integration of these different levels, and this can be done by way of two different approaches: top-down and bottom-up. The former views the practices from a macro to meso and then to a micro level (i.e. from CamTESOL, a broad ELT context, to the IFL, an individual tertiary ELT institution, and then to individual ELT professional practitioners). The latter, on the other hand, views the practices from a micro to meso and then to a macro level (i.e. from the individual ELT professional practitioners, to the IFL, and then to CamTESOL). Figure 7.9 illustrates these two approaches.

Viewed as a top-down approach, the current practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia appears to be managed by a specific organisation or unit in cooperation with other concerned parties. CamTESOL has filled a vacuum and acts like a main entity, cooperating with both domestic and international ELT institutions and supporters, in order to oversee its



Community of Practice type		
***It functions as a* true CoP.**	***It functions as:*** (Wenger et al., 2002)	***It has potential to become a CoP.***
X	A 'functional unit'	✓
X	A 'functional unit' (a research unit)	✓
X	A 'project unit'	✓ *A CoP exists in embryonic form.*

Figure 7.9: Top-down and bottom-up approaches for viewing communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers in Cambodia

annual conference events, including its ongoing support for ELT research. It thus shows that the practice of ELT teacher research at this level appears to operate to achieve certain administrative pre-determined goals. According to Wenger et al. (2002), this is not an operation of CoPs. It is more like an operation of a functional unit as an entity (see Table 7.2). Wenger et al. state:

> [a]t the core of a business or functional unit is the responsibility for managing a business goal, such as serving a specific market segment,.., fulfilling an administrative function. This responsibility includes allocating resources, managing business processes ... and accountability for business outcomes.... (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 41)

Likewise, the practice of ELT teacher research at the IFL, at a meso level, has operated in a similar way, as an operation that is to fulfill a set goal. In other words, this practice has functioned in the form of a research unit. A research coordinator has played a role in managing the operation. He or she passes information about the availability of research grants and calls for research proposals, makes decisions about the proposals, and manages some research papers to eventual publication. Sometimes he or she organises research workshops to provide general knowledge related to research. Drawing from Wenger et al. (2002), this practice is likely to look forward to achieving the institutional set vision rather than, to borrow Wenger et al.'s (2002, p. 41) term, "stewarding knowledge" of research and "learning" to do research. In my experience as a full-time academic staff member at the IFL, apart from the IFL's journal, there has not been any serious commitment to promoting these research-active lecturers' research outcomes among the IFL's ELT practitioners. There has not been an opportunity organised to allow these research-active lecturers to share accounts of doing research in the English Department, only by way of the CamTESOL conference series. Therefore, this practice does not seem effective to attract and motivate other lecturers at the IFL, who are marginal to this practice, to participate in the CoP activities.

Within this top-down approach of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, the role of

individual ELT professionals can be seen as feeding the appetite of CamTESOL for Cambodian research presentations. On the one hand, these ELT professionals have undertaken research either to improve their own teaching or to fulfill their postgraduate degree programs, but on the other hand, and with their own institution's support for conference attendance, they satisfy CamTESOL's needs by presenting the research at the CamTESOL conference. Some Cambodian ELT teachers also received the CamTESOL's research grants and undertook research with the international mentorship assistance organised by CamTESOL. Other teachers, especially the IFL lecturers, received IFL research grants and conducted research to satisfy the needs of the IFL's in-house publication.

Viewed as a bottom-up approach, an ELT teacher-research CoP in Cambodia is at a stage of embryonic growth with individual Cambodian ELT practitioners playing active roles in doing research within their classrooms and/or institutions. These Cambodian ELT teacher researchers have shared their beliefs that being able to do research can promote status in their career, a status which is shared by the IFL as an institution and that undertaking research within their classrooms can help improve teaching quality. They also hold consistent conceptions of 'ELT teacher research' which fall in line with Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research in language teaching and Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle. Specifically, they have developed a joint enterprise by sharing the institutional vision, topics, resources, interests, and being actively involved in undertaking research. (See the analyses in Chapter 7, Sections 2.2 and 2.3 for more details).

Moreover, these ELT professionals have created networks among their colleagues, for example, knowing who knows what specific knowledge about research and who can offer what kind of assistance, encompassing resources and technical assistance. These practices have developed what could be called an initial stage of these Cambodian ELT professionals' mutual engagement in doing research, which is essential for the practice dimension of a true CoP (Wenger, 1998, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). As noted earlier, these Cambodian ELT professionals undertook their research based on their interests and problems arising within

their own classrooms or institution. Participants B3 and B4 undertook their joint research project because they had the same research interest. This indicates that the CoP of ELT teacher researchers at this micro level, comprising a variety of topics of research, is heterogeneous (Tummons, 2012) and provides these ELT teacher researchers opportunities to learn to do research to improve teaching quality within their own professional setting (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Hodkinson, 2004; Nishino, 2012).

In addition, although the Phase 2 participants did not explicitly identify themselves as ELT teacher researchers, their identities as teacher researchers have begun to emerge. They all seemed to acknowledge their role as university ELT lecturers who need to conduct research in classrooms and/or institutions in order to improve their teaching and share their research findings with other Cambodian ELT professionals. This acknowledgement indicates their emerging identity as ELT teacher researchers working at tertiary ELT institutions.

Although these Cambodian ELT teacher researchers have not often formally shared their research stories, such as in research seminars or in staff meetings, which would usually be organised by a coordinator, they have informally shared and exchanged research expertise, knowledge, experiences, and stories among themselves especially when they need such sharing and exchange. Significantly, these research-active Cambodian ELT practitioners have formulated some specific research practices. The most common one, which almost defines the current practice of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, is that the research process begins with the submission of an abstract to the CamTESOL conference series, and ends with a presentation at the conference (see individual sub-case studies B3/B4, B2, and B1). In some cases, the process could end with a publication (see individual sub-case studies B1 and B2). Moreover, and also in common, their undertaking of research activities faces a lot of challenges such as their lack of disciplinary research knowledge, time allocation for doing research, and resources that they need for their research (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5). Indeed, these are the common practices and experiences of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia.

According to Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002), these sorts of practices within a community have not yet developed a 'rhythm', in this case specific to undertaking research. The domain or enterprise is part of a community of practice, which will not operate effectively unless these Cambodian ELT practitioners' research knowledge, expertise, and experiences are integrated in practice to formulate common knowledge through mutual engagement. For instance, these Cambodian ELT teacher researchers' research activities were only individual research activities managed by individual ELT lecturers. These lecturers have accumulated research knowledge, expertise, and experiences through the trajectories of their postgraduate degree programs and career. However, such various knowledge, expertise, and experiences have not been put together in doing research in a CoP to produce common knowledge. Therefore, a CoP has not developed its well-functioning artifacts. These ELT practitioners, despite being actively involved in doing research, have not yet been promoted as 'core members' of the community so as to allow them to build up the CoP's rhythm of ELT teacher research undertaken within their own teaching practice and inspire other marginal members to participate in the CoP's activities. In other words, their participation in research activities has achieved only the first three phases (i.e. awareness, allocation, and accountability) of the participatory process of the CoPs' membership as illustrated in Figure 7.3 (Borzillo et al., 2011). As a result, the notional CoP is not well developed although it has the great potential to eventually become a fully developed CoP, and enjoy all the benefits that would flow from that achieving that status.

7.3.2 The need for true Communities of Practice

The two approaches to viewing the practices of ELT teacher research discussed above suggest a real need for true CoPs at a micro level in the current landscape of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia.

First and foremost, if true ELT teacher-research CoPs exist with individual ELT lecturers as constituent members, a sound ELT teacher-research "rhythm" can be created and this would stand to be more facilitative, workable, and productive than the one empowered

from the top-down by the CamTESOL conference series, as evidenced in Chapter 6. Drawing on Wenger (1998, 2000, 2006), Wenger and Snyder (2000), and Wenger et al. (2002), in the context of such an ELT teacher-research rhythm, individual ELT teachers, facilitated by an active CoP coordinator who can arrange events and activities, are actually involved in systematically undertaking research within a clear CoP framework.

Moreover, true CoPs create opportunities for learning to undertake research, resulting from collaboration and interactions among teacher researchers themselves as well as with other external ELT researchers (Burns, 1999; Griffiths, Thompson, & Hryniewicz, 2010; Sachs, 1999; Thornley, Parker, Read, & Eason, 2004). Along the trajectory of practices, novice teacher researchers (newcomers) are scaffolded and mentored to undertake research by the more experienced and competent ELT researchers (i.e. brokers) (Borg, 2006), and, eventually, move to the centre of the practices and become active members, who further promote the practices (Borzillo et al., 2011). These practices will help encourage ELT professionals' active participation and, thus, sustain life-long professional practices through operationalising ELT teacher research activities. A significant consequence of the practices is that ELT lecturers become autonomous and critical ELT practitioners (Borg, 2010, 2013; Edge, 2007; Hopkins, 2008) who reflect as well as question their own teaching practices (Farrell, 2013, 2014; Freeman, 1998; Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Freeman & Richards, 2002; J. C. Richards & Lockhart, 2007), and systematically undertake research in their own classrooms (Borg, 2010, 2013; Burns, 2009, 2010; Freeman, 1998).

We can now clearly see the power of true ELT teacher-research CoPs at a micro level from a theoretical perspective in promoting and sustaining the practices of ELT teacher research. As stated above, there is a strong interconnection between the three-orders of CoPs investigated in this thesis (i.e. macro, meso, and micro) in the current practices of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia. Thus, the meso-level ELT teacher research practice would play intermediary, yet important, roles in energising individual ELT professionals who are engaged in research, and bridging their research activities towards

broader ELT settings. What needs to be done to achieve this requirement for true ELT teacher-research CoPs is to operationalise a clear CoP framework in the current practices of ELT teacher research in various tertiary ELT institutions in contemporary Cambodia in order to enable the embryonic ELT teacher-research CoP at the micro level to further develop and grow.

7.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ELT teacher research in relation to CamTESOL (in the broad ELT context) and at the IFL (in the individual tertiary institution context), viewed through a top-down approach, has developed within functional units rather than within 'true' CoPs. ELT teacher research has become part of objective statements of these units that needs to be achieved. Thus, the practice has created a rhythm of teacher research undertaking that is organised, and possibly determined, by CamTESOL and the IFL. This research rhythm, as portrayed in Chapter 6 through the four actual research projects empowered and showcased by the CamTESOL conference series, appears to have produced low quality of ELT teacher research.

On the other hand, viewed from a bottom-up approach (i.e. from a micro perspective), the notional community of practice of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL has actually developed to an embryonic stage. This emerging CoP of ELT teacher researchers possesses the necessary constitutive elements proposed by Wenger (1998, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002) such as domain, community, and practice, as summarised in Table 7.5. The IFL lecturers have begun to build their emerging identity as teacher researchers and have been engaged in undertaking research. They have built up connections among themselves (i.e. by creating networks to complete their research activities). This emergent CoP has revealed an organic growth potential for development into a true CoP. This embryonic stage can be likened to an egg which needs to be carefully tended in order to be able to hatch, otherwise it will become rotten and die. Building and maintaining a CoP of ELT teacher researchers

requires careful attention and proper care as much as hatching eggs does in terms of choosing the right fertile eggs to hatch, deciding a reliable and productive method to hatch the eggs, and preparing comfortable conditions, ranging from providing the right temperature for the embryo to develop and hatch to ensuring a safe delivery.

This chapter has revealed the need for creating and operationalising ELT teacher-research CoPs in various tertiary ELT institutions in order to ensure the successful development of the embryonic CoP into a true CoP, which will be taken up in Chapter 8, where I will propose a workable framework for a community of practice of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL. As stated earlier, an integrating force of the three orders of communities of practice is necessary for fully developing ELT teacher research in Cambodia. Thus, the framework would promote more active practices of ELT teacher research at the IFL and simultaneously increase participation from Cambodian ELT practitioners across other tertiary ELT institutions and in cooperation with CamTESOL.

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CHAPTER 8

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCHERS AT THE IFL

8.0 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 7, which investigated communities of practice of ELT research in Cambodia at three levels (macro, meso, and micro), we saw that when viewed from a top-down approach, CamTESOL (macro level) and the IFL (meso level) operate as 'functional units' rather than as 'true' communities of practice. Although CamTESOL and the IFL have considerable assets (i.e. within 'domain', 'community' and 'practice'), which are a CoP's key dimensions, these two entities lack fundamental CoP characteristics, as displayed in Tables 7.4 and 7.5, that a true CoP would need. In this top-down approach, the individual ELT practitioners (micro level) at the IFL have undertaken research in their own classrooms and institution primarily to fulfill the needs of CamTESOL (for Cambodian teachers' presentations of research) and of the IFL (for research publications). However, when viewed from a bottom-up approach, we have seen that the practice of ELT teacher research at a micro level has great potential for developing into a true CoP in its own right and not simply functioning as a vital component in an institution or professional organisation. As noted in Chapter 7, the 'notional' CoP of ELT lecturers evidenced at the IFL is at an embryonic stage, like an egg which requires attention and care in order to enable the emergence of a healthy living creature. An exploration of this period of incubation of the IFL lecturers' nascent CoP is the focus of Chapter 8. The basis of this chapter is that a CoP of IFL teacher researchers is a highly desirable goal, given the huge benefits a CoP offers. Thus, in this chapter we investigate what would need to happen in order for the status quo of an 'embryonic' notional CoP to develop into a fully functioning 'true' CoP (i.e. one that meets the specifications of Wenger and other scholars whose work this thesis has been built on). Operationalising an ELT teacher-research CoP framework will ultimately contribute to productive ELT

professional practices. Indeed, such operationalisation of a CoP framework from the 'bottom up' might contribute positively to the development of a true CoP at the meso level of individual tertiary ELT institutions and, eventually to a true CoP functioning at the macro level of a broad ELT setting (i.e. CamTESOL or another 'umbrella' organisation better suited to Cambodia's particular ELT needs).

In this chapter I will outline a framework for a CoP that can function as a workable strategy for initiating and improving the practice of ELT teacher research at the IFL. The strategy would involve teacher research projects that would span the IFL's full academic year. This CoP framework will provide a basis to help develop the quality of research in which the IFL lecturers would get involved. As stated in Chapter 7, the three orders of communities of practice (i.e. at micro, meso and macro levels) in the practices of ELT teacher research are interconnected. Thus, when research quality is raised at a micro level, the research practices at meso and macro levels will subsequently stand to benefit as well. The CoP framework, which I will present, is grounded in the principles of the design and developmental stages of communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002) and the notion of knowledge strategy-based communities of practice (Wenger, 2000).

8.1 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CREATING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

To begin, let us briefly review the notion of communities of practice. According to Wenger (1998, 2000, 2006), Wenger and Snyder (2000) and Wenger et al. (2002), a community of practice is a group of people who share similar goals, interest, passion, and are concerned about achieving their goals by doing things and learning to do things together on a regular basis. A CoP must have three interdependent dimensions (i.e. domain, community, and practice) to form a coherent practice within the community. The CoP members must share the domain, and be mutually engaged in achieving this domain. When the CoP members are conjointly engaged in doing the CoP's activities together, they will develop a sense of

belonging to the community, and their special identity as a CoP will emerge. They will create opportunities for learning new 'craft knowledge' (i.e. knowledge about doing research) and developing shared repertoires (i.e. common knowledge) about their community. Wenger et al. (2002, p. 42) argue that a CoP is different from other entities (e.g. functional units, operational teams, project teams, communities of interest, and informal networks (see Table 7.2)) in terms of its primary purpose: "to create, expand, and exchange knowledge and to develop individuals' capabilities." With this as my point of departure, I will now present a theoretical framework for creating a CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL.

For creating a CoP and maintaining its vitality along the trajectory of development, Wenger et al. (2002) propose seven principles, comprising (1) design for evolution; (2) open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives; (3) invite different levels of participation; (4) develop both public and private community spaces; (5) focus on value; (6) combine familiarity and excitement; and (7) create a rhythm for the community. Table 8.1 provides details of these seven principles, including the key role of a coordinator in ensuring the success of a CoP's development.

As depicted in Table 8.1, the effective design of a CoP should be based on its members' common problems and needs (Principle 1); members' roles and outsiders' perspectives (Principle 2); participation from different levels and across different boundaries (Principle 3); public and private (physical or virtual) spaces (Principle 4); values that support a larger oganisation, the community itself and its members (Principle 5); familiarity and excitement of a CoP's activities and ideas (Principle 6); and an appropriate rhythm of a CoP's development that is practical and workable (Principle 7). To achieve these principles, a CoP coordinator would play a fundamental role in regularly organising various CoP events and activities which would allow the members to work together to share, exchange, and contribute expertise, ideas, experience, and solutions to help resolve their common problems, and which can help sustain a CoP's rhythm of activities. He or she would also invite people from different levels and across different boundaries to participate in and contribute new

Table 8.1: Seven principles for creating and maintaining a community of practice*, adapted from Wenger et al. (2002, pp. 49-63)*.

Principle	*An effective CoP should be based on ...*	*To achieve this principle, a CoP should ...*	*A CoP's coordinator should ...*
1. Design for evolution	• Members' common needs or problems. • Opportunities that allow members to interact with each other.	• Begin with simple regular meetings (e.g. problem-solving meetings) to attract potential members to the community.	• Organise regular meetings and introduce other CoP's artifacts to members, once they are engaged in discussing the topics and contributing their ideas.
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives	• Both insiders' roles and outsiders' perspectives.	• Allow outsiders to share perspectives for more possibilities for leveraging other existing artifacts in the community.	• Invite outsiders into a dialogue with the members.
3. Invite different levels of participation	• Participation from different levels and across different boundaries.	• Create opportunities for core members to hold leadership roles in leading the community's development projects.	• Organise various activities and connect the CoP members (internal and external).
4. Develop both public and private community spaces	• Both public and private spaces, physically or virtually.	• Create both public and private (physical or virtual) events that bring the CoP members together to exchange, share, and learn from each other the craft knowledge.	• Create various public events including meetings, workshops, seminars, and conferences. • Create private meeting spaces to examine members' progress in doing activities.
5. Focus on value	• Values that fulfill a larger organisation, and achieve the goals of the community as well as the members themselves.	• Begin with current problems and needs of the community. Then emerging values and new knowledge will arise and be easily accessed when the community grows.	• Create activities and events to bring its members together regularly in order to build relationships and trust among its members.
6. Combine familiarity and excitement	• A combination of familiarity and excitement to allow the members to be more engaged in the community, sustain their involvement, and explore further CoP activities.	• Create opportunities that allow the members to gain new exiting ideas.	• Organise workshops, conferences, seminars, fairs, and other major events.
7. Create a rhythm for the community	• An appropriate rhythm of its members' active participation at each stage of the community's development. The rhythm should neither be too slow nor too fast.	• Promote the CoP members' active engagement and attract those who are marginal to the community to participate.	• Organise regular activities and events to attract people to participate in the community.

perspectives to help progress the community.

According to Wenger et al. (2002), along its journey of development, a CoP proceeds through five fundamental stages, encompassing 'potential'; 'coalescing'; 'maturing'; 'stewardship'; and 'transformation', as displayed in a linear process in Figure 8.1.

Following the seven principles of design for a CoP (see Table 8.1), the creation of a CoP should begin at a basic stage (i.e. one of recognising potential where the community identifies a CoP's key domain, community and practice, and begins a CoP by way of existing networks) and subsequently develop through coalescing, maturing, and stewardship of knowledge stages, and then ultimately a transforming stage.

Development stage	CoP's focus
Stage 1: Potential	• Identifying the members' common problems, passion or interest including their expertise, tools, techniques and approaches. • Identifying the community needs, and key domain, community and practice. • Beginning a CoP with existing networks.
Stage 2: Coalescing	• Building value of sharing of knowledge of the domain, and trust and relationships amongst the members. • Organising joint activities.
Stage 3: Maturing	• Building a legitimate community (i.e. shifting from networks to a CoP) by determining the community's role and relationship to other domains, and the community's boundaries. • Developing and promoting the community's common knowledge.
Stage 4: Stewardship	• Stewarding the community's common knowledge and best practice. • Finding the community's voices within a large organisation.
Stage 5: Transformation	• Transforming into various forms of communities. • Building the community's 'momentum': 'applying' the common knowledge; 'assessing' its implications; 'reflecting' its processes; and 'renewing' the common knowledge.

Figure 8.1: A CoP's developmental process, *adapted from Wenger (2000, pp. 3-18) and Wenger et al. (2002, p. 69).*

In the final stage (Stage 5), when the community reaches a mature level in its development, it has the possibility to 'transform' itself into one of three different forms as shown in Figure 8.2. First, the community can become fully developed as a legitimate CoP.

Second, the community may transform itself into a formal entity such as a department or business unit. Third, the community may fade away or die because people are no longer interested in the domain and decide not to be engaged in the community. In the case of a community transforming into a legitimate CoP, the developmental process evolves cyclically. According to Wenger (2000), in this case, the cyclic operation has built its 'momentum', beginning with 'applying' the common knowledge or best practice, 'assessing' its outcomes, 'reflecting on' its processes, and 'renewing' this knowledge.

In the field of language education research, a review of the literature reveals that 'teacher research' is perceived as a means for teachers' professional development (Deblaquiere & Williams, 2007; Ellis & Castle, 2010; Gao et al., 2011b; Hall, 2009b), in which teachers learn to teach as well as improve teaching by undertaking research in their own context (Freeman, 1998; Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Hodkinson, 2004). Thus, a CoP framework can be seen as a potential force to enable teachers to reflect on their teaching (Farrell, 2013, 2014), and learn to teach and improve teaching quality (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; Nishino, 2012). A CoP framework allows teachers to regularly and systematically reflect on their own teaching practices (i.e. undertaking research in classrooms) through joint activities, thus having opportunities to learn both research disciplinary knowledge and teaching-related knowledge from each other. Apart from a model of a CoP developed by Wesley and Buysse (2001) for collaborative reflective practice, there were no studies found in the literature that appeared useful to adapt for the present study. But even the Wesley Buysse model, which comprises goal, participants, methods, and outcomes, was not deemed appropriate. In their model, researchers and early (childhood) education practitioners work collaboratively to systematically reflect on early (childhood) education practice. Useful though this model is, it does not reveal the developmental process of a CoP and how it is organised. Moreover, this model involved the practitioners reflecting on their own practices in collaboration with researchers from outside the centre, which would not be easily workable

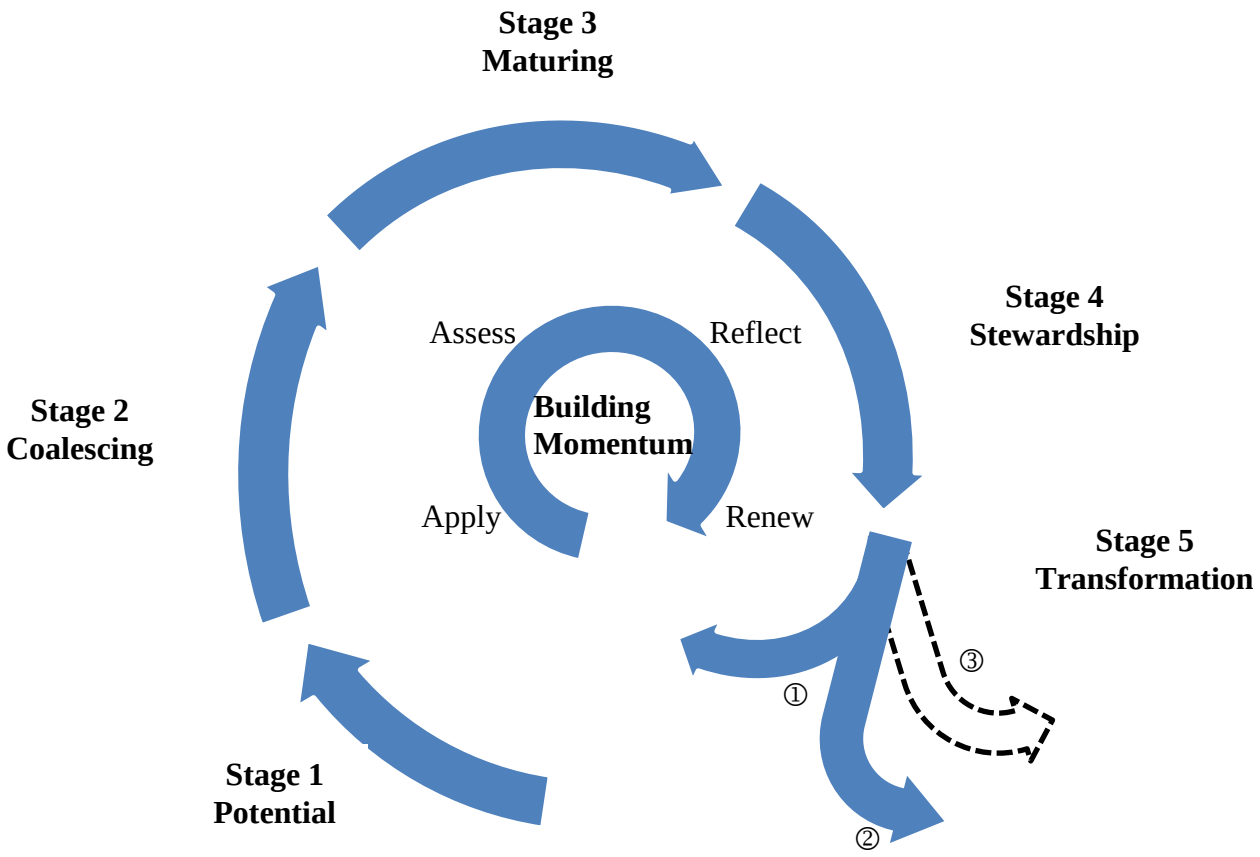


Figure 8.2: Five stages of CoP development, *adapted from (Wenger, 2000; Wenger et al., 2002)*.

for the IFL's context. Given the lack of suitable CoP modelling for ELT teacher research at tertiary level, I will now introduce my own modelling of a framework for a CoP, in which ELT lecturers themselves are involved in undertaking research at the IFL.

8.2 MODELLING A CoP OF ELT TEACHER RESEARCHERS AT THE IFL

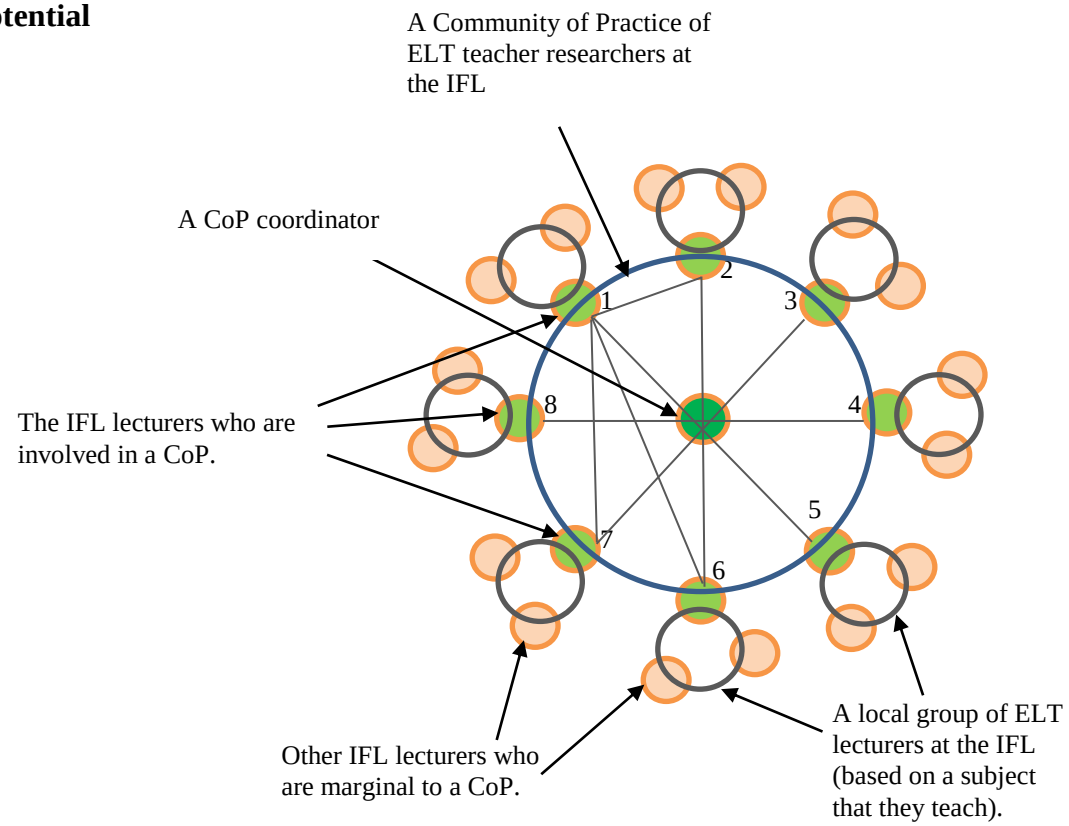
In this section, I will introduce a model of a CoP which can be used as a means to implement an ELT teacher research CoP at the IFL. This model aims to provide a clear framework for a CoP to effectively enhance the IFL lecturers' research activities. It also aims to promote and develop, in a systematic way, ELT professional practices at the IFL. Its purpose is to assist lecturers to question their own practice, plan their data collection and analysis, and disseminate the findings of their research (see Table 6.2 for Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle).

In this model, the community is assumed to consist of one coordinator and eight Cambodian ELT lecturers who are teaching English at the IFL and are also engaged in undertaking research projects. The proposed framework of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers comprises iterative annual cycles of development. Figure 8.3 illustrates the constituent members of this community at two different stages (i.e. Stages 1 and 2) of the first Cycle.

The design of this CoP is grounded in the principles and developmental stages of CoPs mentioned above. The design also draws on a theoretical framework of research activities undertaken across the research timeline by teacher researchers (see Table 6.4) to create a context of undertaking research as a systematic inquiry. This CoP developmental process is cyclical, with each cycle comprising five stages and having a time span of one academic year[18] as shown in Figure 8.2.

[18] At the IFL, and possibly at most ELT institutions in Cambodia, the whole academic year comprises two semesters: Semester 1 (September – February); and Semester 2 (February – July). This pattern is consistently applied to Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 of the academic programs. Year 1 has a different pattern as it is affected by the entrance examination and runs one month behind the other years.

Stage 1
Potential



Stage 2
Coalescing

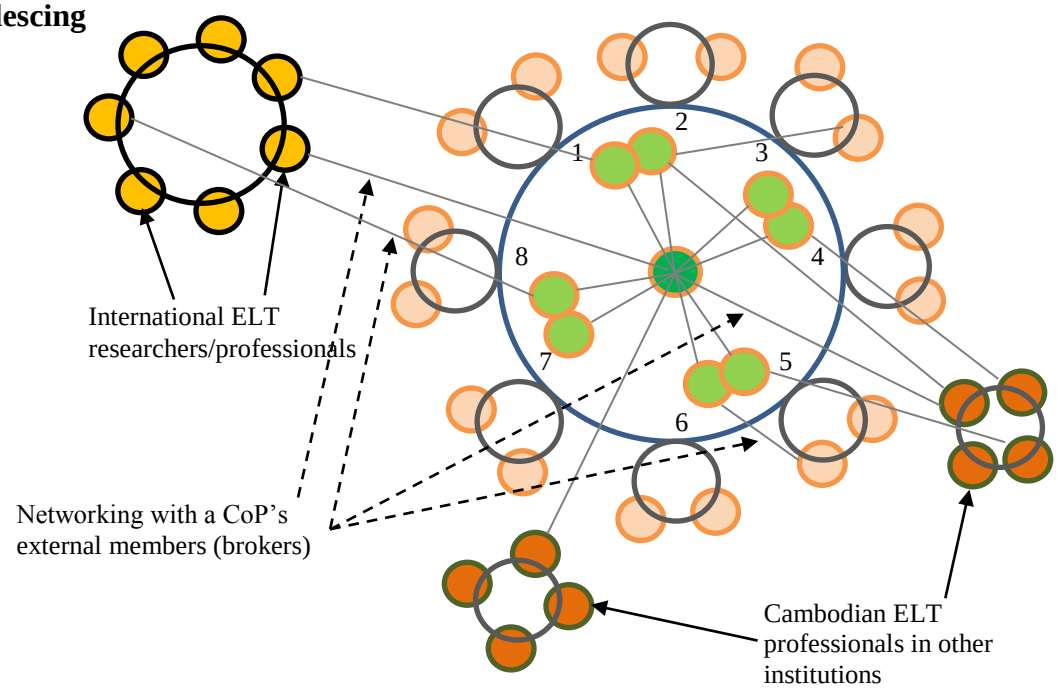


Figure 8.3: A cluster structure of a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL (Stages 1 and 2, Cycle 1)

The full cycle would start in September and end in August the following year. This timeline is set out in Figure 8.4. In Stage 1, the eight IFL lecturers would be located around and connected to a coordinator who would be a central figure in the CoP (see Figure 8.3). Each of these lecturers would also be connected with other groups according to the subject that they teach at the IFL (e.g. Core English; Literature Studies; Global Studies; Writing Skills; etc.). In Stage 2, as the community's members are coalescing, and members become familiar with the community's domain and its values, these eight lecturers would join together to undertake collaborative research depending upon their shared interests, topics, and concerns, especially regarding finding solutions to the problems that they would commonly encounter in their own classrooms. In this design of the community, the teacher researchers would form four joint research projects, each of which would be undertaken by two teacher researchers. This model of collaborative research aims to reflect the benefits of this kind of research noted in the literature. Such benefits include developing "social interactions" to achieve "shared meanings and knowledge construction" (Cesareni et al., 2011, p. 626); providing opportunities for people from different backgrounds to share their expertise to resolve the common problems (Bruce & Easley-Jr, 2000); scaffolding research undertaking (Borg, 2006; Thornley et al., 2004); and promoting systematic undertaking of research (Sachs, 1999; Wesley & Buysse, 2001).

Stage 2 (Figure 8.3) also illustrates networks that the community's coordinator would build with other external (both domestic and international) ELT researchers and professionals (i.e. "brokers"). These networks would provide the community's members with opportunities to learn relevant research stories, content, disciplinary knowledge, and skills which could help them focus on and complete their research activities. From these networks, the community's members could also see new possibilities for developing their community (Wenger et al., 2002). In addition to the interactions created by the coordinator, CoP members may create their own interactions among themselves and with other CoP external members. Thus, this design, which promotes interactions and collaboration among teacher researchers within the

community, would also strengthen teacher research engagement (Borg, 2006, 2013). Table 8.3 provides the details of each stage of this CoP's developmental processes, including the coordinator's roles at different stages.

Developmental stage	Timeline	Brief description of engagement
Stage 1 Potential	**September** **October**	The community's members determine common knowledge needs, i.e. common problems that they face in teaching, and help contribute solutions.
Stage 2 Coalescing	**November**	They are involved in formulating and undertaking joint projects. Their research journey begins and endures until they complete it, preferably, by July.
Stage 3 Maturing	**July**	Along these two stages, various activities and events are organised to provide the members with assistance to conduct their research.
Stage 4 Stewardship	**August**	The members share their research stories and outcomes with other members as well as other teachers outside the community. They discuss the common knowledge and best practice from the research.
Stage 5 Transformation	**September**	They implement the common knowledge and best practice in their classrooms, assess its outcomes, reflect its process, and renew it. The CoP begins a new cycle of development (i.e. Cycle 2). The members submit research abstracts to CamTESOL to report this research the following year.

Figure 8.4: A developmental process timeline of a Community of Practice of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL

As illustrated in Table 8.3, Stage 1 in the development of this CoP comprises two aims: to investigate knowledge needs and to begin a CoP. Investigating knowledge needs helps us understand in what areas the IFL would need to improve its staff members' teaching performances, and in what areas the IFL lecturers would need to improve their practices. These needs would extend beyond the scope of this particular CoP, but the information from these needs would be useful for the community to grow in a life-long learning timeframe (Wenger, 2000). As stated in Principle 5, a community thrives when it is designed to give value to the organisation it belongs to, the community itself, and its

Table 8.3: A model of the developmental processes of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL

Stage		Aim		Activity	Coordinator's tasks
1	Potential (planning stage)	To investigate knowledge needs	Institutional needs of research	Investigating what the IFL needs for improving English language teaching.	Organising a group discussion, which involves the IFL management team, and (possibly) subject coordinators.
			Classroom-based needs of research	Finding out what classroom-based problems the IFL lecturers need to investigate.	Designing a questionnaire and administers it to the IFL lecturers.
			Research disciplinary knowledge needs	Investigating what research disciplinary knowledge and skills the IFL lecturers need for undertaking research.	Designing a questionnaire and administers it to the IFL lecturers.
		• To begin a CoP		Finding existing networks and building the community from these existing networks.	Inviting any IFL lecturers who are interested or have already been involved in sharing their problems in teaching and helping each other find out solutions. He/she would organise regular meetings to facilitate this sharing.
				Determining the common knowledge needs	Identifying the common knowledge, including research problems, research knowledge and problem-solving based knowledge, along with those who are involved in sharing their problems and offering solutions,.
2	Coalescing	• To build value of sharing knowledge of the domain. • To build trust and relationships among the CoP members. • To identify common knowledge and how it can be shared.		Organising joint projects.	1. He/she would coordinate joint projects according to the members' shared topics identified in Stage 1. Preferably, two lecturers join one collaborative project. 2. He/she would organise regular meetings to give the members opportunities to share their stories and progress. 3. He/she would privately meet with the members, learns their progress and problems they face and discusses possible ways to resolve the problems. 4. He/she would invite external people who have relevant expertise and are willing to share such expertise to present their research stories or share their knowledge.
				Organising regular activities to create spaces, physically or virtually, publicly or privately to bring the CoP members together.	
3	Maturing	• To build a legitimate CoP. • To foster the CoP.		Scaffolding and mentoring the CoP members' research activities.	He/she would continue to undertake tasks 2, 3, and 4 mentioned in Stage 2. In this stage, he/she would organise workshops and mentoring assistance to help the CoP members handle the specific problems that they identify in Stage 2.
				Getting the IFL management team involved in the CoP activities.	Inviting the management team to visit the community to listen to the members' reports of the projects and their progress and provide feedback.

Table 8.3 (Cont.): A model of the developmental processes of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL

Stage		Aim	Activity	Coordinator's tasks
4	Stewardship	• To develop common knowledge garnered from members' research projects. • To inform best practice of teaching English at the IFL in specific areas identified in members' research projects. • To disseminate the common knowledge and best practice within and outside the CoP.	Presenting and sharing the research within the CoP.	Organising a sharing session/seminar for the members to share their research stories, outcomes, and discuss the relevant issues to their research.
			Disseminating the common knowledge and best practice outside the CoP.	Seeking and disseminating opportunities for the members to present their research at the IFL's seminars and international conferences, especially in the region.
			Documenting the common knowledge and best practice drawn from the members' research.	Urging the members to write their research reports. He/she documents those reports. Preferably, the members can publish their research projects.
5	Transforming	• To transform a CoP into a fully developed legitimate CoP. • To keep the momentum of the CoP. • To expand the CoP.	Promoting the lecturers joining in the first cycle as core members of the CoP.	Promoting those members (i.e. eight teacher researchers) as core members of the community, and encouraging them to implement the best practice that they learn from the research and reflect on it.
			Implementing the best practice in their teaching.	Undertaking various tasks mentioned in Stages 2, 3 and 4 to keep the momentum of the community.
			Recruiting new members to the CoP.	Recruiting new members to the community, and arranges the core members to work with the newcomers.

members (Wenger, 2000; Wenger et al., 2002). However, these knowledge needs should not be the basis for the community to begin. For a CoP to be designed for evolution (Principle 1), it should begin with its members' common needs (i.e. common problems that they urgently need to tackle in their own teaching context). Therefore, this CoP commences with existing networks at the IFL. As noted in Chapter 7, these networks can be found in the IFL's research unit where its lecturers have been involved in doing research (e.g. those lecturers who were involved in Phase 2 data collection of this PhD thesis). The IFL lecturers who are interested in undertaking research to improve their practice would begin to be engaged in sharing their common problems in teaching and identifying their common research problems, research knowledge and skills.

In Stage 2, this CoP aims to develop joint projects undertaken by its members. These projects would be based on the members' common problems identified in Stage 1, thus engaging the CoP members in doing activities that are of interest to them can increase the degree of their participation (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002) (Principle 3). Figure 8.3 shows that at this stage, the CoP would comprise four joint research projects, each conducted by two members. As the community grows, the community coordinator would organise various activities, including regular meetings, seminars, workshops to provide the members with more opportunities to share their problems and challenges in doing research and learning the research disciplinary knowledge and skills from the more competent and experienced researchers or lecturers. Outsiders would be invited to share their expertise and research stories that would be relevant to the members' research. These activities would thus develop the members' familiarity with their research activities and generate excitement for further research engagement (Principles 4 and 6). In this stage, as shown in Table 8.3, the community members would begin to undertake their research systematically. That is, they would begin to reflect as well as question their own practice (Farrell, 2013, 2014; Freeman, 1998), review existing relevant literature (Kumar, 2005), and think about how to respond to those questions by planning data collection and analysis (Freeman, 1998; Kumar, 2005). These activities

would continue to operate throughout Stage 3 of the CoP's development. At the end of Stage 3, the members' research projects would be completed, and the community would identify the common knowledge and best practice drawn from the members' research and seek to find effective ways to handle and utilise that common knowledge and best practice.

By Stage 4 the community has become mature, so it aims to 'steward' the common knowledge and disseminate the best practice within and outside the community. The coordinator would create a platform for the internal sharing of the members' research stories and research outcomes, and for discussing applications of the research for classroom practice. The community would therefore develop common knowledge and identify best practices. As shown in Table 8.3, the coordinator would also seek opportunities for the members to share their research outside of their community (i.e. at regional or international conferences). The timeline planned for this stage (i.e. in August (Figure 8.4)), would be potentially very suitable for the CoP members to disseminate the research within the community as well as prepare research abstracts for submitting to the CamTESOL conference series in September, the month that the abstracts are due. The coordinator would also encourage the members to write research reports and drafts of their research for publication. This dissemination of the members' research, either in the form of oral presentations or written publications, achieves one of the characteristics of "teacher research" – research being made public (Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998). Simultaneously, such dissemination of the research increases the value of sharing knowledge and promotes the members' confidence and motivation for further engagement in the community.

When this community reaches Stage 5, "transformation", it aims to become a fully legitimate CoP. According to Wenger (2000), when this community becomes a legitimate CoP, it would build its 'momentum' through which the CoP members would 'apply' their best practice and common knowledge, 'assess' its implications, 'reflect' on its processes, and learn from this experience in order to 'renew' this practice and knowledge (see Figure 8.2). To achieve this aim, these CoP members would need to move into the centre of the CoP

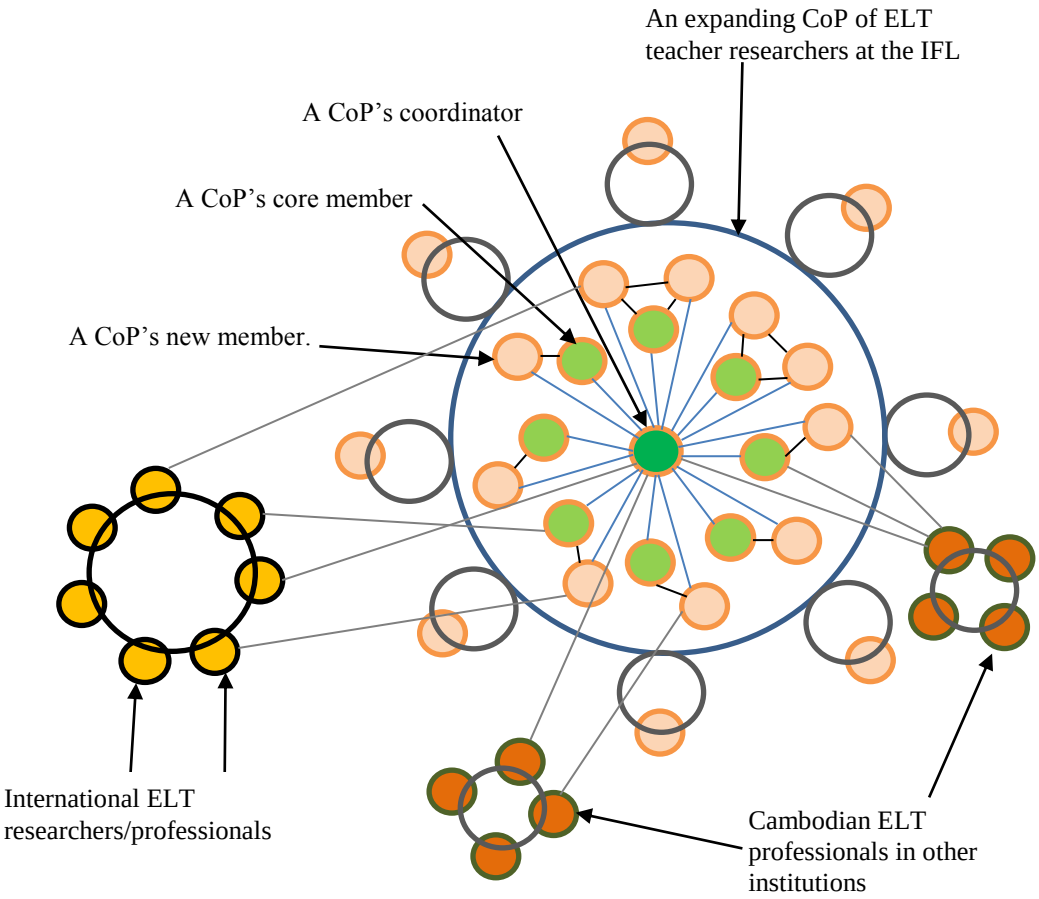


Figure 8.5: A cluster structure of an expanding CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL (Cycle 2)

(i.e. becoming core members), and they can help build the rhythm of the community and sustain this rhythm along the trajectory of development (Principle 7). Doing this will increase the community's shared repertoires, including research stories, research knowledge and skills for doing research, and the common knowledge that they need for effectively teaching English in their own context. The next step for the coordinator and core members to undertake for their community would be to spread their achievements and promote the CoP to other colleagues to inspire them to join the community (Borzillo et al., 2011). Newcomers would participate in the CoP and combined activities would be arranged, in which core members and newcomers work together collaboratively. The CoP would commence a new cycle (i.e. Cycle 2) following once again those stages of development set out above in Cycle 1. The composite members of this (expanding) CoP can be viewed in Figure 8.5, in which each core member would take a leadership role as a mentor to lead, guide, and provide assistance to the

newcomers. However, it is important to note that core members and new members would have an equal relationship among themselves and equal connection with a coordinator. Some joint research projects in a Cycle-2 CoP would have two members; some would have three members, depending on the actual CoP's activities.

This section has provided an outline for how a legitimate CoP could be developed from the currently identified 'embryonic' CoP of IFL lecturers and the resources available at the IFL. Whether such a CoP will develop is ultimately a matter for the IFL lecturers, management team, and administrators to decide.

8.3 DISCUSSION

As portrayed above, the proposed ELT teacher-research CoP model at the IFL would enhance the current practices of ELT teacher research which have grown to an embryonic stage. However, as Wenger et al. (2002) state, no CoPs grow harmoniously without at least some constraints. This section will discuss two important issues of concern: (1) what are the constraints to operationalising the proposed CoP framework in relation to the current state of ELT teacher research in Cambodia?; and (2) how would the proposed CoP framework help respond to these constraints and contribute to the development of ELT teacher research practices? Let us now begin our discussion on the constraints that might hinder the implementation of the proposed CoP framework.

8.3.1 Constraints to operationalising ELT teacher-research CoP

According to Wenger et al. (2002), some CoPs only remain social networks and cannot grow to become legitimate CoPs. Other CoPs develop at an early stage but then fade away and die because the CoP members are no longer interested in the domain or concerned about maintaining it (see Figure 8.2). The proposed framework of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL, if it were operationalised as depicted in the previous section, would face some significant challenges.

First of all, an important issue of concerns might be the number of members joining a CoP. As stated earlier, the proposed CoP framework comprises eight IFL lecturers. In fact, according to the IFL information handbook (2014-2015), the English Department[19] has 66 academic staff members, of whom 51 are full-time staff members. Thus, more than eight lecturers might be interested in joining the CoP. On the other hand, due to the fact that this proposed CoP operationalisation would be new to IFL lecturers, fewer than eight lecturers might be interested in joining the CoP. In either case, for this initiative of ELT teacher-research CoP to take place, the operationalisation would need to begin. In the former case, if a CoP comprises more than eight members, it might be more workable to create sub-CoPs of those lecturers who have similar topics or problems for investigation. Then, the configuration of the proposed CoP would consist of a constellation of various sub-groups, each of which would be led by one competent member or sub-coordinator. Wenger (1998, pp. 126-128) calls this a "constellation of practices". In the latter case, the configuration of the proposed CoP would comprise a small group of lecturers who are strongly interested in investigating their own practices. The CoP in either case would work through various stages (see Table 8.3) of a Cycle 1 CoP and then aim to expand its scope in the Cycle 2 operationalisation of a CoP (see Figure 8.5).

Another important issue of concern might be related to a CoP members' sustained participation in a CoP's activities. One factor which might influence the members' participation is time available for doing research. As revealed in Chapter 6, the research activities undertaken in the context of CamTESOL conference series were severely impacted by time constraints. There was no time allocation given to individual lecturers at the IFL to undertake research, and each lecturer was committed to teaching, undertaking other teaching-related tasks and assessing their students' achievement rather than doing research. In other words, lecturers were not paid for doing research.

[19] As noted in Chapter 7, English Department is also referred to IFL.

Another factor influencing the members' participation might be their possible lack of research disciplinary knowledge, skills, and experience of doing research (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). A lack of resources for conceptualising their research might be another factor to have an impact on the members' participation. They might discontinue their research activities due to their lack of access to resources in the relevant literature. In addition, the CoP members' sustained participation might be influenced by their interest in the topics focused on in the CoP's activities and, if such interest cannot be sustained, they might withdraw from further participation in the CoP.

Last but not least, another concern about the constraints of implementing the proposed ELT teacher-research CoP might relate to the role of the CoP's coordinator. As revealed in Chapter 7, the micro-level notional CoP acted almost as a true CoP but needed a facilitative and active CoP coordinator to rejuvenate the practice towards a true ELT teacher-research CoP. According to Wenger et al. (2002), such a coordinating role is vital to sustain a CoP's development.

The issues of concern discussed above are some of key anticipated constraints that the implementation of the proposed CoP would likely face in reality. What follows is a discussion of how the proposed CoP framework and operationalising it at the IFL would help respond to those constraints and promote ELT teacher research practices there.

8.3.2 Contributions of a CoP framework

First and foremost, a CoP framework would help facilitate individual Cambodian ELT professionals' research activities to proceed within a clear framework and timeline under the guidance of a facilitative, active, and supportive CoP coordinator. There are valid reasons for this optimistic view of the proposed CoP framework. First, as illustrated in Figure 8.4, the CoP framework would create a research rhythm which has a time span of one year, which is different from the research rhythm created and empowered by the CamTESOL conference series (i.e. only a six-month time span) (see Chapter 6). Second, a CoP's members' engagement in research has been clearly set out in each stage across the one-year research

timeline (Figure 8.4). Third, drawing from Wenger et al. (2002), a CoP's coordinator plays a vital role in ensuring the members' research activities to be undertaken and completed across the research timeline. Table 8.3 has provided detailed tasks that a coordinator would do to organise a CoP's activities. For a better understanding, it is important to briefly review these tasks, which mainly include:

(1) organising various events (e.g. meetings, discussions, seminars, and workshops) to create opportunities for members to interact, exchange with each other their own research stories, provide feedback on research activities, and do research together;

(2) ensuring a CoP's foci (i.e. topics and problems that need to be examined) that are shared by the members in order to maintain their interest and participation;

(3) recruiting the CoP's members as well as other external members who have relevant research expertise to provide assistance (i.e. training research skills and sharing resources) as well as mentoring the CoP members' research activities;

(4) documenting the research activities and research outcomes to be used as a CoP's resources; and

(5) seeking the IFL's recognition, endorsement, and financial assistance (i.e. research grants) to motivate the members to complete their research activities.

If a CoP's coordinator is held accountable for undertaking the aforementioned tasks, the constraints that were perceived above could probably be dealt with or reduced to a great extent.

In addition, operationalising the CoP framework would create a collaborative environment of undertaking research activities, in which the more experienced and competent teacher researchers scaffold and mentor novice teacher researchers doing research. The consequence of this practice is both experienced and competent and novice teacher researchers would have golden opportunities for learning to undertake research by doing actual research activities (Tummons, 2012). Thus, undertaking research in this setting would be a collective and social phenomenon rather than an individual responsibility. It also allows

teacher researchers to help each other complete their research activities by sharing research disciplinary knowledge and skills; providing training of research-related tasks, feedback, and advice; and providing relevant resources for research activities. The following are contributions that the proposed CoP framework can help deal with the constraints.

Time constraints: As stated earlier, the proposed CoP framework would be operationalised within a one-year cycle, following various research activities planned across the research timeline. Thus, such a research timeline should give teacher researchers sufficient time to undertake their research activities and ready for the presentation of their research papers at the annual CamTESOL conference. As stated earlier, as undertaking research activities within a CoP framework is collaborative, it then helps the members process their research activities smoothly according to time available for doing research because their problems in doing research are assisted by other members and the CoP's coordinator.

Interest: Operationalising the proposed CoP framework would also help sustain the members' interest in achieving their goals for investigating the problems that they encountered in teaching in order to improve classroom practices, thus ensuring their sustained participation in the CoP's activities. The compelling reason for this promising effect of the proposed CoP is the fact that this CoP would be based on the members' shared problems and actual needs for improving their own classroom practices. As the members share their research stories and outcomes regularly, they might inspire each other by their achievements in practice, and, as a result, increase their motivation for participating in the CoP. In other words, it helps reduce the chance of members' withdrawal from participation.

Resources: Once again as the members interact with each other, either through various events organised by the coordinator or through their own individual contacts, they would help each other with resources that they need to read in order to conceptualise their research. As stated earlier, the coordinator plays a role in providing assistance with relevant resources to help the members better conceptualise their research domain.

Research disciplinary knowledge: In a similar vein, as doing research within a CoP framework is a collective and social phenomenon, the members on a regular basis would exchange with each other useful practical knowledge and skills. Moreover, a coordinator would also organise various activities such as seminars, workshops, and training sessions to assist the members with relevant knowledge and skills for doing research.

CoP's coordinator: Drawing from Wenger, et al. (2002), the success of implementing the proposed CoP framework relies on the active and supportive role of a coordinator. Thus, selecting a suitable coordinator would enable the CoP to achieve its goals. It is important that the coordinator would be competent in both communities of practice and ELT teacher research and a CoP's coordinator should hold this position for two years[20] in order to help the members build up the momentum of ELT teacher research practices in the two cycles as illustrated in Figures 8.3 and 8.5. It is also worth noting that the IFL has a handful of lecturers who have graduated with PhD degrees from overseas, and they possess credible knowledge about undertaking research activities, and are experienced in doing research in a collaborative environment. These lecturers would be able to function in the position of a coordinator and lead such research activities.

The contributions towards operationalising an ELT teacher-research CoP framework discussed above would help produce a better quality of ELT teacher research practices in contemporary Cambodia and formulate a CoP's momentum (see Section 8.1, and Figures 8.1 and 8.2), which enables long-term development of ELT teacher research practices.

Despite the potential challenges that this proposed CoP framework might face if it were put into practice, the design of the framework of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL has great potential for developing and promoting ELT professional development at this institution through teacher research activities. As noted in Chapter 7, the IFL possesses not only great potential, including the IFL's vision, and a research unit, but also lecturers who

[20] This period of two years would be for operationalising the two cycles of the proposed CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL. This period was also planned to comply with the IFL's regulation for having a term of two years for a coordinator position.

have been involved in doing research, receiving research grants, and getting their research published. We also noted that to effectively develop and promote the practice of teacher research at this institution, a clear CoP framework is needed as a means of operationalising those worthy goals. Thus, the design of a CoP of ELT teacher researchers, with an active CoP coordinator, as set out in this chapter, addresses this need. Built upon existing networks and resources at the initial stage of development and designed following the principles presented in Wenger et al. (2002) and the notion of knowledge strategy-based communities of practice suggested by Wenger (2000), the CoP of ELT teacher researchers at the IFL can potentially be effectively implemented to incubate and facilitate productive teacher research practices of a high standard. Whether or not to pursue and achieve such an initiative is obviously a matter for the IFL to decide. As James (2001, p. 7) states, teachers' feelings, attitudes, and behaviours about their work are "often influenced by social forces, levels of pay, or the political structure" of the institution. Therefore, any decision by the IFL to take up the initiative would certainly energise the IFL lecturers' engagement in research.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out a strategy for developing and promoting ELT teacher research at the IFL by way of enacting a true CoP of ELT teacher researchers. This CoP is expected to evolve through five stages of development, beginning with knowledge-based needs analysis and building upon existing networks and resources (Stage 1); forming joint projects (Stage 2); shifting to a legitimate CoP (Stage 3); in which stewarding common knowledge and best practice is primary (Stage 4); and building the community's 'momentum' (Stage 5).

The model of the community of practice at each stage follows a clear framework, including a timeline, aims, activities, and the coordinator's facilitative role. The shortcomings of research undertaken by Cambodian ELT professionals, which would likely have an impact on operating the proposed CoP framework, have also been discussed in this chapter. The proposed CoP framework has also been seen as a promising approach to alleviate the research

shortcomings and improve the standard of research in the context of ELT education in contemporary Cambodia. This framework, if implemented appropriately, would engage the IFL lecturers in undertaking research in their own classrooms. As suggested by Burns and Edwards (2014), such involvement can help teachers improve their teaching, adopt a systematic approach to developing effective practice, and socialise with the research community. It is, therefore, important to make this proposed CoP framework an actual teacher research project. Operationalising this project would allow teacher researchers to 'assess' its outcomes, 'reflect' on its processes, and 'renew' it on an annual basis for incremental improvement in the practices of ELT teacher research at the IFL. It could then possibly extend its influence higher up the 'landscape' of research activity interests in Cambodian ELT education, towards the macro level of ELT teacher research that properly serves its Cambodian research members as a matter of priority.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has presented a case study of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia. It has explored teacher researchers' conceptions of research and their actual practices when they engage with research. The influence of the CamTESOL conference series in dictating the current research cycle has been noted, in terms of both its positive and negative impacts. The notion of a community of practice as a useful tool and 'missing link' for consolidating and moving ELT teacher research forward in Cambodia has been strongly advocated.

This chapter now concludes the thesis by considering whether the study has achieved its main aims, suggesting how the findings of the study can be applied in developing ELT teacher research practices, and offering suggestions for future research. The chapter first re-examines the study's aims and summarises its key findings. Second, it re-emphasises the significance of the study through evaluating the study's contributions in terms of a methodological model, a theoretical framework, and a research quality support framework. Third, it identifies limitations of the study through reflecting on the research methodology adopted for the study. Fourth, the chapter sets out implications of the study for further promoting and developing the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, the Southeast Asian region and beyond. The chapter also suggests some important areas to be considered for future investigations into ELT teacher research practices.

9.1 KEY FINDINGS

This thesis has investigated tertiary-level ELT teacher research practices in contemporary Cambodia by first exploring Cambodian ELT professionals' conceptualisations of teacher research and then examining the actual research activities undertaken by

Cambodian ELT teachers at the IFL in the context of the 2013 CamTESOL conference. It has also examined in the Cambodian context whether there are any true communities of practice operating in ELT teacher research practices by exploring three levels of practice: (1) at CamTESOL; (2) at the IFL; and (3) among individual ELT professionals at the IFL.

The study has addressed three research questions which will now be revisited in terms of what knowledge and understanding the study has achieved.

Research Question 1: What do Cambodian ELT teachers conceptualise as 'teacher research'?

The thesis has represented views about research by asking relevant Cambodian ELT teachers from a variety of higher education institutions. Phase 1 participants had different views of 'ELT teacher research' in their initial pre-existing conceptualisations of teacher research and discussions about the various research scenarios. At best, a moderate level of agreement was found after extensive discussions and self-reflection about their conceptualisations of teacher research, by virtue of half of the Phase 1 participants agreeing on Borg's (2010) definition as best describing ELT teacher research in the Cambodian ELT context. On the other hand, the remaining half of participants did not share the same views. Thus, there appears to be no consensus on how best to conceptualise research even amongst a small group of ELT professionals. Chapter 5 has provided the detailed findings in relation to Research Question 1.

Research Question 2: What actually counts as research in the context of the CamTESOL conference series?

As stated in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, to respond to Research Question 2, the study sought to reveal three main features of actual research activities undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series. These features comprise (1) teacher research processes; (2) characteristics of teacher research; and (3) the constraints to undertaking research activities. I will now briefly summarise the key findings to these three features (Chapter 6 has provided full detail of these features).

Teacher research processes:

The study depicts the landscape of actual ELT teacher research activities empowered and framed by the CamTESOL conference series. There is clear evidence that the CamTESOL conference series is an engine that drives the research rhythm of much ELT research that is undertaken in Cambodia. In step with this research rhythm many, perhaps even most, Cambodian ELT professionals undertake their research projects in a period of just six months, i.e. beginning with their abstract submission to the annual CamTESOL conference series (in September); undertaking research activities when their abstracts are accepted (in October), and working through to their presentations of the research projects at the conference (in February). The study shows the serious consequences of undertaking research activities following this rhythm: (1) an inappropriate research timeline planned and undertaken by teacher researchers; (2) an inadequate amount of time spent on the research activities; (3) less rigor and robustness in research activities undertaken; and (4) conference presentations that are significantly different from the original research abstracts.

Characteristics of the research activities:

Some specific characteristics of ELT teacher research undertaken in this context are evidenced through careful data analysis and interpretation. The first specific characteristic is the nature of the investigations. All four research projects mostly investigated the student participants' first-order perspectives about learning English in different contexts. These research projects did not require restructuring and reorganising of the teaching in the classroom for the purpose of doing the research. The projects were only surveys of learning experiences of the students across the institution.

Another specific characteristic of the actual research activities was found in the type of conference research abstracts submitted to the CamTESOL conference series. These conference research abstracts were only promissory abstracts and achieved only two moves, i.e. raising research problems or purposes (Move 1) and articulating research methodology (Move 2). Consequently, the actual research activities presented at the conference were

significantly different from what had been stated in the abstracts. Such differences mainly comprise the number of participants needed for the study and the research methods.

In addition, another important feature of the actual research activities is that the research activities were likely inappropriately planned across the research timeline. There were frequently large gaps of time between research activities, and the participants appeared to put in more effort to undertake the research activities only when the conference was drawing near. Importantly, the research activities were likely planned and undertaken without first properly reviewing the relevant literature, which is bound to have an impact on the research quality and to result in weaknesses.

Constraints to undertaking research:

The study reveals that the research projects that were undertaken fell far short of international standards of ELT research. Contributing to these shortcomings were lack of resources (i.e. textbooks and access to online journals), the participants' limited research disciplinary knowledge and skill-sets for undertaking research, and minimal institutional support in terms of time allocation for doing research and research-related technical support. In the sub-case study of undertaking a new classroom research project, the research suffered from a lack of problematisation and conceptualising the research's investigation due partly to an inability to access the relevant literature. In the sub-cases of presenting MA (TESOL) projects and the replication of a Master's thesis, the research mostly surveyed what the students did (i.e. students' first-order perspectives), and, thus, the research lacked rich data sufficient to probe deeply and wield explanatory power. Overall, then, we can see that what has counted as research in terms of projects undertaken for presentation at CamTESOL conferences has been seriously flawed. However, more importantly, we have a much better idea of how and why the research activities have fallen short of western standards for ELT research.

Research Question 3: What is the degree to which Cambodian ELT researchers function as a community of practice?

As stated in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, in examining the existence (or not) of true CoPs in the current practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia, the study sought to explore CoPs in terms of three levels or orders, i.e. macro (CamTESOL); meso (the IFL); and micro (the individual ELT professionals). The study clearly shows that there were no true CoPs operating at CamTESOL nor at the IFL. CamTESOL and the IFL possess the necessary domains, but these two entities lack the concerned members' mutual engagement in and shared practice about undertaking research, which are fundamental characteristics that true CoPs would need. However, the practice of ELT teacher research among the individual ELT teacher researchers (i.e. at a micro level) was almost operationalised as a true CoP. The study indicates that apart from the absence of a CoP coordinator's facilitative and active role in organising various activities, events, and spaces to provide teachers with different kinds of research assistance, the practice at this micro level comprised almost all composite elements that a true CoP would need. Chapter 7 has provided the detailed analysis of the evidence of the existence of CoPs at the three levels.

9.2 EVALUATION OF STUDY

This study is believed to make significant contributions to the professional practices in ELT education in Cambodia as well as in the region and beyond, in terms of its provision of a methodological model; a theoretical framework; and a research quality support framework. I shall now elaborate each of the contributions.

9.2.1 Methodological contributions

The study provides a new methodological model in researching teacher research in language teaching, to be considered for investigating the practices of ELT teacher research from macro and micro perspectives in various contexts.

From a macro perspective, the study highlights an interpretive research paradigm through the use of a focus group discussion to elicit ELT teachers' conceptions of teacher research. For example, the participants' opinions about 'teacher research' were noted from

their initial, pre-existing conceptualisations of 'teacher research', from subsequent discussion of the various research scenarios, and then from the more considered conceptualisations of teacher research involving their selection of a published definition of research.

The use of a focus group discussion for data collection, especially involving the participants making decisions about the various research scenarios adapted from Borg's (2009) research scenarios, contributes to rich data (Carey & Asbury, 2012; Marková et al., 2007; Stewart et al., 2007), and, as a result, yields a better understanding about the participants' typically inconsistent and confused conceptualisations of 'teacher research' and 'research'.

From a micro perspective, the study depicts an ethnographically-informed case study, which comprises four sub-case studies of four research projects undertaken by tertiary ELT teachers in the context of the 2013 CamTESOL conference. This case study, which attempted to follow Watson-Gegeo's (1988) and Duff's (2008) principles of ethnographic research in an ESL context and applied linguistics, employed various ethnographic techniques such as collecting relevant documents, including the participants' conference research abstracts; the PowerPoint slides for presentation of the research papers; the (limited) research diaries; the CamTESOL conference handbooks; the IFL information handbook; and individual interviews, group discussions, and subsequent discussions, in which the participants retrospectively provided their research accounts (Woodside, 2010). Such data collection methods comprising triangulation of sources and methods, provided rich data of actual research activities, and can also be employed in other ELT contexts.

9.2.2 Theoretical contributions

The thesis provides a theoretical framework of definitional characteristics of ELT teacher research (see Figure 5.1) which can be used to reconceptualise ELT teacher research among ELT professionals in order to orientate their research engagement. The reconceptualisation will help inculcate the concept of ELT teacher research in ELT professionals in a way that they will perceive 'ELT teacher research' as a standard research

genre, comprising basic characteristics, and that undertaking research necessarily follows certain research processes across a research timeline (Borg, 2010, 2013; Freeman, 1998).

The study highlights a typological framework of ELT teacher research that can be helpful for orientating teachers' actual research activities in terms of the specific types of teacher research and the investigative perspectives that ELT teacher research has explored (see Figure 6.1).

The study also provides a generic structure of a standard conference research abstract that consists of four 'moves', i.e. research problem or purpose; research method; findings; and conclusion and implications of the research findings (Hyland, 2009; Swales & Feak, 2009). This structure will help teacher researchers propose standard conference abstracts to best represent their research projects.

Moreover, the study provides some significant insights drawn from the constraints that the participants had to face in undertaking their research projects for the 2013 CamTESOL conference. These insights can be transformed into supportive mechanisms, including institutional support in terms of allocating release time for teachers to undertake research (Bai & Hudson, 2011; Borg, 2006; Thornley et al., 2004); and providing access to resources (Bai & Hudson, 2011; Reis-Jorge, 2007); institutional incentive and recognition (Bai & Hudson, 2011; Borg, 2006); and mentoring assistance (Borg, 2006).

9.2.3 Limitations

Despite the contributions of the study mentioned above, the study has to acknowledge some weaknesses, especially those related to carrying out the methodology adopted for the study.

9.2.3.1 Limitations of Phase 1 data collection

The first limitation of Phase 1 data collection was the relatively small focus group, comprising just four participants. The ideal number for this study would have been six, but it proved impossible to organise a time and place that could facilitate a group this large. Thus, the focus group was small, but the data were extended by two individual interviews with

participants who were unable to attend the focus group. A second limitation of Phase 1 data collection can be discerned in the adoption of Borg's (2009) research scenarios (i.e. the first pair part of the scenarios) and the adaptation of the scenarios following Borg's (2010) definition of "teacher research" in language teaching (i.e. the second pair part of the scenarios).

First of all, the main constraint of the first pair part scenarios was the inherent lack of comprehensive and explicit information related to research in some scenarios and the participants' lack of ability in implicitly comprehending the scenarios (Scenarios 2a, 3a, 4a, 7a, 8a, and 9a) and unclear descriptions of research (Scenario 6a). Such scenarios were likely to confuse the participants and prompt them to give unclear opinions about the scenarios.

Furthermore, the adaptation of the research scenarios introduced more complexity in the participants' discussion of the scenarios. The adapted scenarios appeared to have prompted the participants to recall (several) different characteristics of research, which caused greater challenges in comparing the scenarios in the same pairs or across different pairs in the discussion.

Another limitation is related to the participants' own limited experiences of undertaking research. As noted in Chapter 5, Section 2, Phase 1's participants had only undertaken research during their postgraduate degree programs (i.e. Master degrees), and none of them had subsequently undertaken research projects in their own classrooms or institutions. Thus, such limited exposure to and experiences in undertaking actual research activities may have impeded the participants from providing clear opinions about 'teacher research'.

The constraints mentioned above impose limitations of understanding about the participants' conceptualisations of 'teacher research'. Therefore, adjustments to the research scenarios are highly advised if they are to be used for future investigation on ELT professionals' conceptualisations of teacher research.

9.2.3.2 Limitations of Phase 2 data collection

A major constraint of the Phase 2 data collection was the participants' limited use of research diaries, in which the Phase 2's ethnographic case study was meant to be grounded. The diaries were the chief mechanism for me to know how the participants were actually going about undertaking their research on a daily basis. The diaries in which the participants (B1 and B2) recorded their research activities provided insufficient information to be able to ethnographically inform a clear research timeline. Even more limiting was the fact that A1, B3, and B4 did not keep any research diaries, despite agreeing to do so. Such constraints altered the contribution of ethnographically informed data, and so to compensate, retrospectively informed data collection through subsequent discussions was adopted to formulate the participants' research timelines.

Another constraint was the participants' repeated cancelations of the individual interviews that were meant to take place at regular intervals throughout their journey of undertaking research activities. The cancelations arose because the participants were unavailable for interviews that had been pre-scheduled, or because they had not undertaken any research activities and, therefore, had nothing to report in terms of updating their research progress.

The limitations described above draw attention to the difficulties of deploying ethnographically informed case study research to longitudinally investigate ELT teachers' undertaking of research activities. On the one hand, a more workable and facilitative strategy is necessary for collecting research diaries. For example, research diaries' entries might be better scaffolded to encourage and guide participants in setting out their research achievements. Alternatively, participants might prefer to use an audio research diary to record their research activities and send the recordings to researchers on a regular basis (Medina, 2013; Monrouxe, 2009; Plowman & Stevenson, 2012). On the other hand, the limitations suggest adopting a more facilitative framework within which to collect ethnographically informed data in the field of ELT teacher research. Such a facilitative framework could

position other researchers as coordinators as well as mentors to play a facilitative and supportive role in assisting the participants with appropriate planning and guidance to undertake research activities capable of achieving research outcomes of a high standard.

9.3 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The implications of the research findings are discussed in terms of structuring appropriate support for promoting and developing the practices of ELT teacher research in Cambodia. The status quo of Cambodian ELT teacher research is that it is well-intentioned but haphazard and lacking a strong sense of community and the importance of high standards. The study indicates that any attempt to support the development of ELT teacher research in Cambodia should be done in a form of (1) reconceptualising ELT teacher research; and (2) operationalising a productive, practical, workable research framework mechanism.

9.3.1 Reconceptualising ELT teacher research

The study indicates that Cambodian ELT professionals have variable and uncertain views of ELT teacher research. Such unclear views might negatively influence their conceptualisation of research engagement in the practices of ELT teacher research, which, to a great extent, can limit their engagement in undertaking research and have an impact on their actual research activities. Thus, at the early developmental stage, a clear conceptualisation of ELT teacher research is necessary for redirecting Cambodian ELT professionals' engagement in research (Borg, 2009, 2010, 2013). To achieve this reconceptualisation, the definitional characteristics of ELT teacher research, ideally a combination of Freeman's (1998) teacher research cycle and Borg's (2010) basic definition of teacher research in language teaching (see Figure 5.2), should be operationalised widely across the Cambodian ELT setting.

9.3.2 ELT teacher research support mechanism

The study reveals that the macro- and meso-level parties in contemporary Cambodia (i.e. CamTESOL and individual tertiary ELT institutions, as represented by the IFL) have a high demand for Cambodian ELT professionals' research outputs. To fulfill this demand,

Cambodian ELT professionals are continuously encouraged to undertake research, but they are not appropriately supported or guided in the relevant processes and activities. Many Cambodian ELT professionals have begun to be engaged in undertaking research but, being inexperienced researchers, they have undertaken research activities in ways that are well short of international standards. Thus, for Cambodian ELT professionals' research engagement to be properly realised and their actual research activities to be achieved to world standards, an appropriate support mechanism framework must be formulated and operationalised.

In light of the findings of the study, an attempt to promote Cambodian ELT professionals' research engagement in terms of *only* providing research grants, ad hoc research workshops (i.e. those given by CamTESOL and the IFL), an international research mentorship assistance (i.e. the assistance organised by CamTESOL), and publishing their research papers in an internal publication (i.e. in the IFL's in-house journal) has proven to be an insufficient approach for promoting the practices. In fact, Cambodian ELT professionals would not only need incentive support (i.e. research grants) and enrichment in research disciplinary knowledge (i.e. the knowledge provided through ad hoc research workshops or any research methodology courses), but also sound, practical knowledge and skill sets for undertaking research activities, which they can only gain through their actual research engagement with properly guided assistance and mentorship. As S. Moore (2011b) suggests, an effective mentorship assistance for promoting the practices of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia should be operationalised in a way that research activities should be mentored by the more experienced Cambodian ELT teacher researchers rather than by international researchers. In this respect, a CoP framework, as advocated in this study, could be a most productive, facilitative, and workable approach to be considered as an operational mechanism.

A CoP model provides a clear framework which the individual ELT professionals need for undertaking their research activities. First, the model provides a collaborative framework, a key attribute for helping teacher researchers complete their research activities.

Second, with a CoP coordinator's facilitative role, ELT teachers are able to process their research activities along an appropriate research timeline.

This model of a CoP is also anticipated to create a rhythm of research activities that is different from and superior to the rhythm empowered by the CamTESOL conference series. The modeling of the CoP framework operationalises a research rhythm within a one-year research cycle, beginning in September (the month the academic year commences in Cambodia) and working through until finishing in August (a month that allows the lecturers to submit their conference abstracts to the CamTESOL conference series, whose submission deadline is in September). This research rhythm will give the lecturers sufficient time to thoroughly plan and undertake their research activities and enable them to be well-prepared for and confident in presenting their research papers. This modeling will also expand its scope in a subsequent year (i.e. Cycle 2), in which the Cycle 1 CoP's members become core members, and work with as well as provide mentorship assistance to newcomers. See Chapter 8 for more details of this proposed modeling of a CoP framework.

This modeling of a CoP framework, if successfully operationalised, will create an ELT teacher-research community of practice in which both core members and newcomers are mutually engaged in undertaking research, learning to do research from each other and from other external members. Thus, for a life-long benefit, this modeling will foster a culture of ELT teacher research, by which individual ELT professionals are actively engaged in improving teaching practices by undertaking research in their own classrooms (Freeman, 1998; Freeman & Johnson, 1998a).

9.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

The study suggests a number of areas that may be useful for future investigations on ELT teacher research practices in Cambodia as well as in the Southeast Asian region and in other developing countries worldwide.

First, it would be useful to investigate how Cambodian ELT professionals conceptualise 'research *engagement*'. As Borg (2013) suggests, it would be important to understand what ELT professionals mean when they state they are 'research engaged'. Such investigations will supplement our understanding about their conceptualisations of 'teacher research'.

Second, it would also be useful to investigate how Cambodian ELT directors, managers, and administrators conceptualise 'teacher research'. As operationalising ELT teacher research strongly needs recognition and support from these concerned parties, their understandings about 'teacher research' and 'research engagement' are essential for orientating the practices.

Third, as we now know that a lot of Cambodian ELT professionals, especially those at the IFL, have participated in ELT teacher research at the IFL and the CamTESOL conference series, it would be important to examine why these ELT professionals have adopted ELT teacher research as professional practices and been engaged in undertaking research, what identities they perceive when they are involved in research, and what roles they perceive ELT teacher research plays in ELT professional development.

Fourth, in light of the findings of the study related to Cambodian ELT teachers' actual research activities undertaken in the context of the CamTESOL conference series, any future investigation, if taken in a form of ethnographically informed case studies about actual research activities, might investigate how researchers themselves might play a facilitative role in helping participants (ELT professionals) undertake research activities along the research timeline. However, such researcher participation must not interfere with the integrity of the research nor the researcher's judgment about what they are observing.

Most importantly, for the life-long benefit of professional development in ELT education, (i.e. to create ELT teacher-research communities of practice), a future ethnographically informed case study about ELT teacher research might operationalise the CoP framework proposed in this study, at a particular ELT institution. The modeling

suggested allows opportunities for collaboration of research activities by the more experienced teacher researchers working with the novice teacher researchers, as well as for learning to undertake research to improve their teaching practices. It will then increase ELT professionals' engagement in research.

9.5 CONCLUSION

9.5.1 Chapter conclusion

This concluding chapter has summarised the key findings of the thesis. These can be understood in terms of four overarching themes in response to the main research questions: (1) Cambodian ELT professionals' conceptions of 'teacher research'; (2) what actually counts as research undertaken by Cambodian ELT professionals in the context of the CamTESOL conference series; (3) the existence (or not) of true communities of practice at the three levels of practice of ELT teacher research; and (4) the potential of a modeling of a community of practice framework for improving the practices of ELT teacher research in contemporary Cambodia. It has also re-considered the significance of the study in terms of methodological, theoretical, and research quality support frameworks. It has then reflected on the limitations of the study, mainly those related to the methodological frameworks adopted for both phases of data collection. The chapter has also reaffirmed the implications of the study and suggests some potential research areas for future investigations on ELT teacher research in Cambodia as well as in the region and beyond.

9.5.2 Thesis conclusion

This PhD study has revealed that despite the busy on-going activities of ELT teacher researchers in contemporary Cambodia, their practices have been hindered by a number of serious constraining factors: (1) Cambodian ELT professionals' unclear and confused conceptualisations of 'teacher research' and 'research'; (2) unrealistically and poorly-planned actual research activities across the research timeline; (3) research activities undertaken with a

significant lack of rigor and robustness; and (4) shortcomings in research quality (i.e. as a result of a lack of resources available for conceptualising the research's domain; teachers' lack of sound research knowledge, skills, experiences of doing research; and a lack of a time allocation for teachers to undertake research).

The study has highlighted the need to attend to reconceptualising 'ELT teacher research' if, as is claimed, the ultimate aim of tertiary ELT institutions and CamTESOL concerning research is to promote Cambodian ELT professionals' engagement in research. This can happen by adopting an appropriate, productive, workable, and facilitative operational community of practice framework (Wenger, 1998, 2000, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002) to better develop Cambodian ELT professionals' actual research activities and to achieve a high standard of research quality.

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Appendices

Appendix 4.1

Focus group prompts

Part 1: Participants' background in research

Task: *The participants share their information about research background in the group and this task should take around **10** minutes.*

1) Do you have any research background?
2) If yes, describe your research experience and engagement, both as a student in your undergraduate or postgraduate degree program and as a teacher in your workplace.
3) What challenges have you encountered while you're doing research?

Part 2: Participants' conceptions of teacher research

Task 1: Eliciting a definition of teacher research

The participants work individually in order to define the term "teacher research" in their own words and list relevant characteristics of teacher research. This task will take around 7 – 10 minutes. Below are sample questions for task 1.

1) Could you provide a definition of "teacher research" in your own words?

2) List characteristics of "teacher research" you think might best describe "teacher research" in Cambodian context.

Once this task has been completed, the definitions should be collected by the researcher so they are not altered later by the participant. The idea is to capture the thinking about research prior to the focus group impact on thoughts and ideas about it.

Task 2: Research scenarios

The participants read each scenario of the pairs below and decide whether it is an example of teacher research. They share their responses with the group and give reason(s) to support their views. The task should take around 45 minutes.

Scenario 1a: "A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful."

1b: "A teacher <u>at IFL</u> noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. <u>She discussed these notes with her colleagues and learned a new teaching technique.</u> She tried this new technique in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful. <u>She practiced it in several lessons and realised that it worked effectively.</u> <u>She started to write up a paper to publish in a local ELT journal.</u>"

Scenario 2a: A teacher read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video-recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He analysed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

2b: A teacher at IFL read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video-recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He compared the learners' written work produced before and after his experiment involving this new approach. He asked the learners to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the new approach. He analysed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

Scenario 3a: A teacher was doing an MA course. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching then wrote an essay of 6000 words in which she discussed the main points in those readings.

3b: A teacher was doing an MA course at IFL. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching. She discussed the main points in those readings and identified one effective grammar teaching and learning method. She then applied it in her class over a period of four weeks. She collected and analysed her students' learning outcomes before and after the application of the method, and feedback from her students. She wrote an essay of 6000 words on this finding and sent it to a journal for publication.

Scenario 4a: A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyse the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

4b: A lecturer at IFL invited 6 teachers, each of whom was selected from one of six respected tertiary ELT institutions in Cambodia for a group discussion on the use of computers in language teaching. The discussion was audio-recorded and, the data were analysed and interpreted. He wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

Scenario 5a: Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.

5b: Two teachers at IFL were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and concluded they over-controlled their classes. They both decided to modify their controlling behaviors.

Scenario 6a: To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching.

6b: To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a lecturer at IFL applied them in her two classes over a period of eight weeks. Then, she selected representatives from each class for two focus-group discussions about the methods. Each group consisted of 6 students, 3 from each class. She recorded the discussions and analysed the data and realised a better method. She decided to use it in her own teaching.

Scenario 7a: A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education.

7b: A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a paper which he submitted to an educational journal.

Scenario 8a: Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

8b: Mid-way through a course, a teacher at IFL spent half an hour talking with his students in order to elicit some feedback on his teaching. He noted what the students shared and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Scenario 9a: A teacher trainer asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal.

9b: A teacher trainer at IFL asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments, the trainer decided to investigate the trainees' ideas. She administered a questionnaire survey in her class, and analysed the data statistically. She presented the results at an ELT conference.

Scenario 10a: The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, then presented the results at a staff meeting.

10b: The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She selected eight representatives of the teachers and invited them for discussion. She studied the recorded discussion and used the information to decide what she should do with the new course book.

Task 3: Choosing a definition of "teacher research"

The participants individually select ONE of the definitions given in the list below, which they think BEST describes the term "teacher research". This task should take around 5 - 10 minutes. The participants are given these tasks in writing to read.

A list of definitions

1) "Teacher research" is an inquiry, in which, on a daily basis, teachers design and implement a plan of action, observe and analyze outcomes, and modify plans to better meet the needs of students.

2) "Teacher research" can be described in this way: "Classroom practitioners at any level, from pre-school to tertiary, who are involved individually or collaboratively in self-motivated and self-generated systematic and informed inquiry undertaken with a view to enhancing their vocation as professional educators."

3) "Teacher research" is a systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and education policy more broadly.

4) "Teacher research" is an inquiry that is intentional, systematic, public, voluntary, ethical, and contextual.

5) "Teacher research" is a systematic study undertaken in order to assess the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique, method, approach or material practiced within a classroom, a particular programme or set of events in an educational institution over a period of time.

Part 3: Participants' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes to current ELT research practice

*The participants discuss the following questions in the group and share their opinions. These questions will be presented orally by the researcher. This activity should take around **10 – 15** minutes.*

1) What are your perceptions about current ELT research practice in your institution/university and in Cambodia as a whole?
2) Is ELT research and practice necessary? If so, how is it necessary?

Part 4: Participants' perception of communities of practice of ELT teacher researchers

*The participants discuss the following questions in the group. The task will take around **15** minutes to complete. These questions will be presented orally by the presenter.*

1) Do you think there is any 'community of practice' of teacher researchers within your institute or elsewhere in Cambodia?

2) If there is, describe the 'community of practice' of Cambodian English teacher researchers.

3) Do you think the community of practice of Cambodian English teacher researchers you have described fulfill the basic characteristics as defined by

Wenger (1998) such as members' mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoires?

Part 5: Participants' future plan for ELT research

*The participants discuss the following questions in the group and share their opinions. These questions will be presented orally by the researcher. This activity should take around **10** minutes.*

1) Will you participate in ELT research activities in your institution/university in the future?
   If yes, what research paradigms, and methods would you use?
   What purpose(s) of participation in ELT teacher research activities would you have?
   If not, give reasons.
2) What suggestions would you make for the improvement of ELT teacher research in Cambodia?

(END OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)

Appendix 4.2

Ethics Approval

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

CHAN NARITH KEUK <chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: Ethics Application Ref: 5201100916D - Final Approval (Sub to Con)

2 messages

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> Tue, Nov 29, 2011 at 11:22 AM
To: Dr Stephen Moore <stephen.moore@mq.edu.au>
Cc: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au

Dear Dr Moore,

Re: Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia

The above application was reviewed by The Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee. The Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee wishes to thank you for your well-written application. Approval of this application has been granted and you may now proceed with your research.

This approval is subject to the following condition:

1. Please forward the permission letters of universities when they become available.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Stephen Moore - Chief Investigator/Supervisor
Mr Chan Narith Keuk - Co- Investigator

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1st December 2012.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements

are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Peter Roger
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

****

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

Appendix 4.3

Cambodian Tertiary ELT Institutions' Permission

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ Royal University of Phnom Penh

ក្រុមជំនួយភាសាអង់គ្លេស English Language Support Unit

1 November, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to approve that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, currently a PhD research student at the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, is permitted to collect data for his research project entitled "In Search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia" from the English Language Support Unit, Royal University of Phnom Penh provided that he complies with all ethics regulations required and issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, Macquarie University.

It should also be advised that there is no similar Ethics requirement in Cambodia or at the English Language Support Unit. I trust that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, the student researcher, has thorough and extensive knowledge of current and past cultural sensitivities to conduct his research.

It is Mr. Chan Narith keuk's responsibility to obtain consent from his target participants for data collection for his project.

Yours sincerely,

P. Somaly

Ms. Somaly Pan

Program Coordinator

English Language Support Unit

Royal University of Phnom Penh

Room 113A, Russian Fed. Blvd., Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Phone: (855) 23 880 772 Email: elsu@rupp.edu.kh

ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
Kingdom of Cambodia
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ
Nation Religion King

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យ ប្រៃលម្អាយ
Build Bright University
លេខ: 0869/12 ស.ប.ប

To whom it may concern:

I, Dean of the Faculty of Science of Education and Languages at Build Bright University, approve Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, currently a PhD research student at the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia to collect data for his research project entitled "In search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia." From the Faculty of Science of Education and Languages at Build Bright University, Cambodia provided that he complies with all ethics regulations required and issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, Macquarie University.

It should also be advised that there is no similar Ethics requirement in Cambodia or at Build Bright University. I trust that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, the student research, has thorough and extensive knowledge of current and past cultural sensitivities to conduct his research.

It is Mr. Chan Narith Keuk's responsibility to obtain consent from his target participants for data collection for his project.

Sincerely Yours,

Mr Ke Chhumpanha,

Dean of the Faculty of Science of Education and Languages

Build Bright University

- *BBU I* : Grey Building, Blvd. Sothearos, Near Samdech Hun Sen Park, Cambodia
- *BBU II* : #49, Corner of St.205-356 Sangkat Toul Svay Prey II, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- *BBU III* : #28, St.184 or 200, Sangkat Phsar Thmey III, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- *BBU IV* : BBU, Along the road from Phsar Krom to Wat Chork, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia
- *BBU V* : Sangkat 4, Khan Mitapheap, Opposite Chamkarchek hospital, Sihanouk Ville
- *BBU VI* : Phum 5, Khum Labansiek, Rattanakiri Province, Cambodia
- *BBU VII* : Phum Chamkar Samroang 2, Khum Chamkar Samroang, Battambang District, Battambang Province, Cambodia
- *BBU VIII* : Sok Leap Building, Phum 1, Khum Rokarknung, Takeo Province, Cambodia
- *BBU IX* : Phum/Khum O Ambel, Serisophoan District, Banteaymeanchey Province, Cambodia

Tel: 023 987 700 / 721 901 / 991 636, 063 963 300, 034 934 024, 075 974 064, 053 393 975, 032 931 031, 054 958 300 *Fax: (855-23) 987 900* *E-mail: info@bbu.edu.kh* *Web: http://www.bbu.edu.kh*

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Nation Religion King

PHNOM PENH INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

N° : 009/11 P.P.I.U

November 07, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to approve that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, currently a PhD research student at the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, is permitted to collect data for his research project entitled "In Search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia." from **the Faculty of Education (English Department) of the Phnom Penh International University (PPIU)** provided that he complies with all ethics regulations required and issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, Macquarie University.

It should also be advised that there is no similar Ethics requirement in Cambodia or at the **PPIU**. I trust that Mr Chan Narith Keuk, the student researcher, has thorough and extensive knowledge of current and past cultural sensitivities to conduct his research.

It is Mr. Chan Narith Keuk's responsibility to obtain consent from his target participants for data collection for his project.

Yours sincerely,

Kea Leaph
Vice Dean and Acting Dean,
Faculty of Education,
Phnom Penh International University (PPIU)

Address : Building 36, Street 169, Sangkat Veal Vong, Khan 7 Makara, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Tel : (885) 23 986 432, 23 999 906, 23 999 908 Fax : (855) 23 999 905
E-mail : info@ppiu.edu.kh; Website : http://www.ppiu.edu.kh

Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia

Commitment to Excellence

December 12, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is to confirm that **Mr. Keuk Chan Narith**, currently a doctoral student of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, is permitted to collect data for his doctoral research study entitled "In Search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia" at the Faculty of Education, the Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia.

It is expected that **Mr. Keuk** be fully aware of and responsibly observe professional ethics of research as required by Macquarie University. At the Faculty of Education, the Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia, where there is no similar ethics requirement, **Mr. Keuk** should have a thorough understanding of the past and current cultural sensitivities of the institution in particular and those of the country in general.

Therefore, it is **Mr. Keuk**'s responsibility to obtain consent from his prospective respondents.

Sok Uttara, PhD
Associate Dean and Professor
Faculty of Education
Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia

❑ Main Campus: No 92-94, Maha Vithei Samdech Sothearos, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Satellite Campuses: ❑ No 6 & 55, Vithei Samdech Pann ❑ No 144-184, Maha Vithei Preah Norodom
Tel: (855) 23 990 153; 12 918 789; Fax: (855) 23 218 909 + Email: info@puc.edu.kh + Website: www.puc.edu.kh

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យ កម្ពុជា
University of Cambodia

N: 0420200 9 U.C

Colleges
Arts, Humanities & Linguistics
Education
Law
Public and Business Administration
Public Health
Sciences and Technology
Social Sciences

Institutes
Institute of Research & Advanced Studies
Institute of Technical and Professional Training

Centers
Center for ASEAN & East Asian Studies
Center for International Studies

16th February, 2012

Human Research Ethics Committee,
Macquarie University

re: **Mr Chan Narith Keuk**

The above has informed the University of Cambodia that he is currently a Ph.D. student at the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University, where he is doing a research project on "In search of communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia". To this end, he has asked to interview one teacher at the University of Cambodia's Centre for English Studies.

The University of Cambodia has no objection to his doing so, provided that:

1. he complies with all regulations issued and required by Human Research Ethics Committee of Macquarie University; and
2. he is aware of, and pays due heed to, Cambodian cultural sensitivities in the absence of any formal ethics requirement in Cambodia, including at the University of Cambodia.

It is the responsibility of Mr Chan Narith Keuk to inform his proposed interviewee of the purpose of the interview; to obtain their consent for participation; and to avoid any disruption of teaching activities at the University of Cambodia.

Angus D. Munro (Dr.),
Vice-President (Academic Affairs),
The University of Cambodia

UC main Campus: 143-145 Preah Norodom Blvd., Phnom Penh; ***Mailing Address:*** P. O. Box 116, Phnom Penh 12000, Cambodia; ***Phone & Fax:*** Central Office: (855-23) 993274, Fax: (855-23) 993284, Information: (855-23) 993275, Library: (855-23) 993276; ***E-mail:*** info@uc.edu.kh,

ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ
NATION RELIGION KING

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យ បេស្ទើន
WESTERN UNIVERSITY

23 February, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to approve that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, currently a PhD research student at the Department of Linguistic. Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, is permitted to collect data for his research project entitle "In Search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia." from the Department of English of Western University provided that he complies with all ethics regulations required and issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, Macquarie University.

It should also be advised that there is no similar Ethics requirement in Cambodia or at Western University. I trust that Mr. Chan Narith Keuk, the student researcher, has thorough and extensive knowledge of current and past cultural sensitivities to conduct his research.

It is Mr. Chan Narith Keuk's responsibility to obtain consent from his target participants for data collection for his project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ao Veng
Vice Rector

Address: #15, St. 528 Sangkat Boeungkak I, Khan Toul Kork, Phnom Penh. **Tel:** (855)23 998 233 / (855)12 200 988
Address: #47, St. 173 Sangkat Toul Svay Prey I, Khan Chamkar Morn, Phnom Penh. **Tel:** (855)23 220 093 / (855)23 6 904 309
Address: #171-173, St. Phreah Ang Eng, Kampong Cham Province. (ក្រោយវត្តជីដុះ) **Tel:** (855)42 942 024 / (855)97 66 99990
Website: www.western.edu.kh

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF PHNOM PENH
INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ
វិទ្យាស្ថានភាសាបរទេស
នាយកដ្ឋានភាសាអង់គ្លេស

08 November 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I, the Head of the English Department of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, approve **Mr. Chan Narith Keuk**, currently a PhD research student at the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia to collect data for his research project entitled "In Search of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia." from the Department of English of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia provided that he complies with all ethics regulations required and issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, Macquarie University.

It should also be advised that there is no similar Ethics requirement in Cambodia or at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. I trust that Mr Chan Narith Keuk, the student researcher, has thorough and extensive knowledge of current and past cultural sensitivities to conduct his research.

It is Mr. Chan Narith Keuk's responsibility to obtain consent from his target participants for data collection for his project.

Sincerely Yours

Mr. Tith Mab

Head, Department of English

Institute of Foreign Languages, RUPP

Russian Federation Boulevard, P.O. Box 416, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Tel: 855-23 885 419 Fax: 855-23 884 154, E-mail: ifl@everyday.com.kh
មហាវិថីសហព័ន្ធរុស្សី ប្រអប់សំបុត្រ ៤១៦ ភ្នំពេញ កម្ពុជា ទូរស័ព្ទ: ៨៥៥-២៣ ៨៨៥ ៤១៩ ទូរសារ: ៨៥៥-២៣ ៨៨៤ ១៥៤ អ៊ីមែល : ifl@everyday.com.kh

Appendix 4.4

Phase 1 Expression of Interest

PhD Research Project
'Communities of Practice of ELT Teacher Researchers in Cambodia'

Inviting Expressions of Interest from
Cambodian English Teachers

You are invited to participate in a research project that is exploring the nature of English Language Teaching research practices in Cambodia in general, and in particular, the research practices at one local ELT institution in Phnom Penh.

This project **aims** to: -

- Examine the general ELT research landscape in contemporary ELT education in Cambodia.
- Better understand Cambodian English teachers' conceptions of and beliefs in research which influence the way they are engaged in research.
- Provide characteristics of communities of practice of ELT researchers in Cambodia.

This project is seeking **Cambodian English teachers** who: -

- Have been teaching English at tertiary ELT institutions or university.
- Have been involved in research to some extent.

This project will **involve**: -

- Participating in a focus group discussion up to 120 minutes in duration at a convenient time in February – March, 2012; **or**
- Participating in an individual interview up to 60 minutes in duration at a convenient time in February – March, 2012.

If you participate, you will **receive**: -

- A free lunch at a Restaurant (to be confirmed) and US$15 upon completion of the focus group meeting or individual interview.

If you would like to participate in this project please print your name and contact telephone number (or email address) in the space below, and return your form to the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL).

If you would like some more information, please contact Mr Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at IFL by telephone at (855)12-896568 or by email at mabtith@gmail.com.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____

The Investigator for this project is **Mr. Keuk Chan Narith, a PhD student at the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University, Australia** (chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au).

Appendix 4.5

Phase 1 Information and Consent form

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

07-11-11

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone: +61 (0)4 15738524
Email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Stephen Moore

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr.

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia.

You are invited to participate in a study of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia. The purpose of the study is to explore and investigate the general ELT research landscape in Cambodia. It will focus on how the research practice has operated in one institution and how this practice is interconnected with a broader ELT professional world. It will also focus on Cambodian ELT researchers and teachers' conceptions of and beliefs about ELT research which influence the way they are engaged with and in research. Moreover, the project will examine characteristics of a community of practice of ELT researchers in general, and, in particular, a community of practice of ELT researchers at the Institute of Foreign Languages.

The study is being conducted by Chan Narith Keuk, a student at Macquarie University, Australia (tel.: +61-415738524; email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au). This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Linguistics) under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Moore, Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University (tel: +612-98508742; email: Stephen.Moore@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be invited to join an ethnographic case study, which will be conducted at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) in a period of 6 months in September, 2012 – February, 2013. In this case study, you will participate in conducting your research which you will present in the 9th Annual CamTESOL conference in 2013. You will be required to write an open diary, preferably one entry per week; attend a monthly meeting which will be held among a group of five IFL research-active teachers in around 60 minutes; and join two informal individual interviews, each of which will take around 45 minutes. You will be asked to submit your conference abstract, power point file used for conference presentation, research paper submitted to the CamTESOL conference, diary, and other relevant documents to the investigator. In the monthly meetings, you will discuss various issues that you and the other teachers raise. In the interviews, you will be given some questions as a guide; however, you will be allowed to express your opinions freely. The monthly meetings and interviews will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed. You are free to speak in Khmer or English. You will receive some snacks during each monthly meeting and each interview, a free dinner at the Tonle Basak Restaurant, and a token of a text book on Research Methodology upon completion of the case study.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Chan Narith Keuk, his supervisor, and probably a professional transcriber will have access to the information you provide. If you would like to obtain a copy of key excerpts of your monthly meeting and interview transcripts, please put a tick (✓) in the box below and provide an email address.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of key excerpts of my monthly meetings and informal individual interviews through my email address .

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

If you have any ethical concerns about this research, you may contact Mr. Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Telephone: (855)12 896568.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ ___ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S COPY)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone: +61 (0)4-1573-8524
Email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Stephen Moore

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr.

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia.

You are invited to participate in a study of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia. The purpose of the study is to explore and investigate the general ELT research landscape in Cambodia. It will focus on how research practices operated in one institution and how these practices are interconnected with the broader ELT professional world. It will also focus on Cambodian ELT researchers and teachers' conceptions of and beliefs about ELT research which influence the way they are engaged with and in research. Moreover, the project will examine characteristics of a community of practice of ELT researchers in general, and, in particular, a community of practice of ELT researchers at the Institute of Foreign Languages.

The study is being conducted by Chan Narith Keuk, a student at Macquarie University, Australia (tel.: +61-415738524; email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au). This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Linguistics) under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Moore, Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University (tel: +612-98508742; email: Stephen.Moore@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to talk about your conceptions of and engagement in research in a focus group discussion or an individual interview. The focus group will take about 120 minutes, while the individual interview will take around 60 minutes of your time. The data collection will take place on one day in February – March, 2012 at the Institute of Foreign Languages or at a Restaurant (to be confirmed) during your lunch break. You will be provided some prompts or questions as guides; however, you will be allowed to express your opinions freely. The focus group discussion or individual interviews will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed. You are free to speak in Khmer or English. You will receive a free lunch (before the discussion or interview, or after the first part of discussion or interview) and $15 upon the completion of the focus group or individual interview.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Chan Narith Keuk, his supervisor, and possibly a professional transcriber will have access to the information you provide. If you would like to obtain a copy of key excerpts of your interview transcripts, please put a tick (✓) in the box below and provide an email address.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of key excerpts of my focus group discussion or individual interview. My email address is: _____.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

If you have any ethical concerns about this research, you may contact Mr. Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Telephone: (855)12 896568.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name :_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ ___ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S COPY)

Appendix 4.6

Phase 2 Expression of Interest

PhD Research Project
'Communities of Practice of ELT Teacher Researchers in Cambodia'

Inviting Expressions of Interest from
Cambodian English Teachers

You are invited to participate in a research project that is exploring the nature of English Language Teacher research practices in Cambodia in general, and in particular, the research practices at one local ELT institution in Phnom Penh.

This project **aims** to: -

- Examine the general ELT research landscape in contemporary ELT education in Cambodia.
- Better understand Cambodian English teachers' conceptions of and beliefs in research which influence the way they are engaged in research and how they do research.
- Provide characteristics of communities of practice of ELT researchers in Cambodia.

This project is seeking **Cambodian English teachers** who: -

- Have been teaching English at tertiary ELT institutions or university.
- Have their abstract of the research accepted by the 9th CamTESOL Program Committee.
- Will conduct the research in order to present the results in the 9th CamTESOL conference.

This project will **involve**: -

- Participating in an ethnographic case study up to 6 months in September, 2012 – February, 2013 at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL).
- If you participate in this case study, you will be asked to:-
  - Complete an open diary writing
  - Attend a monthly meeting up to 60 minutes, which is held among 5 researchers
  - Join two informal individual interviews. Each interview will take around 45 minutes. The first interview will be conducted at the beginning of the study, while the second interview will be conducted at the end of the study.
  - Provide your abstract which is accepted by the 9th CamTESOL Program Committee, power point slides or any documents that you will use for presentation at the 9th CamTESOL conference, research paper that you will submit to the conference for publication (if any), and other relevant documents to the investigator of this research project.

If you participate, you will **receive**: -

- A free dinner at the Tonle Basak Restaurant and a token of a text book on Research Methodology upon completion of the case study and some necessary materials.

- Some snacks will be served at each monthly meeting and informal interview.

If you would like to participate in this project please print your name and contact telephone number (or email address) in the space below, and return your form to the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL).

If you would like some more information, please contact Mr Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at IFL by telephone at (855)12-896568 or by email at mabtith@gmail.com or Mr Pich Pheak Tra, Coordinator of Research and Quality Assurance of the ED at pheaktrapich2005@yahoo.ca

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____

(Please return the flyer to pigeonhole **116** in the copy room)

The Investigator for this project is **Mr. Keuk Chan Narith, a PhD student at the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University, Australia** (chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au).

Appendix 4.7

Phase 2 Information and Consent Form

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone: +61 (0)4 15738524
Email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Stephen Moore

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr.

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia.

You are invited to participate in a study of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia. The purpose of the study is to explore and investigate the general ELT research landscape in Cambodia. It will focus on how research practices operate in one institution and how these practices are interconnected with the broader ELT professional world. It will also focus on Cambodian ELT researchers and teachers' conceptions of and beliefs about ELT research which influence the way they are engaged with and in research. Moreover, the project will examine characteristics of a community of practice of ELT researchers in general, and, in particular, a community of practice of ELT researchers at the Institute of Foreign Languages.

The study is being conducted by Chan Narith Keuk, a student at Macquarie University, Australia (tel.: +61-415738524; email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au). This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Linguistics) under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Moore, Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University (tel: +612-98508742; email: Stephen.Moore@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be invited to join an ethnographic case study, which will be conducted at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) for a period of 6 months in September, 2012 – February, 2013. In this case study, you will participate through conducting your research which you will present in the 9th Annual CamTESOL conference in 2013. You will be asked to write an open diary, preferably one entry per week; attend a monthly meeting which will be held among a group of five IFL research-active teachers for around 60 minutes; and join two informal individual interviews, each of which will take around 45 minutes. You will be asked to submit your conference abstract, power point file used for conference presentation, research paper submitted to the CamTESOL conference, diary, and other research relevant documents to the investigator. In the monthly meetings, you will discuss various issues that you and the other teachers raise. In the interviews, you will be given some questions as a guide; however, you will be allowed to express your opinions freely. The monthly meetings and interviews will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed. You are free to speak in Khmer or English. You will receive some snacks during each monthly meeting and each interview, a free dinner at the Tonle Basak Restaurant, and a text book on Research Methodology upon completion of the case study.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Chan Narith Keuk, his supervisor, and possibly a professional transcriber will have access to the information you provide. If you would like to obtain a copy of key excerpts of your monthly meeting and interview transcripts, please put a tick (✓) in the box below and provide an email address.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of key excerpts of my monthly meetings and informal individual interviews. My email address is: _____.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

If you have any ethical concerns about this research, you may contact Mr. Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Telephone: (855)12 896568.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ ___ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S COPY)

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone: +61 (0)4 15738524
Email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Stephen Moore

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr.

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia.

You are invited to participate in a study of Communities of Practice of English Language Teaching Researchers in Cambodia. The purpose of the study is to explore and investigate the general ELT research landscape in Cambodia. It will focus on how research practices operate in one institution and how these practices are interconnected with the broader ELT professional world. It will also focus on Cambodian ELT researchers and teachers' conceptions of and beliefs about ELT research which influence the way they are engaged with and in research. Moreover, the project will examine characteristics of a community of practice of ELT researchers in general, and, in particular, a community of practice of ELT researchers at the Institute of Foreign Languages.

The study is being conducted by Chan Narith Keuk, a student at Macquarie University, Australia (tel.: +61-415738524; email: chan-narith.keuk@students.mq.edu.au). This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Linguistics) under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Moore, Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University (tel: +612-98508742; email: Stephen.Moore@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be invited to join an ethnographic case study, which will be conducted at the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) for a period of 6 months in September, 2012 – February, 2013. In this case study, you will participate through conducting your research which you will present in the 9th Annual CamTESOL conference in 2013. You will be asked to write an open diary, preferably one entry per week; attend a monthly meeting which will be held among a group of five IFL research-active teachers for around 60 minutes; and join two informal individual interviews, each of which will take around 45 minutes. You will be asked to submit your conference abstract, power point file used for conference presentation, research paper submitted to the CamTESOL conference, diary, and other research relevant documents to the investigator. In the monthly meetings, you will discuss various issues that you and the other teachers raise. In the interviews, you will be given some questions as a guide; however, you will be allowed to express your opinions freely. The monthly meetings and interviews will be audio-recorded and will be transcribed. You are free to speak in Khmer or English. You will receive some snacks during each monthly meeting and each interview, a free dinner at the Tonle Basak Restaurant, and a text book on Research Methodology upon completion of the case study.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Chan Narith Keuk, his supervisor, and possibly a professional transcriber will have access to the information you provide. If you would like to obtain a copy of key excerpts of your monthly meeting and interview transcripts, please put a tick (✓) in the box below and provide an email address.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of key excerpts of my monthly meetings and informal individual interviews. My email address is: _____.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

If you have any ethical concerns about this research, you may contact Mr. Tith Mab, Head of the Department of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Telephone: (855)12 896568.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature:_____ ___ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S COPY)

Appendix 4.8

Phase 2 Interview prompts

1. Have you had any experiences in undertaking research as a student and as well as a lecturer?

2. Can you describe your current research project in terms of the context of your research project? For example,
   2.1. when did you begin the project?
   2.2. who were involved in the project?
   2.3. what have you completed?
   2.4. how has your project been managed?

3. When you submitted an abstract to the 2013 CamTESOL conference, was your research project completed?
   3.1. Was there anyone to help you write the abstract?
   3.2. Was there anyone to help check your abstract before you submitted it?

4. Why are you interested in researching the current topic?

5. What are your purposes for undertaking this research and presenting it at the CamTESOL conference?

6. How did you conduct literature review? conceptualise your research framework?

7. What research method did you plan for the research project?
   6.1. How did you recruit the participants? How many participants?
   6.2. How did you collect data?
   6.3. What research instruments did you use?

8. What challenges did you face in undertaking your research project so far?
   Have you found anyone to help you with your difficulty?

Appendix 5.1

Participants' initial standing definitions of language teacher research*

Participants	Initial Standing conceptions	Characteristics
K1	Teachers read additional materials to improve their general knowledge and teaching pedagogy so as to improve students' learning.	• Teachers do peer-teaching, teaching demonstration, peer mentoring, sharing in order to reflect their teaching (Reflection); • Teachers do research for developing materials (Material development); • Teachers do action research to find out practical [methods, techniques]; • Teachers do research to become independent researchers.
K2	As a teacher one should read research journals related to the field he/she is teaching. This is to help improve one's teaching method in the contemporary world since many educational institutions are focusing on research.	• Teachers read journal articles and search on the internet; • Research results will be useful for further applications and help to improve one's own teaching.
K3	Teacher research is a kind of research which is conducted to find out strengths and weaknesses of teachers in their teaching field. So the weaknesses will be improved better.	Teacher research should include: • challenges in their teaching, weaknesses in educational sector, • how much teachers apply what they have learned effectively, and • what the teacher need to improve in their career.
K4	Teacher research might be defined as conducting any research to meet the requirement to be a teacher. Teacher research may also be research about teachers and what they should do being teachers.	• Teacher is engaging with research papers; • Teacher is trying out new methods and adopting changes to old methods in order to meet the needs of community; and • Teacher is finding out teaching and learning background.
K5	Teacher research is research conducted by teachers; Teacher research is research related to teachers or teaching.	• Teacher research is action research. A teacher sees a problem, i.e. low quality teaching, he/she then conducts research in order to find solutions. • It can be conducted in a team in order to have more ideas to share for improvement with classrooms or universities.
K6	It is a study or investigation of how either the existing theories of learning and teaching work in Cambodian school context. It refers to a small scale study conducted in the classroom context as it is mainly involved in learning and teaching.	• Teacher research is classroom action research, • Teacher research is investigation into how children and adults acquire language through different sources; and • Teacher research is language assessments.

* The participants' original written definitions and characteristics of teacher research are edited in order to provide complete sentences. However, the meanings are maintained.

Appendix 5.2

Sample transcript of Phase 1 participants' discussion of research scenarios

Part-2-task-2-discussion-research-scenarios

Lines	Pseu.	Transcript
1	M	ok so moving to the next part er the next task in the same part (1) er
2		(.) we'll we will focus on (.) er research scenarios (1.2) ((sound of
3		dropping something)) ok so in these in these scenarios, you're going
4		to read erm ((sounding of paper flapping)) erm (.) 10 pairs of research
5		scenarios (.) and each pair has two scenarios (.) and (1.9) each
6		scenario in the pair (.) has something different (1) so after you read
7		(1.5) please identify whether (.) the scenario is (.) you you identify
8		whether it is research or it is not research (1) ((sounding of dropping
9		something)). Ok and then we are going to discuss why it is a research
10		and why it's not (.) ok so (.) er I'd like you to scan through the whole
11		er the (.) all scenarios in ten minutes (1.4) we have 10 scenarios so we
12		have twen 20 scenarios altogether 10 pairs I'm sorry (1.6) ((sounding
13		of paper flapping))
14		((the recording was running for the participants to scan the scenarios:
15		00:00:22.6))
16	M	yes you can write make notes on the paper so don't worry about that
17		((moderator reminded the participants))
18		((the recording was running : 00:07:43.2. sometimes sounds of paper
19		flapping))
20	M	yes another 5 minutes ((moderator reminded the participants)) er (3.6)
21		to finish reading
22		((the recording was running : 00:05:13.6))
23	M	Ok (3.1) alright so we start (.) er sharing (.) er (1) we start to share our
24		ideas (.) your opinions (1) whether the (.) the scenarios (1) are
25		research or not (1.1) ok scenario 1a (.) and scenario 1b (.) so who
26		starts first? (7) ((sound of soft laughing)) remember (.) there are no
27		wrong answers right ((laughing)) ok ((laughing)) alright
28	K4	[ok let me start first again] (.) I am 4K
29		(.) (.8) er I think the scenario (.) 1a is er (1) one type of researches it is
30		(.8) er a teacher research (.) in a classroom (.7) because the teacher
31	M	hmhm
32	K4	(.8) er (.8) you know try to find out (1) ok (.) about her lessons (1) by
33		(1.1) er making notes (.) in her diary (.) and then she (.) she adapted
34	M	hmhm
35	K4	change to (.) ok her lessons when she finds out that her lessons (.) er
36		her lessons didn't work well (2.6) and scenario (.) 1b (.) is also a
37		research [] er (.) this (.8) the the scenario 1b tells us that
38	M	[ok (1) hmhm (.)]
39	K4	(1) er the teacher at IFL there (.6) is en (.) engaged (.7) in the research
40		[(1.1)] er (.) both in the research (.7) and (.) with the research [(1.4)]
41	M	[Hmhm] [ok]
42	K4	she (.) used the class (1) ok that er (1.2) she (.) she found (1.3) i mean
43		her lessons (1) didn't work well (1) and then she took notes she
44		discussed with her colleagues ok (1.8) and she tries to find new

		techniques (.) ok in her (.) in the next lesson (2.6) and then finally she
		started to write up a paper to to publish in a local ELT journal (.8) so
		it means that she (.) was (.) engaged (.) in the research [(2.7)]
	M	[ok]
	K4	That's all for scenario 1.
	M	[alright] ok thank you very much you have any different idea you can
		(.) [xxx] yes (.)
	K2	I'm K2 I think (1) scenario 1b is more systematic [(2.)] er (.) you know
	M	[ok]
	K2	because here the teacher have to (1) also have to write er a research
		paper (.7) to you know (.) the research paper to publish (.) (M: erh) in
		a local ELT journal (.) not just to (.) er (1.8) er write in a diary [(1.6)]
	M	[yeah]
	K2	and try some different techniques [(.)] so I think er1b is more
	M	[erh]
	K2	systematic (.)
		and then in terms of (1) the identification whether or not
	M	(.) it is research so 1b according to your explanation is more research
		[yes]
	K2	[yes] it's more it's more research (1.6)
		ok (.8) and 1a is less research
	M	[yes]
	K2	(.8) but it's kind of (.)
	M	yes kind of research too because she tried different
	K2	techniques (.) until come up with er the (.) the best techniques [xxx]
	M	[so if]
		you are asked to drop one (.) to to to (.8) choose one which is (.)
		research (1) which one you would choose?
	K2	choose b er b
	M	ok (2.8)
	K3	ok I'm K3 er for me I think like him "b" is er (.) a kind of research
		and (.) for "a" i think it just (.) er an observation [(.)] classroom
	M	[hmhm]
	K3	observation (.) related to the techniques (1.2) which the teacher is
		teaching (1) er (.) because er in "b" (1) yes (.) has (.8) "b" has a
		different process (.) and (.) before (.) they before the teacher (.7) er (.)
		writes er start writing (.) er (1.2) the paper to publish in (.) a local (.)
		E er ELT journal (1) er (.) the teacher need to conduct research related
		to teaching (.) and then have er discussions with their colleagues er
		with her colleagues (.9) and then learn new thing (.) techniques (.)
		after that (.) use er what they (.) have discussed (.8) to apply (1) in the
		classroom and then (.) er (.) what they have discussed (.) and they
		applied effectively (.) Finally they start writing (.) for the journal (1.2)
		That's all.
	M	[hmhm] ok thank you very much
	K1	ok I'm K1. I want to share a little bit about er (.7) scenario 1 (.) a and
		b. (.8) 1a like previous er er K1 (.) ((addressing himself)) 2 3 and 4
		said (.) it's about our own observation (.) ((clearing his throat)) our
		own (.) i mean reflection in the classroom we reflect what (1.1) what
		we should improve (.) and then we do our own er i mean (1) i mean
		decision [(.)] and then for "b" we (.) we have to discuss with (.) er
	M	[hmhm]
	K1	other colleagues so we have more samples we have more (.) i mean
		broader solutions (.) for not only for a class maybe for (.) the whole

99		school (.) and that's why she can come up with er (.) a paper to the
100		ELT journal (.) and then they will discuss more I think maybe the (.)
101		the ELT journal er manager or he can check (.) and then follow up
102		later [(.)] so it becomes a fully research full research (.)
103	M	[ok] alright (.8) just
104		bear just remind you that (.) there are no wrong answers so (.) feel
105		free (.) to express (1) because these these are just scenarios (.7) ok (.7)
106		now we move to scenario "b" "a" er 2 (1) 2a and "b" (.) and who
107		would like to begin first? (10.4)
108	K4	I may begin again
109	M	ok (sound of all laughing) so no worries yes no worries start (1)
110	K4	ok I am K4 again [(.)] er in er scenario 2one and 2b i think (.) er it's
111	M	[ok]
112	K4	similar to scenario (.) 1a and 1b [(1.4)] er (2.8) in scenario 2a (2.4) if
113	M	[ok]
114	K4	er (1) I'm not mistaken it it is (.) it is part of research again ok (1.6)
115	M	[hmhm]
116	K4	although it's not detailed (1.4) but it touch ok part of the research (2)
117		and the scenario 2b (.) is is more (1) you know detailed (1) and then
118		like (.) er more systematic like (.) er (1) K2 said (.) because the (.) the
119		teacher (1.6) er (.7) spent time reading new approach ok so (1.3) she
120		or he was engaged with the research and (.) later on (.7) er (.) created
121		a questionnaire (.8) ok ask students to complete the questionnaires
122		(1.2) and analyzed the informations (1.8) ok (.) and finally presented
123		(.) the information to (.) all his colleagues (1) at the staff meeting
124		(1.2) er the two scenarios (1.1) er are (.7) not like (.) detailed research
125		actually (.) they they are (.8) parts (.) of research I I still say that they
126		are researches ok scenario 1 or 2 (.)
127	M	er 2a and 2b (.)
128	K4	Oh I'm sorry er scenario 2a and 2b
129	M	yeap [(1.2)] so finally you (.) you think they are research [(.)] yea ok
130	K4	[ok] [they are research]
131	M	(1.1) though (2.1) not much detailed (.) detail in one or the other ok]
132	K4	[much detailed]
133		number one is just one part of the research (.) and number 2 is also
134		research but not really detailed (2.4)
135	M	[ok] alright (.) thank you (.) so (.)
136	K2	I I may ((giggling and laughing)) er K2. I think so. I think (.) yes
137		scene (.) scenario er 2a (.) and 2b are similar to er (.7) er scenario 1a
138		and 1b (.8) yes er (.8) er scenario 2b is more [(1.3)] a research [(.)]
139	M	[ok] [ok]
140	K2	Yes, more but but I'm not saying that er (.) 2a is not a research it's
141		[also a research too] er (2.1) and I like 2b because er I look at the
142	M	[ok yeap]
143	K2	experiment you know his experiment is to compare (.8) er (.) the the
144		learners' written work produced er (.) before and after [(1.6)] and
145	M	[hmhm ok]
146	K2	compare comparison [(.)] this is what I like
147	M	[alright] yes (1.1) thank you very
148		much and you have any other (.) different (.) idea you want to add
149		(4.8) or if not we move ahead no worries (2.1) if you all agree that (.)
150		er (.) you have the same opinions we can move to the next one (.)
151	K3	yes I'm (.) K3 I think (1.3) my idea is similar to [K4] yes (.7) but for
152	M	[K4 ok]

K3 yes actually er scenari scenaro (.) 2 (.) b is more detailed than "a" (.) but er (.) the purpose is (.) actually the same [purposes] (.) but er (.) er
M [the same purpose yes]
K3 a er a is not more detailed (.) like "b" (.) er than "b" (1.) so yes (1.4)
M [ok]
still both of them are research
K3 yes
M ok ((giggling)) (1) alright (1.4) K1 you any different (.7) or the same then we move to (.) er scenario (.) three (1)
K1 er I'm K1. I have similar idea like (.) 2 (.) 2a er we have (1) the survey like in the classroom and then we have report like report to the staff (.) meeting (1) so I still say (.) er a report (.) yes can still a report but not really complete research (1) But for "b" we have more we have (1) like we have (.7) er formative and summative assessment like before after the (.) i mean previous before and after er (.) written feedback, right yes (.) and then we have questionnaire we have
M [hm]
K1 er (1.1) how to analyze the data (.7) but (.) they haven't (.9) written up the whole paper yet [(.9)] just er (.) I mean just something practical
M [er]
K1 not in the paper [(.)] I think that's er almost research (.) complete
M [ok yes]
K1 research paper [(1.6)] this is what I think (.)
M [hmhm] so (.) both of them (1.7) research (.) but not (.) because (.) you said that because (.8) they haven’t written up the paper [(.)] so (.) they are not complete the
K1 [yes]
M research (.7)
K1 they are not really systematic [(.)] not formal
M [ok] oh (1) al-right thank you very much so we go to scenario three (.8) 3a and 3b (4.5) yes as I try to er ((long utterance)) (.) er repeat (.) no there are no wrong answer (.) yes (1)
K3 Ok I’m K3 er (.) I think er (1) ((sound of paper flapping)) b is a (.) scenario b (.) is a kind of research (.)
M yes 3
K2 [3b]
K3 yes 3b
M yes (1)
K3 er (.) because er (1.6) the teacher was doing an MA course at IFL [(.)] yes (.8)
M [hm]
K3 actually (.8) er (1) she also discussed er the main point related to reading and identify (.) what (.) er one effective grammar teaching and learning method (.) er after the discussion (.) she also (.) applied (1.3) er (.) in the class (1.4) yes (.) about 4 weeks (.8) and then she also collected the data and analyze (.8) the outcome (.) of (1.6) her research (2.5) after that (.) er (1.4) she started writing (.7) yes she started writing the journal [(2)] for (.) publication. That (.8) 's all.
M [hmhm] yeap so
K3 so b is (.) er a research
M yes 3b is a research while 3a is not
K3 yes

M you have different (.) similar (2)
K4 different er (.) I am K4 er (.) in scenario (.) 3a I think this is this is
M [ok]
K4 a research (.8) the teacher (1) was engaged with research (.) because er (1.2) er she read (1) many books many articles (1.1) ok and wrote (1) an essay of (.) 6000 words (.) so it means that she was engaged with research and (.) this is a teacher research because er she (.) she read (.) different articles and books (.) er (.) to to find out the main points before writing (1) ok an essay [(3)] er (.7) unlike 3b (1.8)
M [hmhm]
K4 er (.) this is this is er (.) real research it is more detailed (.7) because the writer (.) ok (.) er (.) the teacher was (.) first of all engaged (.) with (.7) the research and later on she was engaged in the research (.) finally she published (1) a a journal (1.2) ok (2) she wrote (.) an essay of 6000 words (1) of her findings (.) and (.) finally (.) she sent it to a journal for publication (1) so er a real research needs publications [(.)]
M [hmhm]
K4 but still scenario 1 er 3a is a research [(1.2)] this is what I think
M [hmhm]
K4 (.) that's all.
M thank you very much (1.3) ((xxx)) ((giggling))
K1 er I'm K1 (.) I want to share about er scenario (.) 3a and b (.9) er from my experience (.) 3a is also research (.8) we call this er library research because we do most of the work (.) I mean reading a lot in the (.) documents in the library only they don't need to go to the
M
K1 [ok]
field (.) they do in the library (.) and they can come up with their own findings or yes summary yes (.7) I think that that the main focus we have the finding (.8) from the library (.) he read many books and then he come up (.) with his own assumption (.) or own finding that's (.) about the research (.7) but in the library only (1) he did not have interview observation and so on (1) like previous (.) like (.) 1a 1b we have we have we observation in a classroom (.) in Cambodian context I think even observation we also call research but I think sometimes
M it's not really a research and for 3b I support it's real it's a real
K1 [ok]
M research (.8) 3b (.) thank you
K2 [alright] yes thank you (.) er K2 I'm er K2 I I ((sound of laughing)) I think yea b is er (.) is a real research (1.3) because (.) you know because er (1.5) you know because she applied (1.2) in the class (.) for (.) she applied this
M method (.) in the class [(.)] and then she (1) and then finally she
K2 [hm]
came er she came she came up with er one effective grammar way of
M teaching [(.)] but for er in 3a yes I agree with K1 and K4 it's a
K2 [ok]
research but (1.2) it's not er (.) this research is not put into experiment put into (.) er put into yes practice (xxx)
M [ok] [so would] you have different name for that? (1) as you you say (.) it's research but not put into experiment so you may have a different term (.) to describe that kind of research (.)
K2 it's about action research

M oh action research (.7) ok (.7) or sometimes like the previous one (.) you say not real research [(1.4)] alright [(.)]
K2 [yes] [yes]
M and then because scenario b (1) the (.) the thing done in scen scenario b (.) is put into (.) experiment
K2 yes
M and then it becomes real research (.) alright? (.7)
K2 yes
M ok thank you very much (.) well we go to scenario 4 (.) er 4a and 4b (2) ((sound of paper flapping)) er (1) yes (11.2) ((the participants were reading the scenario)) alright
K4 I think er I am K4. I think er scenario 4a (1.1) is er is research again just part of the research because er (1) I think a research need to be in
M [ok alright]
K4 (.) like (.) in (.) detail system (.) so how we start (.) and then more to the end of research (.) but in scenario 4a (.) er the the lecturer on only created the questionnaire and gave the questionnaire to (.7) er the (1) ok (.) 500 teachers ok (1.7) and later on (.) er she got the the statistics (.8) and used (.) the statistics to analyze (1.8) and finally wrote an article (.) so (.) there only three steps there I can see (.8) question-naires (.) analyze the (.) statistics and wrote an article (1.1) ok it is a research (.) but not very detailed again (.7) and scenario 4b (.9) er
M [hm]
K4 (1.5) the the the teacher ok (1) has er clearer (1) steps (1) for (1.2) his or her (.) research (1.3) so (1.5) in scenario 4b the teacher was more engaged in the research (.) ok ((xxx)) started with (.) er (.9) er assem assembling (.8) er six teachers (1.3) and (1.5) ok (1) er discussion have a group discussion with the teachers (1) and use er the the information from the video recording [(.)] er to to analyze and
M [hmhm]
K4 interpret (1) ok (.) and finally wrote an article (.8) and (.7) ok (1.1) yes and wrote an article about the work in the academic journal (2.3) it it so they they both are researches
M ok (.) hmhm (.) thank you very much (1) alright (.) you have any different view (.) ((laughing)) (1)
K4 I think that ((xxx)) scenario 4's (.) just somehow similar to the previous scenarios ((laughing)) (xxx)
Group [yes]
M yes they they (.) they're similar in (.)
K3 similar
M yes
K4 except the except the steps you know the way (.) the research is er
K2 [yes xxx]
K4 crea er have been conducted [(.)] like whether it is er (.) the teacher
M [ok]
K4 was engaged with the research or engaged (.) in the research ok (.) er just that (.8) and teacher research or (.) or what (.) ok other research is (.) this what I think
M alright (.)
K3 ok I'm K3 I would like to add something (.7) yes actually (.) er (.) what he mentioned (.) er is similar to mine (1) yes I think *4*a and *4*b are (1) both of them are research (.8) but er 4 4a (.7) it is a kind of research but focus on like (.) er one er 500 teachers (.) for (.)

assembling (1) and (.) 4b (.) just like (.) focus group (.) like like this [(.)]
K2 [like
what we are doing]
K3 mean select er er (.) er (.) six or seven teachers from (.) different er
universities (.) er and then (.9) er (.9) join together and discuss related
to (1.3) er the topic (1.4) er (.7) so actually I think er (.) both of them
are research but er different way
M [hmhm] yeh yeh (.8) ok (1.1) thank you (1.2)
K2 yes ((laughing)) I'm K2 I (.) I think (.9) yes (.) I think so like K4 and
K3 (1) yes er er 4b (.) is what we are doing now ((all-laughing)) so
it's more systematic ((low voice)) (.)
M alright er (1) K1 do you have any different you add or else we move
to 5a (.) 5b (1.2) ok would you like to start first scenario 5a and 5b?
K1 [(xxxx)]
(1.3) er yes I will try (.) er for scenario (.9) 5a (1) er this one er (.7)
the survey they (1.8) the report in the newsletter 'national news' ((K1
was reading the phrase in the scenario)) yes I think it's er (1) a
newslet newsletter (.) it's not really research (.)
M ok (2.5) ((sound of drop
of something))
K1 just a report in a newsletter [(1.8)] even though they wrote er (.) er
M [hmhm]
K1 article **we** call it essay article not really research article a short article
yes (.) just a normal article (.) in a newspaper a newsletter (1) and (.)
for 5b (1.4) I think they are similar scenario (1.3) they observed the
class for three (.) months (5.8) er yes (.) ((clearing his throat)) so they
do the survey and then (.) they checked with the control (.) control
group (1.8) and then they made change I mean from the finding (.)
they modified their behavior (.) control their behavior [(1)] think this
this one er similar to the previous one like (.7) er previous scenario
M [hm]
K1 like (1) er 1a 1b like that (1.4) they observed and then they made
change like (1.8) their own research (.) still research but (.) action
research for his own class (.9) (it')s not really er a broad one (1.5) I
mean (1) he (.) he (1) he engaged in the research but (.) to some
extent (1) not really broad (1.5)
M ok
K1 yes that's all for me (2.3)
M so (.8) I I'd like to hear (1.1) whether you you consider these two
scenarios are research (1.6)
K1 er the first one I think it's er (.) just a survey [(.)] in a newsletter (.8)
M [ok]
K1 a report survey or report but (.8) 5b I think is a research (1.6) [more]
M [ok]
K1 about a research (1.2)
M alright any (.) different ideas (1)
K2 er I'm K2 I think (.) both are research (.)
M both are research (1.2)
K2 er (.8) but er but (.) 5a is (.) er (1.7) more (.) I think is more public er
(1.3) because you er (.) this is what you (.) you wrote the article yes
you wrote the article (.7) they learned for the newsletter (.7) from the
national language association but for 5b er (1.3) they only er they
both (.8) they they only both of them knew (.) what they should do
then modify their controlling behavior after they have observed each

368		other for [(1.3)] yes for some time (1.3) er (1.4) I think er (.) the first
369	M	[ok]
370	K2	one is (1) er (1.7) is better I think yes as you (.) write journal I mean
371		(2)
372	M	ok (3.3)
373	K4	er I am K4 er I I agree with K2 they are both researches just er they
374		they have (.) the two researches have different aims (.) so the first er
375		(.) scenario like 5a (.) er the aim is to to (1) you know (.) to put the (1)
376		er what they they have discussed ok (1) er write what they have
377		discussed in (.) into (1) er newsletter for the national language teacher
378		associations (.8) and er the second (.9) scenario 5b (.) er this is a
379		teacher research in the classroom so the aim is only to apply this in
380		the classroom teacher (.7) try (.) to find out ok what what was wrong
381		ok (.) after three months (.7) and then (1) the teachers (.) decided to
382		modify their their controlling behavior in the classroom so this is
383		the teacher research in the classroom (.) they are both researches (1.8)
384	M	ok (.)
385	K4	that's all
386	M	K3 if you have er
387	K3	I have no idea
388	M	ok ((all-laughing)) so we move to scenario six 6a and 6b (2.4) maybe
389		you like to start first K3 ((laughing)) (11.8)
390	K3	ok for me er I think er scenario b (.) er 6b (.8) is a (.8) research [(1.2)]
391	M	[ok]
392	K3	rather than 6a (2.7) because (.8) er this is er the research (.) of (.) er (.)
393		the two methods [(.)] for teaching vocabulary (1.5) er (2.6) actually
394	M	[hm]
395	K3	er (.) the lecturer also applied (1) applied er (.) what technique (.7)
396		they they have learned (.8) in (.) the class [(.9)] yes actually the
397	M	[hmhm]
398	K3	duration of (.) the application is er eight weeks (1.3) yes (.) after that
399		(.) er (.) the lecturer choose (.7) er (1.1) the repren representative (.7)
400		er from the class they applied (1.8) to test (.8) to find out (.7) er (.)
401		how effective (1.1) er (.) it is (.) after the (.) er yes after the
402		application (2.4) and then (1) er (1.9) she also recorded the discussion
403		and analyze the data (1.2) er (.) and realized a better method (.) after
404		that er (1) they can (.) apply or they can use in their real teaching (1.2)
405		after (.) er (.) this observation after this research
406	M	[ok] [hmhm]
407		(1.5) so finally six (.) 6 (.) b
408	K3	yes I think 6b is (.) a research (.) rather than (.) [6a]
409	M	[6a] (.) ok thank you
410		very much (1.6) er (.7)
411	K4	I'm K4 (.7) I think if we (.) we look at the term research so (.) they (.)
412		both 6a and 6b (.8) er do not look really like research but if we use (.)
413		you know specific name to the researches then for example classroom
414		research or teacher research or action research (.) then I I think they
415		both are researches (.7) like er 6a (.7) er (.8) it is it is a class (.)
416		classroom research (.) or teacher research (.) in the classroom (.7)
417		because teacher you know (.8) er (.) try to find out the method of
418		teaching vocabulary and so on (.) ok after a period of time like
419		teaching vocabulary for four weeks or five weeks (.) and then try to
420		use different methods ok this is er er a classroom research trying to
421		apply (.) new methods or different methods in the classroom (.7) ok

(.) classroom research or teacher research in the classroom (1.5) which is very similar to 6b (.) ok very similar (.) so it is also (.) 6b is also a classroom research or (.7) er you know teacher research in the classroom (.8) because (.8) teacher (.) try to find out (.) ok different (.) methods in teaching vocabulary (.) and try (.) try to you know apply the (.7) the methods ok (.) for a period of time to find out whether which method works (.) better which doesn't (.) ok work (.) well (1) and then (.) you know selected er (1.1) representatives from each class ok for group discussion and so on to find out ok whether (.) which method work well which doesn't work well (.8) so I think this is er a research (.7) so they both are researches (1)

M ok thank you very much (1.6)

K2 er I am K2 ((sound of soft laughing)) er I think er (.) both 6a scenario 6a and 6b are both research (.) but (.8) er ((long utterance)) (.) they only have different ways of collecting data [(.)] yes one (.) is

M [hmhm]

K2 experiment (.) and then the other er 6a is an experiment an experiment research (1.4) for b yes er (.) for group discussion (1.4) so the different sample (3)

M alright (1.2) yes thank you very much what about (.) K1? (2.5) ok (.) so we move to er 7 er scenario 7 (1.1) er who (.) would like to begin first? (14.2)

K4 Ok I am K4

M yes

K4 I would like to begin first (1) er (1.4) I'm not really sure about the term teacher research (.7) but if er (.) I (1) for yes

M from your

K4 in my view ok the term teacher research (.) is about (.) finding out ways (.7) or methods in teaching (.) in improving (.7) the the teaching ok in the classroom (.7) so if (.) er (1.5) the term (.) teacher research (.) is the same as what I think then scenario 7a is (.) is a research again [(.)](1) it is a teacher research (.) in the classroom (1.8) and er

M [ok]

K4 7b (.8) 7b doesn't look (.) really like a research (1.1) er ((long utterance)) (1.7) just (.) ok (.) it it touches a small part of the research (1) er ((low sound)) (1.2) er I would say (.) er 7b is is not really a

M [hmhm]

K4 research

M ok thank you very much yes (8.5) what are your opinions ((laughing))

K4 [that's all]

K3 (8.6) for me I think I'm K3 yeap

K3 I think er (1.1) er 7b (.7) is er research (3.2) because (.7) er (.) the head master (.)meet er every teacher individually and ask them (.) what's er going on (.) and what working conditions are (.9) and (.) after that (.) er (.) the (.8) the head also (.) the head (.) master also (.8) er (.) took notes the teacher answer (.7) then he (.) wrote the note (.8) er (.) to submit to the (.) edu er educational journal (2.6) for for a it's (1) it's also (.) similar

Unid. [similar]

K3 ((laughing)) (1.2) yes similar to be (2.1) finally er (.) the

K2 [similar to b] (.)

K3 head master also write the report to (.) the ministry of education

M [education yeah]

476	K3	(3.6) so for me I think b is (1.2) a research (.7) rather than a
477	M	ok (2.6)
478	K1	yes I'm (.) K1 (.) I just want to share idea about 7 scenario 7 a and b
479		(.9) I think the two are similar (.) but 7a research report mean they
480		write report (7) about their finding about what problem in school just
481		send to ministry (.7) just (.) we have research report but this one is
482		just normal report not (.) research report (.)
483	M	which one? (.)
484	K1	er 7a
485	M	7a just a re
486	K1	just a report (.) normal report (.) not (.) research report (.)
487	M	oh ok
488	K1	yes (1.6) that's why sometimes it's confusing ((all laughing)) a
489	M	[ok]
490	K1	normal report
491	M	alright ok
492	K1	yes
493	M	thank you very much
494	K1	and (.8) yes b also similar they write a paper also report but in this er
495		(.) I mean er (.) essay style maybe (1.9) ok that's what I can share
496	M	ok (1.9)
497	K2	I think that the (.) I'm K2 I think the difference is only the ministry of
498		submitted to the ministry of education (.) and the other one is
499		submitted to er 7b is submitted to an educational journal [(1.5)] so
500	M	[yeah]
501	K2	well (2.3) I think er b is more er er er research er (1.4) er (.) it's
502	M	[ok]
503	K2	submitted to the yeah educational journal and everybody will read (.9)
504		so everyone who interested in research (.) journal articles will (1)
505		touch will read er 7 er will read er the educational journal so I think
506		it's more (1.7)
507	M	research
508	K2	yes research than a ((voice fading)) (.)
509	M	ok
510	K1	just wanna share with with er (.) the word (.) especially I find some
511		find confusing about the word (.) something write a paper to (.) be
512		submitted to an educational journal ((K3 laughing)) but sometimes (.)
513	K3	[research report] ((shoft laughing))
514	K1	yes report because don't accept right for research (.) educational
515		journal research (.) so it is sent even they send they don't (.) it's not
516		qualified they just reject it (.) ((K3 soft laughing)) so sometimes the
517		word is confusing you know (.)
518	M	ok
519	K1	yes tricky on that I find it tricky ((some soft laughing))
520	M	alright
521	K4	yes
522	K1	I would say just both of them are just report (.8) not real research (.)
523	K4	and er once again er I am K4 I I think the term paper in 7b we need to
524		(.) er clarify the term paper is it research paper or it is just only a
525		document (.)
526	(Unid)	erh ((unidentified speaker))
527	K1	essay right (.)
528	K4	yes if it's only just simple document (.7) about (.7) the the teachers'
529		answers (.8) then it it's not really a research (.9) just simple document

(1.2)
K1 er yes er (.) I'm K1 I just want to share some more (.) sometimes they submit to the educational journal I mean committee and then they find it interesting (.) they may follow up (.) to do more investigation that it becomes a research (.) maybe I think it ok
M [oh] [oh] ok
K4 that's why I say 7b is not really a research ((laughing))
M alright thank you very much for that ((all laughing)) so so we move to scenario 8 8a and 8b (.) ((laughing)) (9) ((K3 & K4 soft laughing))
K4 confusing again I think ((K3 laughing)) (.8)
K3 er (4.2) yes actually a er I'm K3 er (.) actually a and b (.) er (1.1) I think they are the process (.) er of conducting the research (1.2) er (1.5) but for me er I think a is more formal because this is like because they have er (.9) thirty students (.7) er feedback form because they have the form and then the students are going to fill in and then they (.) have some comments they also wrote [(.)] and (.) for for b
M [hm]
K3 just (.7) like (1) er (1.8) spend just spending er half an hour talking with er his student (.) in order to elicit the feedback so (.) er actually er just (.) take note some so we we don't have er enough er document (.) to (.) yes to write er (.7) the research actually they are the way that er (.9) (.8) the teacher conduct research (.7) and (.7) I think er (.8) a is er (.7) more formal (1) more formal because (.) er they have the questionnaires they have some kinds of things and then the students are going to (.) er fill in and sometimes they are going to write some comments and then we are going to collect er the comments and then we can analyze [(.)] for er (1.5) the second part of the the other
M [hmhm]
K3 course (1.6) so that's all for me (.)
M alright thank you very much and (2.4) ok (.) K1 (1)
K1 yes er so I'm K1 (.) just want to share about scenario (.8) 8a and 8b (.8) er like we have talked previously about er teacher research like K4 said right (.) (yes ((soft voice; unidentified speaker))) our own research for our classroom to improve our teaching materials or (.) teaching style (.) I think this one ok we can say that's teacher research I would yes we can define right (.) teacher research in our Cambodian er context (.)
M that (.) 8a you mean (.)
K1 a and b
M a and b ok
K1 but when we talk about the er (1) the fully I mean recognized er (.) the research (.) I think this one not acceptable because just they do the first survey (.) because in research we have er formative and summative right assessment so this one we have the first one formative assessment (.7) eh in the middle not formative just half way right [(.)] so the first evaluation or assessment (.7) so I don't know
M [ok]
K1 whether (.) they do it (.) in the (.) the end of the semester or not yes is a question (.7) and (.) what other things they will do or they just do the survey (1) I think so it's not a complete research (1.4) but if (.) for er (.) the teacher sake ok improvement you know in the classroom is ok (.)
M ok let (.) er (.8) I'll summarize from your (.) your point of view (.) in terms of teacher research (.7) you accept that scenario 8 (.7) both 8a

and b are research [(.)] teacher research [(.)] ok (2.4)
K1 [yes] [yes]
K2 er
K4 er I'm K4 I I agree with that so both er 8a and 8b are teacher research
K2 yes actually yes
K4 yes (.) so to make just make it short
M alright
K2 yes ((sound of soft giggling))
M ok then we move to scenario 9 (.) 9a and 9b (2.5)
K4 er can I start first I K4 I think 9a and 9b (.) er are the same as 8a and 8b above (.) so they are all teacher researches ok (1) er er just one thing different (.7) one difference is that er in 9a (.7) er the (.8) the the trend er you know (1.3) decided to write an article about that ok (.) and pub oh submitted to er professional journal so probably for publication (1.3) so (1.3) er (.) it is it is (1) like (.7) er more (1.7) more than er just er a teacher research in the classroom
M hm (3)
K4 ok that's all I think
M ok (3.6) alright (.) is to add some more comments to that or you have different
K2 K2 er yes I think er (.8) similar idea (.) er (.) but 9b is more er (1.8) ((sound of bang on the table)) er (.8) a research yes systematic I think (.) because (.) er (.) is to do with (.) er administering questionnaires (1.2) analyzing the data and then presenting the result [(.)] so er (1.7)
M [hmhm]
K2 it (.) it's just more than er scen scenar scenario 9 (.) er 9a scenario 9a is (1.8) probably er only action research teacher research (.) alright ((fading voice))
M (M:hm) (1.8) alright thank you thank you very much (9.4) ((K3 giggling)) any (xxx)
K1 ok I'm K1 I just want to add to K2 (.) er for scenario 9a yes the teacher do their own research (.) yes for the classroom (.7) and so does from their (.9) especially they got the data from er (.) trainees right trainees' perception [(.8)] because motivation I think we have
M [hmhm]
K1 not only perception we need to find yes like (.) 9b we have to do questionnaires we have interview other more (.) not only of perception because people have different perception right [(.)]
M [hm]
K1 sometimes is is not acceptable or not (.) really applicable (.) or not (.) so broad (1) so 9b yes I think is more (.) on research part (.8) we can say research report this one [(1.6)] because they have the result they
M [hmhm]
K1 have the (.) data right questionnaire and so on (1.2) yes (.) that's all
M [all-
right (1.1) so (.) K3 you have (1) more (1.4) ((sound of paper flapping))
K3 actually similar
M ok (.) alright (.) so we move to scenario ten 10a and 10b (6.1)
K3 yes I'm K3 I think er 10a and 10b similar to (5) ((sound of paper flapping)) 4a and 4b
M alright (.)
K3 actually there (.) I think there (.7) similar to (1) er 4a and 4b (3.1) because er (.) 4b er related to er focus group (.) but (.) for a (1) er (.)

M ten ten (.)
K3 oh sorry (.) er ten 10a (.) refer to the focus group (.) because (.7) er she selected eight representative (.) of the teacher and invited them to er invited them for er discussion (.8) this is related to (.) er (.) the new coursebook (.)
M ok so ten 10b you are talking about yeah 10b
K3 [yes 10b yeah] for 10a mean (1) er (1) just collect the information what er the teacher (.) thought (1) of the new coursebook (.7)
M by using questionnaire
K3 yes by using questionnaire to complete and study their response (.8) yes and then present the result to the staff in the meeting (1.7) so (.) they are the (.9) the kind of research but er (.7) er (.7) actually er they have er different purpose
M ok different ways
K2 different way ((low voice))
K3 yes different way
M different method
K3 yes different method (1)
M alright
K2 I'm K4 ((actually he is K2)) I think so (.) I think both are research (1.4) yes but only that they have different way of collecting the data (1.9) and different sample (1.6) er as for 10a er (1.5) because (.8) er (1) the researcher (1.2) the head of the department er (1.6) give one (.) to to conduct the questionnaire so (.) he gave all the teacher the questionnaire [(.)] but for 10b (1) er as it is (.) a focus (.) group
M [ok]
discussion you know (.7) then er (1.4) yes the head of the department English department (.) could not do that so he (.) he only er (1.1) yes selected er eight representative (.) yes of teacher (.) and invited them for the discussion (.8) is like what we are doing
M (M:hmhm) ((sound of paper flapping)) so (.) ((sound of paper flapping)) can I hear your final decision (.) again
K2 yes (.) so they are both er research but but different ways of er
M [ok]
K2 analyzing data collecting data
M collecting data ok (1.4) K1 you have any other (.) additional (.) comments (.8)
K1 ((giggling)) (.8) yes I think (.) both of them are the same similar I mean (.) the research but 10a the just survey I would say survey yes (.) when b is about discussion (.) so in order to be fully er I mean (.) very effective we need to have questionnaire (.) interview (.) observation and discussion right (.) follow-up interview (.) that's become er (1) full er research (1) but (.) in short I would say (.) yes (.) these two are still research (.)
M ok (1.8) thank you very much erm (5.1) whether K4 er (3) what K4 think about scenario 10a and b ((K4 just returned from the toilet)) we want to hear your voice ((laughing))
K4 [sorry] ((giggling)) sorry about that ((laughing)) (1.6) er (6) er I think er scenario 10a and 10b are both researches er like (.) er like researches in the school (1) because the the head of the the the department ok (.7) er (.) tried (.) or wanted to to find out what teachers thought about the course and so on so it it is (.) er (.7) they are both researches to improve the (.7) probably (1) the the quality (1)

692		in the school as well as the (1.3) probably coursebook (.) er syllabus
693		(.) course syllabus (2.7) I think that's all
694	M	ok (.) thank you very much

Appendix 6.1

Phase 2 participants' past research projects

Participant	Number of Research projects	Year	Role	Focus	Research methodology	Purposes
A1		2007	**Student**: A1 was a research assistant when he was a student in the BEd (TEFL) program.	Not known.	Not known.	Not known.
	1	2010	**Lecturer**: A1 was joining a joint research project with his colleague at the IFL.	Independent learning.	Following a qualitative approach, using interviews.	• To gain more experience in doing research; • To publicise research outcomes by presenting at the CamTESOL.
B1	1	2009	**Lecturer**: B1 was doing research with a group of his students.	Not mentioned.	Not mentioned.	Not mentioned.
	1	2011-2012	**Student**: B1 undertook this project while he was doing his MSc in Education in America.	Relationship between students' achievements and goal orientation in Writing Skills.	Following a quantitative approach, using questionnaires completed by the students at the IFL.	To fulfill a requirement for completion of an MSc in Education degree.

Appendix 6.1 (Cont.)

Participant	Number of Research projects	Year	Role	Focus	Research methodology	Purposes
B2	3	2007-2008	**Student**: B2 did three research projects when he was a student in an MA (TESOL) program.	Ways a teacher follows in order to achieve his goal in teaching life.	Following a qualitative approach, using interviews.	To fulfill a requirement for a course in his MA (TESOL) program.
				Approach(es) a teacher used to teach in a Year 2 class.	Following qualitative approach, using classroom observation.	To fulfill a requirement for a course in his MA (TESOL) program.
				(Related to reading)	Following quantitative research, using questionnaires.	To fulfill a requirement for completion of his MA (TESOL) program.
B3	1	2009	**Lecturer**: B3 was a lecturer at the IFL when he was doing this research.	Reading contributions to language learning, esp. vocabulary.	Following a qualitative approach, using a narrative frame.	To present at the CamTESOL; To share his finding with other teachers at the CamTESOL.
	1	2010	**Lecturer:** B3 was a lecturer at the IFL when he was doing this research.	Learners' perspectives on quizzes and tests.	Following a quantitative approach, using questionnaires.	

Appendix 6.1 (Cont.)

Participant	Number of Research projects	Year	Role	Focus	Research methodology	Purposes
B4	1	2007	**Lecturer:** B4 did this research project in collaboration with his colleague at the IFL.	Nine ways to promote reading.	Following a quantitative approach, using questionnaires.	To build up research capacity; To have more experiences in doing research; To help his students learn English and skills better; and To present the research at CamTESOL conference series.
	1	2008	**Lecturer:** B4 did this research project individually.	Factors to contribute to academic success; to explore how students prepared for tests and exam.	Following a mixed-method approach, using questionnaires and focus group.	
	1	2010	**Lecturer:** B4 did this research project in collaboration with his colleague at the IFL.	The current status and development of ELT program in Cambodia.	Interviewing six ELT managers believed to be successful in managing ELT programs in Phnom Penh.	
	1	2011	**Lecturer:** B4 conducted this research project individually.	Cambodian university students' dual degree.	Analysis of 100 students' written essays on why they were doing dual degrees concurrently.	

Appendix 6.2

Phase 2 Participants' Conference research abstracts

A1's conference abstract

English has taken significant role in contemporary Cambodian society (Clayton, 2006; Pit & Roth, 2004). Not only does English influence the social and professional spheres of lives of the individuals, but also to a great extent it has affects the academic performance of the students. In the English-medium degree program, English has been a deciding factor on the content-knowledge acquisition of the students, that is on one hand, it helps facilitate in the instructions and comprehension of the subject content, and on the other hand it acts as an obstacle that blocks the effective dialogue between teachers and students. Thus, this study is proposed in order to investigate the effects that English has on students' achievement or performance in the subject areas in the Department of International Studies Program and to suggest beneficial measures to improve the situations.

B1's conference abstract

Students' interest has been theorized as one of the most important factors influencing academic achievement. However, most—if not all—of the previous studies have been conducted in the Western countries. This study intends to investigate how students' interest affects their academic achievement in writing classes. Approximately 200 students will be selected as research participants in this study. The sample will be derived from year-one students in the English Department of the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL), RUPP.

B2's conference abstract

This paper examines the extent to which Cambodian learners of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh, particularly year-three students, have been using different strategies of acquiring vocabulary in reading context. Systematically, 90 students will be randomly selected as sample to represent the whole year-three population. Optimistically, the study aims at giving the most and less-useable strategies that can be a useful reference for learners when they want to learn vocabulary through reading.

B3/B4's conference abstract

This paper aims to answer three research questions: (a) what are common written mistakes made by English language learners? (b) What are feedbacks they wish to receive on their written work? And (c) what are the impacts on their writing quality after having worked from draft 1 to draft 4 of the essays? To answer these questions, five students majoring in BA in English are recruited. They are asked to produce a complete essay on "Why people procrastinate, its consequences, and its solutions." The essays, which will be analyzed for common mistakes, are computerised and submitted to researchers. Three separate meetings on feedbacks with each participant will be conducted. For research question three, each student's drafts will be detected for possible improvement over time (10-week period). Finally, a focus group will be organized with a focus on feedbacks students wish to obtain on their written products. This research has many implications for writing teachers across backgrounds.

Appendix 6.A1

A1's PowerPoint slides

Investigating the Perspectives and Challenges of English Language in the English-Medium Degree Program

By A1

Click to add title

1

1. Introduction/Literature

- English is learned or used mainly for communication among people with different linguistic backgrounds.
- Clayton (2006), English language was preferred to other foreign languages in Cambodia because of its roles in economic and political transition and integration into its democratic international counterparts.
- Another dimension leading to the English preference is the advancement in technology and Internet in the era of globalization, where people use English to function a variety of operations including SMS, personal and business e-mail exchange, document search, chat, and so on (Gray, 2002)

2

- English is perceived to be the most important language for education.
- Because of the important role of English language in various domains in the contemporary society, the dramatic transformation of the education systems worldwide takes place. English-Medium Instruction (EMI), in which English language is mainly used as a means of teaching and learning content subjects has been practiced.

3

- Mellion (2008) has proposed a conceptual framework in which three main factors should be considerably considered for a successful implementation of EMI: the social, political, financial, and organizational conditions in which it is implemented, the teaching staff's commitment, and the competencies of both teachers and students in the program.
- English-medium instruction has presented itself with a large number of expected problems, namely insufficient language skills and training of staff and students, lack of interest from the students, loss of confidence and failure to adapt among local students, uniformity and availability of teaching materials, and many others (Smith 2004).

4

- Kyeyune's (2003), a lot of teachers said that content was the most important thing in learning and they did not bother with the language. The students also showed the negative attitudes towards English which resulted from the pressure to speak English and teachers' deficiency in English.
- Wu's (2006), most students, even those admitting their low English proficiency, reported a very positive attitude to EMI (EMI was a helpful language policy), and that EMI was one of the most effective ways to make their English better. However, a majority of the students believe that EMI caused problems in course content comprehension, opinion expression, and discussion between students and teachers.

5

- Flowerdew, et al (1998) the Hong Kong Chinese University lecturers perceived EMI as good since English helped the students with their exams and was the language of disciplines and textbooks. It also was needed for future jobs and important for maintaining Hong Kong's status. They supported the government's EMI policy, but they raised a few serious problems in implementing the policy, such as students' weaknesses in English, their unwillingness to participate and ask questions in English, and the pressure from students to use Cantonese.

6

- Chang's (2010) overall, most of the subjects did not show negative attitudes towards the EMI courses. Moreover, most of the students surveyed agreed that English instruction helped them improve their English language proficiency, especially in terms of listening, but they generally did not think that they had a high level of comprehension of their EMI lectures.
- Evans and Green (2007), a great number of the respondents suffered from a lot of difficulties when studying content subjects through the medium of English. The evidence suggested that students' problems lied in academic writing and academic speaking. The findings also indicated that students' receptive and productive vocabularies were generally inadequate. Academic listening appeared to present students with fewer difficulties than writing, speaking and reading.'

7

- A lot of considerations need to be given to the way in which EMI is implemented if it has to avoid as many undesirables as possible. Therefore, it has been the researcher's observation that considerable challenges have occurred in the International Studies Program at Institute of Foreign Languages and have threatened the academic achievement of the students and the quality of the courses as a whole.
- 1. Teachers' teaching capacity
- 2. Students' language ability
- 3. Language use in the textbooks

8

- Thus, in order to find out the effectiveness of the EMI program at this institution, this research aims to (1) assess the role of English language in the ISP courses from the perspectives of the students, (2) find out the challenges posed by English language barrier towards the ISP students' academic performance and achievement, and (3) to investigate the students' learning strategies in dealing the language difficulties they have faced.

9

2. Research Questions

- 1. What are the students' perceptions towards the role of English in this EMI program?
- 2. What are the most common challenges encountered by the ISP students at each year level: year 2, 3, and 4?
- 3. Among six categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, social, affective, and memory, which one has been used the most and the least by the ISP students to deal with their learning problems?

10

3. Methodology

- 3.1 Research and sampling design
- Quantitative and qualitative methods are used.
- The participants were the students in years 2, 3, and 4 from all the three shifts at Department of International Studies at Institute of Foreign Languages.
- **Quantitative**

Study Area	Population	Sample size	Percentage
Morning	146	98	67
Afternoon	143	96	67
Evening	136	93	68
Total	425	287	67.5

11

- **Qualitative**

Study Area	Population	Sample
Morning	98	2
Afternoon	96	3
Evening	93	3
Total	287	8

12

- 3.2 Instrument and data collection procedure
- A structured questionnaire
  - 287 questionnaires were randomly distributed and 177 were returned.
- A focused group interview
  - 9 students were randomly contacted, and 8 showed up.
- 3.3 Data Analysis
  - SPSS
  - Qualitative techniques

13

4. Results

- **Research Question 1**: What are the students' perceptions towards the role of English in this EMI program?

Students' perceptions toward role of English in EMI	Total	Frequency (%)			
		SA	A	D	SD
1. All the subjects are taught in English language.	177	115 (65)	57 (32.2)	5 (2.8)	0 (0)
2. We have to read and write in English in every subject.	177	119 (67.2)	52 (29.4)	5 (2.8)	1 (.6)
3. Both teachers and students have to speak English during teaching and learning.	175	68 (38.9)	94 (53.7)	13 (7.4)	0 (0)
4. Textbooks are printed in English language.	171	126 (73.7)	42 (24.6)	3 (1.8)	0 (0)

14

Students' perceptions toward the role of English in EMI	Total	Frequency (%)			
		SA	A	D	SD
5. In exams or tests, we are assessed in both the mastery of subject matter (content) and English language.	176	76 (43.2)	91 (51.7)	9 (5.1)	0 (0)
6. It is fine if we make minor mistakes in English while writing or speaking.	175	78 (44.6)	83 (47.4)	11 (6.3)	3 (1.7)
7. English grammar and general vocabulary (Not key terms or terminology) are not taught separately from the content.	177	29 (16.4)	95 (53.7)	43 (24.3)	10 (5.6)
8. Teachers focus considerably on the content of the subjects rather than English language.	176	63 (35.8)	83 (47.2)	26 (14.8)	4 (2.2)

15

Students' perceptions toward role of English in EMI	Total	Frequency (%)			
		SA	A	D	SD
9. When learning or taking tests, I pay a lot of attention to the content, not the language.	172	50 (29.1)	87 (50.6)	31 (18)	4 (2.3)
10. Teachers always give feedback regarding English language, grammar and general vocabulary.	176	23 (13.1)	92 (52.3)	54 (30.6)	7 (4)
11. It is good that English is used to teach the subjects because I am able to learn both the subject and English.	177	98 (55.4)	74 (41.8)	4 (2.3)	1 (.6)
12. The success of my study in the program is totally dependant on my English ability.	170	60 (35.3)	81 (47.6)	26 (15.3)	3 (1.8)

16

- **Research Question 2:** What are the most common challenges encountered by the ISP students at each year level: year 2, 3, and 4?

Different areas of the students' language or learning difficulties in each year level					
Year		Writing/ speaking	Listening	Reading	Tests
Two	Mean	2.74	2.64	3.18	2.57
Three	Mean	2.67	2.57	3.12	2.45
Four	Mean	2.50	2.48	3.26	2.46
Total	Mean	2.63	2.56	3.20	2.51

17

- **Research Question 3:** Among six categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, social, affective, and memory, which one has been used the most and the least by the ISP students to deal with their learning problems?

Learning strategies that the students use	Total	Mean
Memory	177	2.78
Cognitive	177	3.06
Meta-cognitive	177	2.88
Compensation	177	2.86
Affective	177	2.90
Social	171	2.83

18

5. Discussion

- The findings of the study above indicate that English has really gained its basic status in this EMI program.
  - English is employed as a necessary tool to master or acquire the content matters as it is present in every aspect or dimension of the course ranging from textbooks to instruction.
- To the students, the language is vitally important for their study, especially for making sense of key concepts in the reading materials.
  - Guzman's (2008), most students believed that English language allowed them to have a great access to the material and the concepts and the knowledge of their field which originated from English speaking countries.

19

  - Wu (2006), the students in the present study have shown their positive attitude to the fact that they can benefit both English and subject knowledge in this EMI program.
- Most lecturers and students seem to have placed a lot greater attention and emphasis on the content than the language itself.
  - Kyeyune's (2003) study, a lot of teachers in the interview said that content is the most important thing in learning, so they do not seem to bother with the language.

20

- it should be noted that in this program there is no consistency in the way individual teachers or lecturers give importance to the English language in their teaching. This, in fact, heavily depends on their own perceptions which are usually shaped by their background education.
- the language use in the instruction and learning has certain limitation. Some level of code-switching is obviously present in this EMI program.
  - Wu (2006), who has found that a great amount of code-switching to Madarin takes place in many courses owing to a number of reasons such as 'students' low proficiency in English, subject content, and time pressure.'

21

- Evans (2002) who reported that students' poor English proficiency affected lecturers' ability to use it, causing the code-switching. However, a clear distinction between the present study and the previous ones is the level of the code-switch. Maybe because the ISP students' English proficiency is ensured by the entrance exam, it is reasonably higher than those in the two studies who experienced a serious language problem. Thus, the amount of the code-switch is minimal.

22

- The students in all the levels in ISP program have experienced the greatest difficulty in reading and some level of trouble in the productive skills, but not much in listening and tests.
  - Evans and Green (2007) who discovered that the students at Hong Kong Polytechnic University encountered reading, speaking, and writing much more than listening.
- The students in the present study seem to suffer greatly from the content of the academic reading texts as well as the language, while the learners in the other study saw both technical and common difficult vocabulary as the biggest barrier to their reading comprehension.

23

- Wu's (2006), technical vocabulary was the greatest obstruction to the comprehension of the reading in the course books for the students at Chung Hua University, and this in turn greatly affected their lecture comprehension.
- Perhaps, reading is the greatest challenge for these students for two main reasons.
  - First, these reading texts are the non-simplified authentic materials containing advanced language and complicated concepts, which requires a very high language proficiency from the students.
  - Second, the students may not have possessed enough language competence as well as reading skills for academic reading materials that they have to deal with in the program.

24

- Another striking point from the finding is that the students have also reported their challenge in presentation. Nervousness and delivery skill seem to be the main aspects of their problem. However, they have not mentioned any language problems in their speaking.
  - In contrast to this, Evans and Green's study (2007) indicated that the students had a lot of difficulty with accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation in speaking.

25

- The students seem not to have a serious problem with listening to lectures during their study.
  - Flowerdew and Miller (1992) also reported that their university students demonstrated their great ability to comprehend English lectures based on the high self-rating of such competence. Maybe, listening does not present as great a challenge as reading since the reading texts contain authentic advanced language, while in lectures, that language and the complicated concepts in them are usually simplified and clarified by the course instructors.

26

- The result of the study shows that the students in this program seem to have explored a variety of learning strategies to deal with their learning problems, with cognitive strategies the most frequently used and the memory ones the least.
  - Vinke (1995), the English-medium Instruction program students used more cognitive strategies and less memorization strategies than their Dutch counterparts. He also claimed that this helped make a confirmation to their earlier expectations or hypothesis that 'students with a better language proficiency use more cognitive strategies reflecting a deep learning approach.'

27

- Griffiths and Parr (2001) and Mochizuki (1999) reported that among all the language learning strategies, memory strategies were employed least frequently by their subjects.
  - In somewhat contrast with these results, Yang (2005) who reported that when nursing pre-professionals in Taiwan wanted to remember any medical terminology, they used both cognitive and memory strategies. Nevertheless, it should be cautioned that this study narrowly focused only on the area of learning terminology, while the current study concentrate on learning in the program as a whole.

28

- An interesting point emerging from the study is the indication of the popularity of affective strategies among the students in this EMI program. Perhaps, because the students have to struggle a lot with the reading and other tasks in this program, they need to make sure they do not become too stressed out so that they can continue and complete their study successfully. Therefore, affective strategies have been employed to keep them relaxed and motivated.

29

6. Conclusion

- This study presents a clear picture of what the English-Medium Instruction program in DIS is like. Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of English language in this program, the language does not seem to receive a lot of attention from the stakeholders. The main challenge encountered by the students has been identified in the reading area, and this seems to be attributed to the complicated concepts and language use of certain reading materials and lack of necessary reading skills. On the bright side, however, to ensure their academic success in the program, the learners have used a lot of cognitive and affective strategies to deal with all kinds of their learning problems, especially reading but not much of memory strategies.

30

7. Implication/Limitations

- Curriculum development/material design
- Teaching Methodology
- Selection of the students for the program

- The questionnaire has not undergone a pilot
- Lack of literature
- Absence of some participants

31

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Thank You!

Questions & Comments

34

Appendix 6.B1

B1's PowerPoint slides

Student's interest and writing achievement

Presented by: B1

1

Statement of problem

- Writing is assumed to be difficult to teach and learn
- One of the reasons: heavy workload for both students and teachers
- At IFL, journal writing is one of the main activities in writing classes assigned to give chance to students to practice writing.
- However, this adds to the existing workload of both students and teachers

2

Purpose

- To examine the benefits of journal writing in writing classes by looking into the relationships among students' interest in journal writing, interest in writing class, and writing achievement.

3

Research Questions

- How do students describe their level of interest in journal writing and the writing subjecte?
- How is students' interest in journal writing, writing classes, and writing achievement related to each other?
- Background variables: gender, learning shift, and students' proficiency in English

4

Literature

- There are two types of interest: personal and situational
- *Personal interest* refers to information that is of **enduring personal value, activated internally, and topic-specific** (Hidi, Renninger, and Krapp, 1992)
- The basis of personal interest appears to be pre-existing knowledge, personal experiences and emotions (Deci, 1992).

5

Literature (cont.)

- Situational interest refers to information that is of temporary value, environmentally activated, and context-specific (Hidi *et al.*, 1992).
- Information that is unusual (e.g., newspaper headlines about a celebrity sex scandal) or relevant within a particular context (e.g., the performance of mutual funds you have recently purchased) falls into this category.

6

Literature (cont.)

- Interest manifests itself in several ways, including active engagement, focusing of one's attentional resources, and learning more than one would otherwise learn (Shraw & Lehman, 2001).
- Interest affects the use of specific learning strategies and how we allocate our attention (Hidi, 1990).

7

Literature (cont.)

- In Cambodia, proper learning strategies might be a question.
- A very large number students in Phnom Penh take two degrees at the same time, and some also work. This is especially true at the university the research was conducted at.
- Therefore, it is a question whether despite having high interest, students have enough time and energy to learn properly.

8

Context

- Institute of Foreign Languages, RUPP
- BA in English, four-year program
- Year 1: only two English subjects: Writing and Core English (general English class)
- Writing: grammar for writing and paragraph writing
- Journal writing is one of the writing activities. Students are supposed to write some journal entries in their free time.

9

Context (cont.)

- The topics in journal writing can be free or assigned, depending on the teachers.
- Journal writing is supposed to give chance for students to practice writing and improve their fluency in writing.

10

Participants

- Year-one students
- Passed entrance exams
- Around 600 students selected out of around 4,000 applicants
- Feel proud, probably high confidence and interest
- Students can choose to study in three shifts: morning, afternoon and evening.
- Students study at only one shift, 3 hours a day.

11

Participants (cont.)

- 300 questionnaires sent out, 100 for each shift
- 244 returned the questionnaires
- Morning: Male = 41, Female = 42
- Afternoon: Male = 51, Female = 30
- Evening: Male = 45, Female = 35

12

Measurement

- Measurement of interest adapted from Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, Carter, and Elliot (2000).
- Interest in this study covers three aspects: personal interest, perceived usefulness, and further pursuit of the activity

13

Measurement (cont.)

Students' interest in journal writing

- 7 items with Likert-type response scale ranging from 1(Totally Disagree) to 6 (Totally Agree). There was no neutral option.
- Principal-component analysis revealed only one component (eigenvalue = 4.3, variance = 60.9).
- Reliability: $\alpha = .89$

14

Measurement (cont.)

Students' interest in the writing subject

- 8 items with Likert-type response scale ranging from 1(Totally Disagree) to 6 (Totally Agree). There was no neutral option.
- Principal-component analysis revealed only one component (eigenvalue = 4, variance = 50.9).
- Reliability: $\alpha = .85$

15

Measurement (cont.)

- Core English score (English proficiency) : reflects students' ability in grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening, ranging from 1-100.
- Writing score: ranging from 1-100, paragraphs are marked holistically by individual teachers
- Individual teachers might have different criteria on what constitutes good writing and thus writing scores might reflect some bias (This is the major limitation in this study.).

16

Procedures

- Questionnaires were given a few weeks before the end of the second semester (June 2012).
- Lecturers were asked to help administer the questionnaires to the target participants.

17

Results

18

Descriptives

	Gender			
	Male (n = 137)		Female (n = 107)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Writing Achiev	75	1.02	74.16	1.14
English Proficiency	69.93	.89	69.15	1.02
Journal Interest	4.98	.07	4.87	.07
Writing interest	5.23	.06	5.23	.05

19

Preliminary results

ANOVA

Writing Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	569.002	2	284.501	2.059	.130
Within Groups	33308.060	241	138.208		
Total	33877.061	243			

20

Correlations

		Gender	English Proficiency
Writing Achievement		.04	.77**

** $p < .001$

21

Correlations (cont.)

		Journal Interest	Writing class Interest	English Proficiency
Writing Achi		.09	.3**	.77**
Journal Interest			.75**	.07
Writing Interest				.22**

** $p < .001$

22

Multiple Regression

- Multiple regression to find unique contribution of writing interest on the variance of writing scores
- Model = writing scores (DV), English proficiency (first entry), writing interest (second entry)
- $R^2 = .62$, R^2 change < .001, F change = 193. 53, $p < .01$

23

Discussion

- From descriptives: students had high interest in journal writing and the writing subject
- Interest in journal writing correlated strongly and significantly with interest in the writing subject, but it did not have a significant correlation with writing achievement.
- Interest in the writing subject correlated with writing achievement. However, the correlation became weaker, despite still significant, when students' English proficiency was controlled.

24

Limitations

- Writing scores were marked by different lecturers and thus comparing those scores can reflect errors.
- The study was conducted on year one students. Tests in year level reflect both students' knowledge in grammar and ability to writing paragraphs. That's why, English proficiency was found to be a major predictor of students' writing achievement. The results might be different in different year levels.

25

Limitations (cont.)

- The study was conducted only at one university; therefore, any generalization should be made with caution.
- Other variables, such as learning strategies, time management skills, and effort, should be examined as well in future studies.

26

Appendix 6.B2

B2's PowerPoint slides

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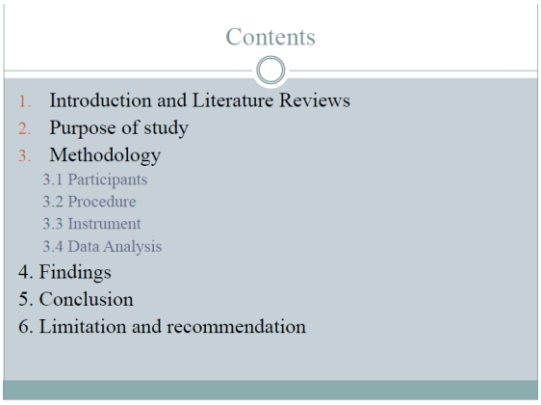

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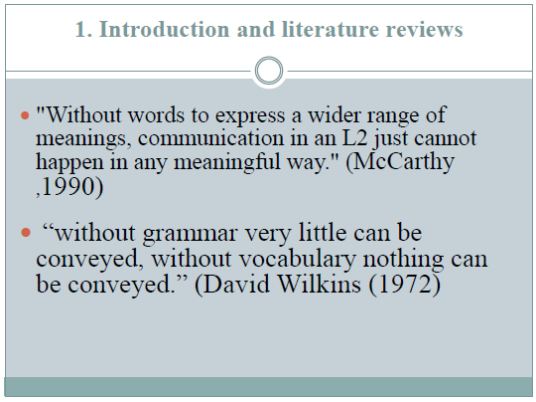

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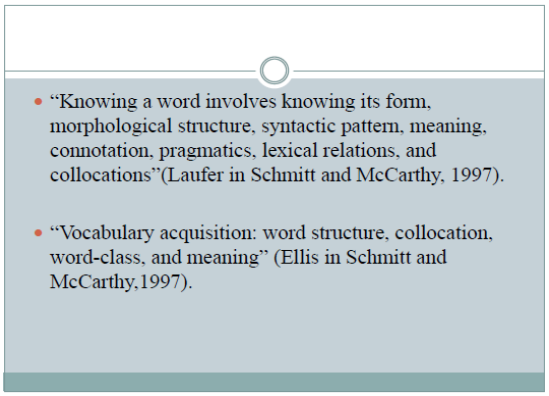

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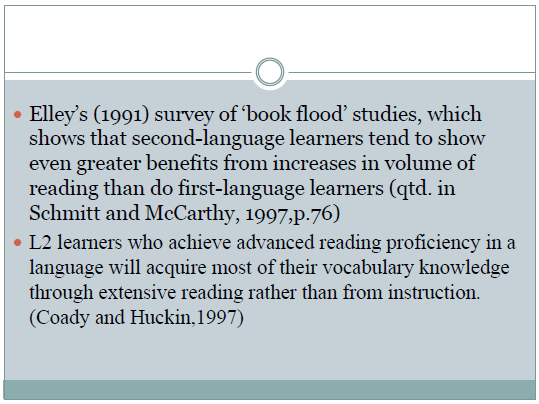

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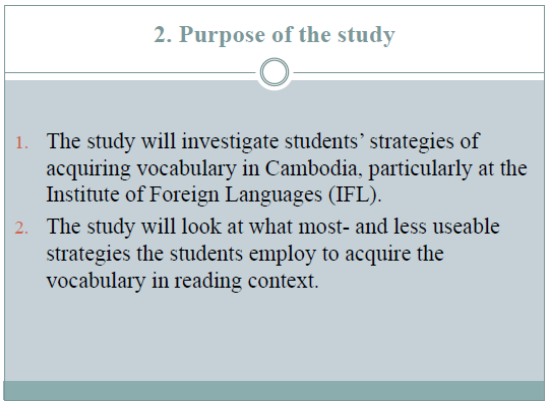

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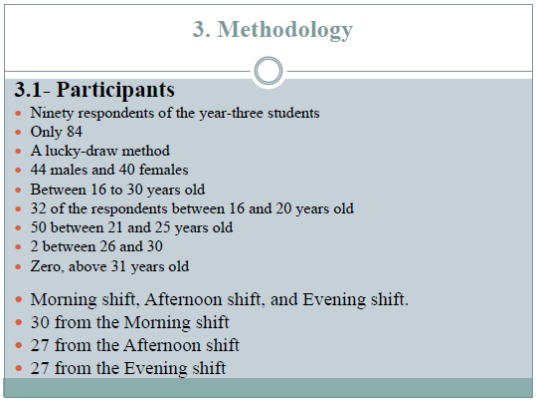

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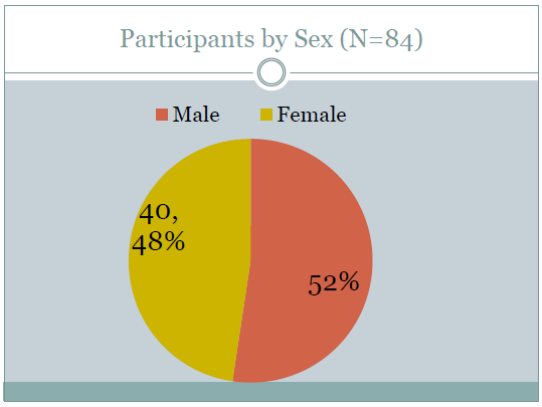

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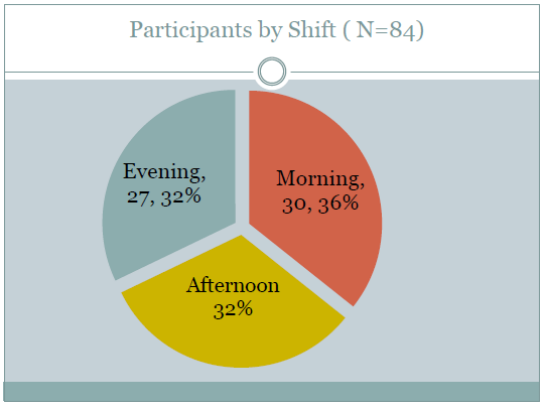

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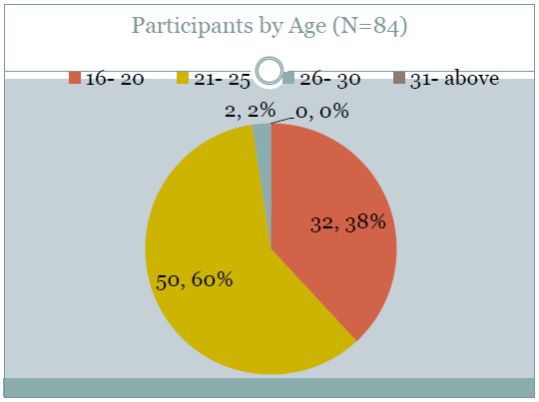

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3.2 Instrument

- A taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (TVLS) by Schmitt (1997) was employed and administered
  (1) Determination Strategies including six statements
  (2) Memory Strategies having eight statements
  (3) Cognitive Strategies consisting of four statements
  (4) Metacognitive Strategies containing three statements
  (5) Social Strategies including four statements
- "Yes" or "No"

11

3.3 Procedure

- The lecturers and class monitors in year-three classes in all shifts
- The questionnaire was distributed in the late October and early November 2012 to the randomly selected participants in their classrooms.
- The students were requested not to discuss with their fiends
- The questionnaire took 20 minutes.

12

3.4 Data Analysis

- Ms Office 2010, particularly Ms Excel, to analyze and interpret the data received from the respondents.
- Descriptive analysis was employed to summarize the percentage of the students' responses.

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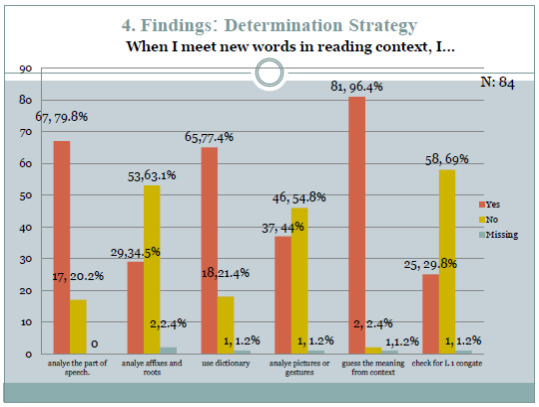

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- Schmitt asked a total of 600 Japanese students with regard to actual strategy use and perceived helpfulness. Only 74 percents of the participants was reported guessing meaning from textual context to learn a new word.
- Schmitt's (1997) research showed using dictionary to learn a new word was the highest (85%) among others.

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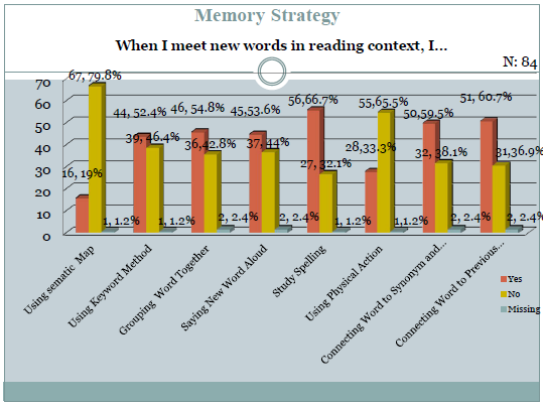

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- The finding was similar with Schmitt's (1997) research on 600 Japanese students with strategy used that Semantic map was the least use.

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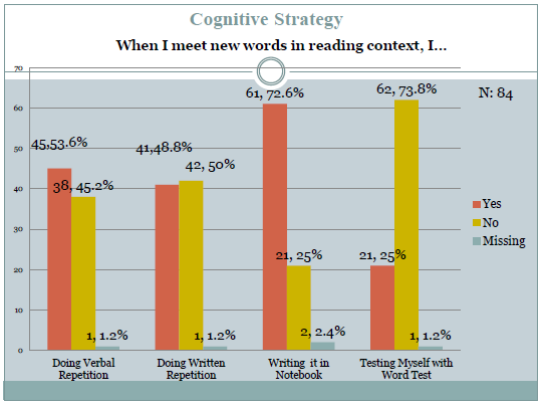

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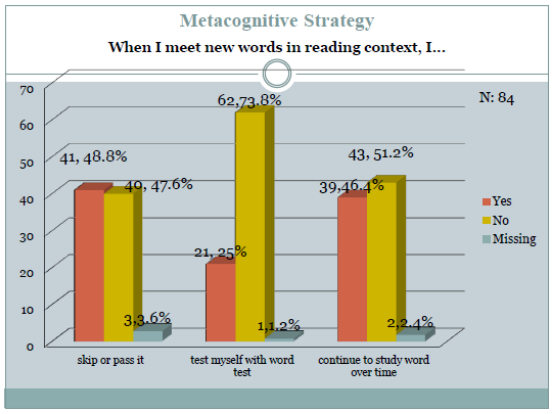

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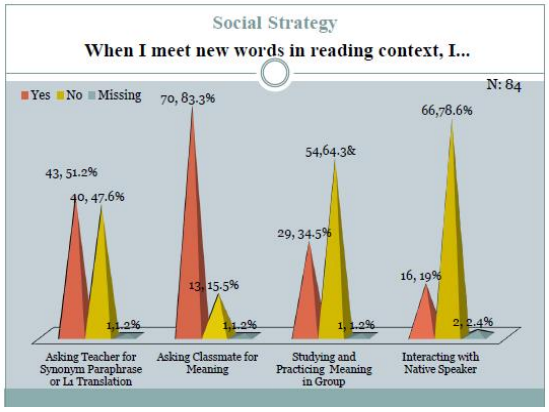

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- Again, Schmitt's (1997) finding was 73 percent reported asking classmates for meaning of word.

21

Other strategies

when meeting a new word in reading context, I search the Internet to find out some sentences that are written down related to that word so that I could better understand how this word is used in the different situations.

When meeting a new word in reading context, I try to guess it meaning through the words that around it. Sometime, I write it down in my alphabetical notebook and write its meaning with example and try to find its family words.

When meeting new words in reading context, I try to remember or take notes in order to check it at my house.

Mostly, I do learn new words myself and the thing I need is dictionary, paper or electronic dictionary.

22

When I see a new word, it is difficult for me to understand the text.

When meeting a new word in reading context, I try to make up examples using the word.

I review words I noted in the handbook and apply it into writing wherever possible.

When meeting a new word in reading context, I try to guess it through the context.

When I meet a new word in reading context, I check dictionary, translate it in my language and English, then give example to my real life.

23

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, guessing the meaning from context, asking classmates for meaning, writing the word into the notebook, asking teacher, and using dictionary are most likely employed to learn vocabulary. Therefore, when teaching vocabulary, teachers should try to use the materials that match to the strategies in order that the students can enhance their vocabulary. Moreover, the teachers should also expose students to a variety of alternative vocabulary learning strategies that can be considered an effective way of enabling learners to achieve more effective independent vocabulary learning in the future, especially

24

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, guessing the meaning from context, asking classmates for meaning, writing the word into the notebook, asking teacher, and using dictionary are most likely employed to learn vocabulary. Therefore, when teaching vocabulary, teachers should try to use the materials that match to the strategies in order that the students can enhance their vocabulary. Moreover, the teachers should also expose students to a variety of alternative vocabulary learning strategies that can be considered an effective way of enabling learners to achieve more effective independent vocabulary learning in the future, especially

25

6. Limitation and recommendation

- Limited number of participants
- Only one angle
- No comparison with other

- According to the findings, the strategies that has been discovered seems to be congruent with and against the other researches, so further research is needed to conduct on level, and other institutions or locations.

26

Thank for your attentive attention!

27

Appendix 6.B3/B4

B3/B4's PowerPoint slides

Students' Written Mistakes and Preference for Teacher Feedback

CamTesol 2013 (23-24 February)

By B3 and B4

IFL/RUPP/Cambodia

1

Introduction:

- Among the four macro-skills, writing is perhaps one of the hardest for English language learners.
- Also, writing is perhaps the least practiced by students.
- Writing skill, however, is no doubt the most important skill that successful students have to possess because learning involves a lot of written outputs.
- Teachers who teach writing subject naturally have more burdens than their counterparts who teach other subjects in English. In addition to preparation and delivery of the lessons in the classroom, they have a post-class activity to do: Giving feedback on their student written products.

2

Literature on Writing Feedback

- Directive Versus Facilitative Feedback Strategies
  - In a directive strategy, the teacher gives feedback on word use, grammatical mistakes, and sentence structure.
  - Whereas, facilitative strategy hits hard on the content or idea development (Carney, 2006, as cited in Sou, 2010).

3

Sou (2010): Facilitative feedback:

- Use questioning
- Praise student's work
- Make students feel proud
- These shall lead to subsequent revising

4

- Summative versus formative evaluation
  - Black and William (1998, as cited in Jones, 2011) find that it is more productive if feedback emphasizes strength and weaknesses of students' writing and does not include grade.
  - However, some studies show that students care more about grades and largely ignore teacher feedback (e.g., Chanock, 2000; Ecclestone, 1998, as cited in Jones, 2001). Other studies find the opposite (e.g., Duncan, 2007; Taras, 2003; Weaver, 2006, as cited in Jones, 2011).

5

- Other studies
  - Process writing:
    - Process writing involves drafting, revising and rewriting (Jones, 2011).
    - Advantages of process writing: It develops learner autonomy and evaluation skills among students as well as promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility in improving their piece of writing (Wakabayashi, 2008, as cited in Jones, 2011).
  - Preference for feedback:
    - Sou (2010) finds that students seem to prefer that their teacher not pinpoint to every mistake in the essay. They want teacher to tell them which specific part they need to improve.

6

- Feedback dialogue:
  - Studies call for a constant dialogue between teacher and students in order to foster independent learning, and in order to impact on student's work more positively (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2006, as cited in Jones, 2011).
- Feedback as a means to learning
  - Research has focused more and more on using assessment/feedback for learning purposes (Carless, 2006; Mutch, 2003, as cited in Jones, 2011).

7

The Present Study

We aim to explore answers to three research questions:

1. What are common written mistakes made by English language learners?
2. What are the impacts on their writing quality after having worked from draft 1 to draft 4 of the essays?
3. What are feedbacks they wish to receive on their written work?

8

Method

Participants

- 5 students were recruited in this study.
- They were third year students at a large language school in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia.
- Their major is BA in English language.

Sampling

- Students were purposefully selected, based availability and contribution to this study.
- Qualitative researchers are recommended to choose 'information-rich' participants (Creswell, 2005).

9

Instruments

- Students were asked to produce essays.
- First drafts were collected and feedback was provided for further revision.
- And we conducted the interviews with them to explore their ideas that could help address research question 3.

Data Analysis

- We carefully read their essays and categorized possible mistakes.
- Simple percentage (count) statistics was used.
- For interview data, we developed 'themes' and quoted some examples to support those themes.

10

Results: (Language) First Draft

N.	Type of Mistake	Mistakes First Draft	Percentage %
1.	Article	14	18
2.	Collocation	4	5
3.	Word choice	11	14
4.	Singular-Plural (or Subject-verb agreement)	16	20
5.	L1 interference	11	14
6.	Fragment	2	2.5
7.	Use of pronoun	4	5
8.	Reciprocal pronoun	1	1.2
9.	Gerund/infinitive	4	5
10.	Redundancy	2	2.5
11.	Tenses	3	3.8
12.	Preposition	3	3.8
13.	Structure	5	6.4
14.	Parallelism	1	1.2

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Results: Problems on Content (First Draft)

- Content is classified into three categories:

A. Overall Meaning

B. Counter Argument

C. Idea Linkage

See examples:

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	Overall Meaning	Counter Argument	Ideas Linkage
K3.	N/A (acceptable)	Not well constructed because no clear reason to argue	N/A

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	Overall Meaning	Counter Argument	Ideas Linkage
K4.	A. Ideas not well organized from important to less important or via versa. B. Too much input in one paragraph which is hard to understand. C. Not very flow of idea express D. Reasons are strong enough to support the topic sentence. (uniform is easy to recognize as it gives sense of security in school)	Not explain the counter argument in detail; thus, it does not have a concrete support	There is bit and piece of information and not well structure

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K5	Ideas are not clearly expressed to support the topic sentences and not enough evidence	A. Not explain the counter argument in detail; thus, it does not have a concrete support B. Transition Signal for the counter argument is misemployed.	N/A

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Results After Multiple Feedback/Comment

1. Language Problems

A. Articles still exist but in smaller rate;

B. L1 Interference has not been totally modified ;

C. Structures are seen dramatically changed because this type of mistakes may have resulted from the participants' carelessness.

D. Word Choices have been more carefully employed

E. Singular and plural subjects are mostly reduced

Surprisingly, some sentence problems have been reduced and well structured in the subsequent drafts.

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Results After Multiple Feedback/Comment

2. Problems with Content

A. Ideas have been well-organized and consistent with the topic sentences,

B. The flow of idea has been improved because the participants have employed the right linking devices

On the contrary, counter argument paragraphs, and ideas have been insignificant altered. This is may have resulted from lacking of teacher-student's conference.

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As for research question 3

Common themes:

- Recognition of the important roles of teacher feedback
  - Problems encountered: grammar, structure, organization, ideas, etc…
- Preference for feedback on recurring mistakes/important mistakes
  - Teacher should not correct everything.
- Using symbols versus direct feedback
  - Help make them think by themselves
  - Help them remember longer
- A need for follow-ups of feedback (feedback loop)
  - Things go in a circle or a need for several conferences/drafts

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Conclusion

- This study is similar to the previous ones, as follows:
  - A need for selective feedback
  - A need for feedback that boosts confidence
  - A recognition of feedback as a learning tool
  - A need for teacher's time for feedback
  - Time for students to revise the drafts
  - A combination of written and verbal feedback (e.g., Students might not know what to revise if only written feedback is provided).

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Limitations

- Time constraint for us
- Our focus was on participants taking English language as their major (BA in English), not students enrolling in general majors
- Lack of face-to-face conference with individual participant
- Lack of a diverse set of topics for subsequent drafts (Seeing if there are recurring mistakes when writing on different topics)

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References

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