

Vietnamese Pre-service Language Teachers' Technology-Mediated Task Creation: An Ecological Perspective

Paul J. Moore¹ , Giang Hong Nguyen²  and Quang Vinh Nguyen² 

¹The University of Queensland, Australia

²Hanoi University, Vietnam

Abstract

As an emerging context in CALL literature, Vietnam provides the international research community striking insights into attempts at CALL integration and its links to national educational development, from macro-level policy development to meso-and micro-level implementation. This qualitative study explores the major assessment task of a course “Integrating ICT in Language Teaching and Learning,” as well as lesson-plan data from a group of four pre-service teachers, to provide insights into the influence of macro-level policy on those who are really in charge of its implementation—trainee language teachers. Analysis of lesson plans and semi-structured interviews revealed themes of growth in technological capabilities, technology overload, simplification of the relationship between theory and practice, and external influences on pedagogy. We draw on these findings to argue for a holistic, contextualised, ecological approach to teacher training in CALL.

Keywords: Technology mediation, lesson planning, teacher training, Vietnam

Introduction

As with many countries across Asia, the Vietnamese government, through its National Foreign Languages Project (Government of Vietnam, 2017), is investing heavily in improving English language learning across all educational sectors, with a specific focus on the sustainable integration of technology (Ministry of Education & Training, 2014).

E-mail: p.moore5@uq.edu.au, giangnh@hanu.edu.vn & vinhnq@hanu.edu.vn

In Yijen Wang, Paul Moore, Teresa Hsieh, & Hao Tran (Eds.), *Proceedings of the XXIIIrd International CALL Research Conference, 2025* (pp. 1–6). Castledown.

While much capital has been expended on policies at the macro-level, their aim is to influence the micro-level of classroom interaction (Moore et al., 2023). If policy and standards implementation is wholly a top-down endeavour, it risks irrelevance and ineffectiveness (Hubbard, 2023). What is needed is evidence from micro-level implementation as to the relevance and effectiveness of the government's investment (Nguyen et al., 2025).

In the context of an undergraduate course on “Integrating ICT in Language Teaching and Learning,” this paper explores the perspectives and practices of a group of four pre-service EFL teachers in their collaborative development of a technology-mediated lesson plan. We draw an ecological approach to SLA (van Lier, 2004) and CALL integration (Gruba, 2021) to investigate the contribution of a micro-level lesson-planning task to teachers' developing capabilities in technology integration.

Methodology

Participants

The study triangulates three sets of qualitative data from four undergraduate trainee English language teachers in Vietnam. Data were collected from an existing course; as such, the students who volunteered for the study represented a convenience sample (Cohen et al., 2018).

Data Collection and Analysis

The three sets of qualitative data used in the study were: (i) a collaboratively designed 90-minute lesson plan; (ii) a 900-word justification of the design; and (iii) individual interviews where participants were asked questions about theoretical, technological and pedagogical decisions made.

Content analysis (Cohen et al., 2018) was drawn on to analyse lesson plan documents (14 pages) and transcribed interviews (152 minutes). The aim was to provide insights into how learners perceived their own technology-mediated lesson planning capabilities, and how these perceptions triangulated with their actual lesson plans.

Results

Four major themes arose from the analysis: growth in technological capabilities; technology overload; the relationship between theory and practice; and external influences on pedagogy.

Theme 1: Growth in Technological Capabilities

All learners reported perceptions of growth in their technology-mediated lesson planning capabilities. These were represented as developments in the use of available technologies, awareness of theoretical and pedagogical approaches to integrating technologies (e.g., “access to a wider range of strategies” [P3], and feelings of improved *efficiency* [P1], *confidence* [P2], *flexibility* [P3], and *competence* [P4].

Theme 2: Technology Overload

The learners created an integrated skills (vocabulary-listening-speaking) lesson aimed at primary school children on the topic of “[my] favourite movie.” The content of the lesson, and its structure (warm-up, presentation, practice, and production), were based on the chosen coursebook (Bosiak & Kim, 2009).

Figure 1 provides an overview of the tools chosen.

As can be seen above, the learning management system for the class was Google Classroom, while the online lesson was to be conducted via Zoom. In addition to the functionality of Zoom (chat, breakout rooms, drawing tools), six external tools were chosen.

Noting the large number of tools used by the group, P2 stated “I realized that we applied a lot of online tools and apps in our lesson plans.” P4 provided an explanation for the group’s strong focus on (somewhat redundant) technological tools at the expense of a strong pedagogical approach: “I think we are learning how to integrate technologies into teaching ... so *I have to apply as many tools as possible* to be familiar with these tools” (italics added).

Theme 3: Relationship between Theory and Practice

The participants’ justification of their lesson plan revealed a simplistic direct relationship between theory and practice.

In their interviews all four identified discrete theories taught in the course, including behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, as well as theories specific to technology (“multimedia learning effects” [P4]) and culture (collectivism [P2]). They also noted that such theories were taught separately from practice. For example, P1 stated “in some lessons I only learned theory ... no application.”

In the written lesson plan justification, the participants explained the use of online quiz tools (e.g., *classkick.com*) as follows: “the teacher uses the stimulus and responses method ... based on the Behaviorist method.”

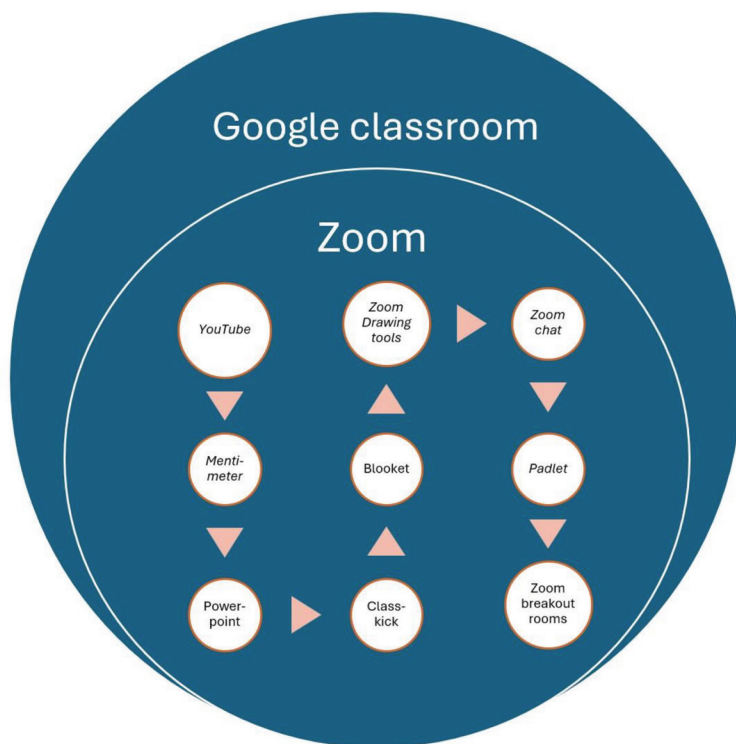


Figure 1. Technological tools used in the lesson plan

Theme 4: External Influences on Pedagogy

Three key influences on the group lesson planning project included: the CALL course text (Bower, 2017), which provided theoretical and pedagogical information for the participants' justification; the chosen language coursebook (Bosiak & Kim, 2009), which determined the language teaching approach and materials; and prior teacher training experience, including micro-teaching, which P1 explained as "traditional" (unsupported by technology), and others explained as less *interesting*, *interactive* and *collaborative* than what they felt could be achieved with technology-integrated learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis above has provided insight into pre-service Vietnamese language teachers' perspectives and capabilities with regard to technological integration. This research represents an effort to highlight micro-level implementation

of national policy, to inform the development of further pedagogical and policy activity at the meso- (institutional) and macro- (national) levels. The tenuous link between participants' perceptions and practices (Theme 1), and their strong focus on technologies at the expense of pedagogy (Theme 2) are common features of research into CALL professional development within Vietnam and beyond (Moore et al., 2023).

Similarly, the somewhat superficial link between existing materials—specifically professional development texts and language learning coursebooks—and the participants' lesson plan and justification (Theme 3), highlights the necessary role of a critical, evidence-based, approach to existing theory, research and pedagogy (Levy & Moore, 2018), as well as a principled approach to integrating pedagogical approaches and technologies (Bax, 2003).

Finally, the fact that participants' approaches were influenced by their prior experience and other contextual data (Theme 4) provides evidence for the necessity of a holistic, contextualised, and ecological approach to research into the developing technological capabilities of pre-service language teachers.

References

- Bax, S. (2003) CALL – past, present and future. *System*, 3(1), 13–28. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(02\)00071-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(02)00071-4)
- Bosiak, I., & Kim, V. (2009) *Step by step listening 3*. e-future. <https://www.efuture-elt.com/books/view.do?bookkey=491>
- Bower, M. (2017). *Design of technology-enhanced learning: Integrating research and practice*. Emerald.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Government of Vietnam. (2017). *Decision No. 2080/QĐ-TTg on approval of adjustment and addition in foreign languages project in the national education, Period 2017–2025*. Government of Vietnam. <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Quyét-dinh-2080-QĐ-TTg-2017-bo-sung-De-an-day-hoc-ngoai-ngu-trong-he-thong-giao-duc-quoc-dan-370658.aspx>
- Gruba, P. (2021, December 10). *Leading the integration of technology* [Keynote Speech]. Technology Standards in Foreign Language Teacher Education in Asia Symposium, Brisbane & Hanoi.
- Hubbard, P. (2023). Contextualizing and adapting teacher education and professional development. In D. Tafazoli & M. Picard (Eds.), *Handbook of CALL teacher education and professional development: Voices from under-represented contexts* (pp. 3–14). Springer Nature.

- Levy, M. & Moore, P. J. (2017). 'Language and technology': Theory and practice, options and issues in computer-assisted language learning. In Son, J.-B. and Windeatt, S. (Eds.), *Language teacher education and technology: Approaches and practices*. Bloomsbury.
- Ministry of Education and Training. (2014). *Official letter 792/BGDĐT-NGCBQLGD-Guidelines for the implementation of the basic requirements for general English teachers' competencies*. MOET. <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/cong-van/Lao-dong-Tien-luong/Cong-van-792-BGDĐT-NGCBQLGD-nam-2014-Yeu-cau-co-ban-nang-luc-giao-vien-tieng-Anh-pho-thong-221908.aspx>
- Moore, P. J., Nguyen, G. H., & Nguyen, Q. V. (2023). Professional standards in CALL teacher training in Vietnam: Towards an ecological approach to CALL integration. In D. Tafazoli & M. Picard (Eds.), *Handbook of CALL teacher education and professional development: Voices from under-represented contexts* (pp. 463–481). Springer Nature.
- Nguyen, Q. V., Moore, P. J., & Nguyen, G. H. (2025). Making the case for micro-level leadership in CALL integration in Vietnam. In L. McCallum, & D. Tafazoli (Eds.), *Computer-assisted Language Learning in the Global South* (pp. 147–163). Routledge.
- van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective*. Kluwer Academic Publishers.