TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF ICT IN AN EFL SETTING IN A VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university teacher experiences and practices of integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their teaching in a public higher education institution in Vietnam. The ultimate goal is to identify what makes their ICT integration effective and flexible enough to meet the needs and expectations of students and teachers in this context. To this end, a theoretical framework and methodology based on a critical realist ontology and focussed ethnography were adopted. The critical realist theoretical framework combines Bhaskar's (1978) domains of reality (the real, the actual and the empirical) with Archer's (1995) social domains (structure, culture and agency) in order to identify the underlying mechanisms driving EFL teacher's experiences and practices in ICT integration as well as inhibiting and enabling factors influencing this integration. The focussed ethnography combines four methods of data collection (critical discourse analysis of policy texts, questionnaires, observations, and interviews) in order to obtain a complete picture of the phenomenon within its cultural context. Eleven policy texts were selected at international, national and institutional levels to examine what potentially, directly and indirectly shaped and influenced the teachers' ICT integration practices and experiences. One hundred and thirteen (*n=113*) teachers from a cohort consisting of five departments and centres within the institution answered the questionnaires which yielded teachers' self-reported ICT practices, and what encouraged and/or prevented them from integrating ICT into their teaching. Six EFL classroom teachers were observed to examine how they actually used or integrated ICT in their teaching and whether their concerns and the national and institutional concerns impacted on their actual practices. Thirty five teachers took part in one-on-one interviews (some before and some after the observations) providing further insights into inhibiting and enabling factors.

This study shows that the drivers for an effective and flexible integration of ICT in a Vietnamese EFL university setting depend on how responsive, adaptive and timely teachers are to meet student needs and expectations. The most influential factors enabling individual teacher's movement from potential effective and flexible integration of ICT to actual effective practices are their teaching passion, a thirst for further ICT training opportunities and networking opportunities. However, this study shows that it is not enough for leadership to provide a strong policy vision, it is also necessary to provide practical support for staff and tangible rewards to facilitate ICT integration. It is also necessary to communicate specific guidelines on how the vision and an appropriate pedagogy can be realised within the local constraints in order to ensure

effective and flexible integration in the Vietnamese higher education context. Like the staff, institutions need to be responsive, adaptive and timely to staff needs in order to ensure they can meet student and government demands and expectations.

This study makes two major contributions to the field of ICT in higher education and English Language Teaching (ELT). First, it opens up new approaches in the use of focussed ethnography in conducting an ICT-related research in the Vietnamese context. It also proposes the Responsive-Adaptive-Timely (RAT) model that can be used to facilitate an effective integration of ICT in ELT in this and similar contexts. The use of this model can potentially move educators, leaders and EFL teachers from a focus on merely using ICT and devices to being more aware of their own practices and the professional development required to unleash teachers' effective and flexible integration of ICT.

STATEMENT (THESIS DECLARATION)

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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Date: _____

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. ICT and ELT terminologies used in higher education

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CU	Capital University
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ET	English teacher
HEIs	Higher education institutions
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
NFLP	National Foreign Language Project
R2D2	Reading, Reflecting, Displaying, Doing
SAMR	Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TPACK	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

2. Policy texts

MOET Directive	MOET Directive on Enhancing the Teaching, Training and Application of Information Technology in Education Sector between 2008 and 2012 (MOET, 2008) (PT1)
TESOL Framework	Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) Technology Standards Framework (Healey, Ioannou-Georgiou, Kessler, & Ware, 2009) (PT2)
MOET Guideline 201	Guideline on IT Task Implementation for the Academic Year 2009-2010 (MOET, 2009) (PT3)
MOET Guideline HE 2010	Guideline on IT Task Implementation for the Academic Year 2009-2010 for Universities and Colleges (MOET, 2010)
Draft Report	Self-Evaluation Report of Capital University 2010 – 2011 (Provided by CU staff) (PT5)
TESOL Vietnam	Project on Building the ICT Application Competence Standards for Vietnamese Teachers of English (provided by CU staff) (PT6)
MOET Guideline 2014	Guideline on IT Task Implementation between 2013 and 2014 (MOET, 2013) (PT7)
MOET Guideline 2015	MOET Guideline on IT Task Implementation for the academic year 2014-2015 (MOET, 2014) (PT8)
Horizon Report 2014	The NMC Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition (Johnson, Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2014) (PT9)
Horizon Report 2015	The NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Higher Education Edition (Johnson, Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2015) (PT10)
ICT Training VN	Training for Teachers on ICT-Supported Pedagogy 2015 (provided by CU staff) (PT11)

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