

Title of Project:

English Primary Teachers' Agency: A Case Study of Vietnam

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Project Summary:

Teachers' agency has become a growing research interest in language education, especially at the critical juncture of widespread globalisation, when many non-English speaking nations including Vietnam, the context of study, have promulgated a new language policy to respond to this transformation. However, teachers' agency has still remained under examination despite a small number of recent studies (Lee, 2011; Ollerhead, 2010; Yang, 2012; Zhang & Hu, 2010). Therefore, it becomes a critical issue within the field of language policy and planning, especially when the roles of teachers are evidenced to be fundamental to the policy implementation (Baldauf, 2005; Garcia & Menken, 2010; Li, 2008; 2010; Ricento&Horberger, 1996). Conceptualising agency from the works of Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Biesta and Tedder(2006), and Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2013), this study aims to examine how English primary teachers in different contexts (i.e., urban, rural, and mountainous) in Vietnam exercise their agency to interpret and respond to changes in the national English education policy. Using the descriptive-exploratory multi-case study research design, the study will collect data from in-depth interviews, class observations (with follow-up interviews) and policy documentation. The study will shed light on the practice of teachers in responding to the language education policy reform in a number of contexts in Vietnam. It will also make a contribution to explicitly theorizing the concept of teacher agency. Furthermore, it will put forward implications for teachers, policy makers, and school leaders to facilitate the agentive roles of teachers in reform implementation.