

'This is something beyond their capacity': Teacher educators' cognition of L2 pragmatics and challenges of its integration into EFL teacher education: An exploratory study in Vietnam

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journals.sagepub.com/home/ltr**Anh T. Ton-Nu** 

University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH), Vietnam

Jonathan Newton 

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Abstract

Language teacher cognition concerning second language (L2) pragmatics is an under-researched sub-field in language teacher cognition research. L2 pragmatics is also overlooked in many L2 teacher education programs. To address these gaps, this study adopted a within-site case study design to investigate the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of 14 Vietnamese teacher educators of English about how to teach L2 pragmatics and their actual teacher education practices. Data was collected through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that the teacher educators fell into two broad and equally sized groups differentiated by the extent to which they were able to articulate what L2 pragmatics is, why it is of value, and how they addressed it in their teacher education. The findings offer insight into how to improve the quality of English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education in Vietnam and similar contexts regarding L2 pragmatics and teacher training.

Keywords

L2 pragmatics, L2 teacher education, teacher beliefs, teacher cognition, teacher knowledge

Corresponding author:

Anh T. Ton-Nu, University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH), 59C Nguyen Dinh Chieu, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City 84, Vietnam

Email: anhntn@ueh.edu.vn

I Introduction

Second language (L2) pragmatics has been widely studied since the 1990s with respect to how it can inform the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) (e.g. Bachman, 1990; Culpeper et al., 2018; Ellis et al., 2024; Ishihara, 2022; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Central to L2 pragmatics research are questions of ‘how learners come to know how-to-say-what-to-whom-when’ (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 68) and ‘how learners come to understand or comprehend meaning, as well as how they negotiate and co-construct meaning’ (Culpeper et al., 2018, p. 1).

Evidence from previous studies shows that instruction in L2 pragmatics helps learners develop their L2 pragmatic competence (Ishihara, 2022; Kecskes, 2014), especially in EFL contexts where learners have less exposure to naturalistic environments through which to implicitly acquire L2 pragmatics. Accordingly, there have long been calls for greater inclusion of L2 pragmatics in ESL/EFL teaching (Baker, 2011; Cohen, 2016; Taguchi, 2019). This suggests an important role for teachers, who, according to Ishihara (2022), need to have both subject-matter knowledge of L2 pragmatics (i.e. knowledge of L2 pragmatics *per se*) and pedagogical-content knowledge of L2 pragmatics (i.e. knowledge of how to teach L2 pragmatics). Accordingly, research has investigated teacher awareness, knowledge, beliefs, and practices of L2 pragmatics (Cohen, 2018; Cohen et al., 2023; Glaser, 2023; Hsieh & Chuang, 2021; Ishihara, 2011, 2022; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2024; Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2019; Yildiz Ekin & Damar, 2013). This research shows that L2 pragmatics remains poorly integrated into textbooks and undervalued in teacher education programs (McConachy & Hata, 2013; Ren & Han, 2016; Ton-Nu & Murray, 2020; Ton-Nu & Nguyen, 2023; Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009). Regarding teacher education, there is not, to our knowledge, any published research on teacher educators’ cognition of L2 pragmatics. Our aim in the current study is to address this gap by investigating what teacher educators (TEs) at a university in Vietnam know and believe about L2 pragmatics and how this informs their teaching practices.

II Literature review

In the following literature review we first introduce two established frameworks for studying L2 pragmatic competence and teacher knowledge, and then review previous research on teacher cognition for teaching L2 pragmatics.

I Teacher cognition for teaching L2 pragmatics

Language teacher cognition refers to ‘what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom’ (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Research in teacher cognition shows that teachers’ decision-making about what and how to teach effectively in their L2 classrooms draws on four main types of knowledge: disciplinary knowledge (what), knowledge of pedagogy (how), knowledge of learners (who) and knowledge of context (where) (Freeman, 2016; Ishihara, 2022). In addition, according to Freeman (2016), L2 teachers need to have

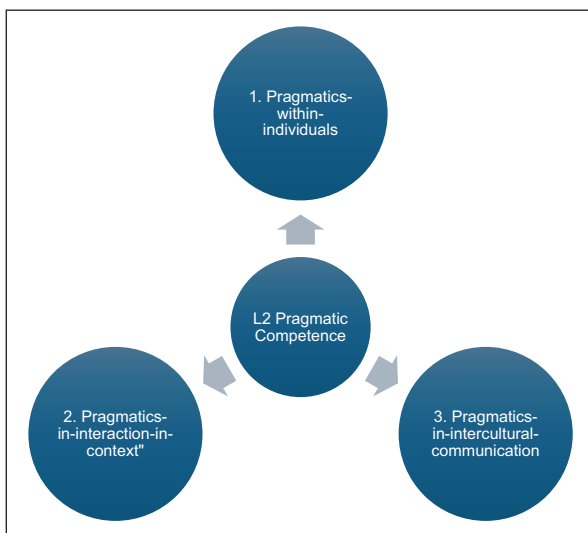


Figure 1. Second language (L2) pragmatic competence framework.

specialized content knowledge and pedagogical-content knowledge related to the various dimension of language (e.g. phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics).

This study draws on two complementary frameworks for describing the knowledge of L2 pragmatics that underpins the teaching L2 pragmatics. The first, proposed by Culpeper et al. (2018), identifies three main domains of L2 pragmatic competence, as presented in Figure 1. The first of these domains, pragmatics-within-individuals, is knowledge of the linguistic tools and sociocultural norms required to comprehend messages directed at oneself and to produce appropriate linguistic forms in various social settings. The second, pragmatics-in-interaction-in-context is the ability to interact meaningfully, including negotiating and co-constructing meaning, and responding to changes in contextual elements such as setting, relationship, affect, attitude, and stance. The third, pragmatics-in-intercultural-communication, is the ability to mediate communication between people of different cultures and to interpret the communicative agenda of conversation participants, together with the willingness and motivation to engage with and accept L2 socio-cultural beliefs and norms. In other words, this framework suggests that to achieve L2 pragmatic competence, especially in today's globalized world of intercultural communication, L2 learners must develop not only the ability to comprehend and produce meaning but also the skills to engage in interactive meaning-making. This enables them to 'negotiate and co-construct meaning' with interlocutors from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Culpeper et al., 2018, p. 1). Based on this framework, Culpeper et al. (2018) propose that the teaching of L2 pragmatics should extend beyond the traditional focus on teaching linguistic forms and their contextual applications. Learners must be guided on how to negotiate mutual understanding and utilize various resources and methods to enhance their contextual adaptability in increasingly intercultural environments. As such, to support L2 learners in acquiring and developing these aspects of pragmatic competence, L2 teachers must themselves possess these skills.

Table 1. Teacher knowledge for teaching second language (L2) pragmatics.

Knowledge for teaching L2 in general	Knowledge for teaching pragmatics
Content knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of a range of pragmatic norms in the L2. • Knowledge of pragmatic variation. • Metapragmatic awareness.
Pedagogical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of how to teach L2 pragmatics. • Knowledge of how to assess pragmatic competence.
Knowledge of the learners and of the local, curricula, and educational context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of learners' identities, cultures, proficiency, and other characteristics. • Knowledge of the (pragmatics-focused) curriculum. • Knowledge of the role of L2 pragmatics in educational contexts.

Source. Ishihara, 2022, p. 21.

The second framework we reference outlines what teachers need to know to teach L2 pragmatics, beyond merely possessing L2 pragmatic competence, as noted above. This framework, proposed by Ishihara (2022), identifies eight components of teacher knowledge required to teach L2 pragmatics, as presented in Table 1.

These two frameworks are complementary because while Culpeper et al.'s (2018) framework focuses on the dimensions of L2 pragmatics that learners need to acquire (and thus teachers have to possess), Ishihara's (2022) framework outlines the dimensions of pragmatic knowledge that teachers need to be familiar with if they are to effectively teach L2 pragmatics.

2 Previous studies on teacher cognition in L2 pragmatics

Teacher cognition in L2 pragmatics is a relatively new strand of teacher cognition research (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020). To date, most research into teacher cognition on L2 pragmatics has focused on teachers' awareness of L2 pragmatics and the impact of teacher training and professional development on the development of teachers' L2 pragmatics awareness (Cohen et al., 2023; Glaser, 2023; Ishihara, 2011; Ngai & Janusch, 2018; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2024; Vellenga, 2011). For example, Nguyen and Ton-Nu's (2024) study showed how an EAL (English as an additional language) teacher in Australia with awareness of intercultural pragmatics integrated this dimension into their classroom to enable their learners to use the target language appropriately. This study affirmed the role of teachers in L2 pragmatics teaching and the need for systematic integration of intercultural pragmatics in EAL programs as well as for L2 pragmatics in teacher education.

Other studies have shown how professional development (henceforth PD) can successfully raise teachers' awareness and expertise in L2 pragmatics. Ishihara (2011) investigated the developing pragmatic awareness of a Japanese EFL teacher who participated in a five-hour PD seminar on instructional pragmatics. The findings showed how the teacher, through discussion with the researcher and his colleagues, developed his ability to evaluate the inclusion of pragmatic content in English textbooks in Japan.

Similarly, in Vellenga's (2011) study involving ESL/EFL teachers from various backgrounds participating in four 1.5-hour lessons about L2 pragmatics teaching, all six teacher participants responded positively to the pragmatics teaching materials and reported increased knowledge of pragmatics. Glaser (2023) examined how a day-long workshop enhanced in-service primary German EFL teachers' awareness and knowledge of L2 pragmatics. Her findings showed that the workshop successfully raised teachers' awareness of the importance of L2 pragmatics learning from the very early stages, instilled a positive attitude towards L2 pragmatics teaching, and equipped the teachers with factual L2 pragmatics knowledge and practical teaching techniques. Ngai and Janusch (2018) investigated the effectiveness of a four-week professional development program for 25 elementary school EFL teachers from South Korea at a university in the United States. They found that the participating teachers successfully gained intercultural pragmatic awareness not confined to specific cultures or locations, even though the course materials were primarily illustrated with examples from the United States. Whilst all of these studies confirmed the positive impact of PD on teachers' awareness and knowledge of L2 pragmatics, none provided evidence of changes in teaching practices or learning outcomes. This remains an area open for further research.

Also, only a few studies have explored the interplay between teachers' L2 pragmatics cognition and their teaching practices (Cohen, 2018; Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2019). Cohen (2018) surveyed 30 native and 83 non-native teachers of English about their confidence in teaching L2 pragmatics. He found that both groups lacked confidence in this area but that the teachers' critical awareness and knowledge of L2 pragmatics had a greater influence on the willingness to teach L2 pragmatics by the non-native speaker teachers than the native speaker teachers. In interviews with 10 Greek EFL teachers, Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019) found that while the teachers had very limited content knowledge of L2 pragmatics, they all recognized the importance of L2 pragmatics and its teaching and reported possessing intuitive and personalized knowledge of L2 pragmatics based on their communication experiences. However, they also reported that their capacity to focus on L2 pragmatics in instruction was constrained by the national curriculum, exam preparation, and lack of teaching materials.

To date, no studies of which we are aware have investigated teacher educators' cognition of both L2 pragmatics and L2 pragmatics training for pre-service teachers. The current study addresses this gap.

III The study

The study investigated three research questions:

- Research question 1: What do Vietnamese EFL teacher educators (TEs) know about L2 pragmatics and L2 pragmatics teaching?
- Research question 2: What do they believe about the importance and value of teaching L2 pragmatics to preservice teachers?
- Research question 3: How do their knowledge and beliefs affect their teaching of L2 pragmatics to preservice teachers?

Table 2. Assigned percentage of six groups of knowledge of professional education courses.

Professional knowledge courses	Credits' percentage
Practical skills	44
Pedagogy	26
Literature and culture	10
Linguistics	8
Graduation thesis or alternative courses	7
Class visiting and teaching activities	5

A case study design was adopted in the form of a within-site study in which a cohort of 14 participating TEs formed a bounded-system (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). This design allowed us to systematically gather information about how the TEs functioned within their natural setting.

1 Research context

The study was conducted at a public medium-sized university in Vietnam – henceforth Central University (CU; pseudonym) – that trains teachers of foreign languages. Its English Department has been training Vietnamese EFL teachers since 1957. According to the teacher training curriculum, undergraduate students who major in pedagogical English need to complete 141 credits in four years to graduate as English teachers. Of these 141 credits, 41 credits are general knowledge courses such as Politics, World Civilization History, Practical Vietnamese. The other 100 credits are professional knowledge courses, divided into six groups. The assigned percentage of each professional knowledge group is presented in Table 2.

Of note, almost half of the credits (44%) are for English language skill development courses (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). In contrast, the linguistic knowledge courses only make up 8% of the credits and must cover compulsory courses in Phonetics/Phonology, Grammar, and Semantics and optional courses in Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, and Stylistics.

2 Participants

All 30 TEs from the English department of Central University were invited to join this study. Fourteen of the teachers accepted the invitation. The demographic information for these 14 teachers is presented in Table 3. Most of the TEs had more than 15 years of teaching experience and most held a PhD degree in Applied Linguistics or Education obtained from American or Australian universities. This means they all had experience living abroad. Previous research shows clear benefits for studying abroad on L2 pragmatic competence (e.g. Schauer, 2006, Taguchi, 2008). Half of the TEs reported receiving training in L2 pragmatics and marked 'n/a' when asked about their need to learn more on the topic. They also indicated awareness of L2 pragmatics through self-study (e.g. reading), and daily use of English abroad. In contrast, TEs who had not received training

Table 3. Demographic information of participating teacher educators (TEs).

Teachers (pseudonyms)	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Qualification	Years overseas	Pragmatics training	Pragmatics learning need
1. Rose	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	No	Yes
2. Ruby	Female	> 15	MA	4–6	No	Yes
3. Daisy	Female	5–10	PhD	4–6	Yes	n/a
4. Henrik	Male	> 15	PhD	4–6	Yes	n/a
5. Hannah	Female	> 15	PhD	1–2	Yes	n/a
6. Amy	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	Yes	n/a
7. Sarah	Female	> 15	MA	1–2	Yes	n/a
8. Tammy	Female	5–10	MA	1–2	No	Yes
9. Ann	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	Yes	n/a
10. Maggy	Female	10–15	MA	< 1	Yes	n/a
11. Queenie	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	No	Yes
12. Bella	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	No	Yes
13. Melinda	Female	< 5	MA	1–2	No	Yes
14. Quinley	Female	> 15	PhD	4–6	No	Yes

marked ‘Yes’ to indicate a need to learn about pragmatics, suggesting an initial awareness of its importance.

3 Data collection

Data for this study were collected from three sources: an online pre-interview questionnaire, follow-up, in-person, individual interviews, and classroom observations. The questionnaire included demographic questions and 13 open-ended questions about their knowledge, beliefs and reported teaching practices of L2 pragmatics (see Appendix A).

The semi-structured interview schedule included 16 questions on the TEs’ cognition and practices of L2 pragmatics (see Appendix B). Interviews lasted from 27–58 minutes and produced around 10 hours of interview data. All interviews were audio-recorded. The interviewer asked questions in Vietnamese and the TEs mostly responded in Vietnamese, except when using terms related to pragmatics and English teaching methods.

All 14 TEs were requested to allow Author 1 to observe one of their classes for pre-service teachers. However, only four TEs (Sarah, Ann, Tammy, and Queenie) agreed to this request. Data from these observations consisted of audio recordings and field notes for each of the four 90-minute lessons, and a written reflection by each of the four TEs after their observed classes. In these reflections, the TEs were asked to respond to three questions:

1. What do you think the student teachers learned from the last lesson?
2. What factors in your teaching context constrain what you are able to achieve?

3. What would you like to change for the teaching of knowledge related to pragmatics to be more effective?

The first two questions extended beyond pragmatics, as the researchers aimed to explore the extent to which the TEs incorporated pragmatics into their L2 lessons (e.g. Sarah and Queenie's Speaking lessons, Ann's Discourse Analysis lesson, and Tammy's Listening lesson). This exploration could help address research questions 2 and 3.

The other TEs were not observed either because they declined to be observed because they claimed not to include any L2 pragmatics in their teaching or because their courses had been completed before data collection began. These completed courses were Pragmatics taught by Rose and Ruby, Cross-Cultural Communication by Hannah, and Academic Writing by Henrik.

4 Data analysis

Data analysis began with transcribing all interviews and recordings of the classroom observations in the originally used languages by the participants, i.e. both English and Vietnamese. All data were analysed using NVivo 12 following a thematic approach to coding (Braun & Clarke, 2021) whereby the researcher iteratively read and identified themes in the data with reference to the research questions. This process involved the following steps:

1. Become familiar with the data by reading the transcripts while listening to the recordings and making memos on each transcript;
2. Code the data based on the research questions;
3. Create new codes for relevant new topics;
4. Group the codes into initial categories;
5. Refine initial categories into themes based on the two adopted theoretical frameworks in this study as presented in Section II.

Following this procedure, the data were mainly coded deductively to answer the research questions about TEs' knowledge, beliefs, and practices of L2 pragmatics teaching. This resulted in codes such as:

- familiarity with L2 pragmatics terms and its related concepts;
- perceived importance of L2 pragmatics and L2 pragmatics instructions in class;
- adopted L2 pragmatics teaching approaches.

New codes identified through the iterative coding process included:

- obstacles from preservice teachers' side in L2 pragmatics teaching;
- department's requirements for L2 pragmatics integration;
- TEs' evaluation of preservice teachers' English proficiency level and L2 pragmatic competence.

Table 4. Evidence for the division of participating teacher educators (TEs) into two groups.

	Questionnaire			Interview	
	Mean number of questions answered	Mean length of answers	Quality of answers	Interview length	Quality of answers
Group A (<i>n</i> = 7)*	12.6/13	398 words	Detailed answers	45 minutes	Many insights discussed
Group B (<i>n</i> = 7)**	10.25/13	230 words	Short answers (often just yes or no)	36 minutes	Superficial and circular answers

Notes. * Rose, Ruby, Daisy, Henrik, Hannah, Amy, and Sarah. ** Tammy, Ann, Maggy, Queenie, Bella, Me-linda, and Quinley.

Subsequent axial coding involved grouping and abstracting all codes into categories which were then refined into themes.

IV Findings

The analysis of the data showed that the 14 TEs fell into two distinct groups based on the quantity and quality of information they provided in their answers to the questionnaire and interview (see Table 4). All the TEs in the first group, Group A, provided substantial answers that indicated a well-developed understanding of L2 pragmatics. The TEs in the second group, Group B provided insubstantial answers that showed evidence of a much less well-developed understanding.

To elaborate on the findings in Table 4, the seven Group A TEs provided detailed information in both the questionnaire and the interview, with six of them answering all questions in the questionnaire with detailed responses. Their responses ranged from 352 to 708 words. Their interviews lasted from 34 to 58 minutes and generated insightful and useful data for this study. Among them, Sarah was the only one who left three questions unanswered. However, as she provided clear and thoughtful answers in the 48-minute interview, she was included in Group A.

In contrast, the seven Group B TEs provided superficial answers in both the questionnaire and the interview. Their answers were characterized by short answers, often just 'Yes' or 'No', or no information answers, such as 'n/a', 'I can't say anything about that', or 'I'm not sure about this'. There were some long answers that accounted for the mean length of 230 words of their answers, but these were infrequent and the content was typically vague. For example, when responding to a question in the questionnaire about how they integrate pragmatics into language skills-focused courses, Maggy wrote:

I don't think there is enough time to cover this knowledge well in the course of Listening as I am teaching because I must cover all listening tasks and also give some extra exercises, so I only have about 15 minutes in Pre-listening to talk about the topic and share some knowledge as well as exchange some information, which can be related to pragmatic knowledge.

Such superficial answers were also found in the Group B interviews. Although Author 1 provided detailed explanations of the pragmatic terms and concepts in the questions – significantly increasing interviewer speaking time – none of the Group B TEs offered substantial information.

1 TEs' varied knowledge of L2 pragmatics

The two groups of TEs demonstrated sharp differences in what they knew about content knowledge of L2 pragmatics. For instance, when asked about the differences between English and Vietnamese pragmatics, Group A TEs all successfully explained the differences between the two languages regarding linguistic forms, their meanings in different contexts, and sociocultural norms. As Hannah explained:

Politeness is an issue, because sometimes the same behaviour can convey opposite meanings in different cultures. And compliment misconceptions as well. In Vietnam, when someone says You are fat now, You look fat now, s/he has a good intention of saying that You are healthy, You are beautiful now. This kind of compliment may be misinterpreted in English cultures.

Amy made similar points:

The domination in power difference conversations in Vietnamese is very clear. For example, in conversations between teachers and students, teachers often dominate. But in English, it's not like that. I observe this in the conversations between my supervisor and me in New Zealand. She always praised me and encouraged me by saying 'It's a very good idea!' or 'You are very thoughtful in your reply.' And she was always polite with me even when I was wrong or had different opinions. This changed my way of speaking to my students when I went back to Vietnam.

As these examples show, the Group A TEs could refer to and exemplify their metapragmatic knowledge, using terms such as politeness, compliments, power difference. As Daisy commented:

Pragmatics used to be my favourite subject at university because of its clear relationship with and usefulness to language use in social contexts. It was so easy for me to find examples related to its theories in real life communication. You can see interesting examples of speech acts, politeness, implicature, etc. every time you come into interactions with other people.

Overall, all TEs in Group A showed awareness of theories of L2 pragmatics as well as pragmatic differences between English and Vietnamese in areas such as speech acts, choice of conversation topics, and levels of directness.

All Group A TEs shared the common background of obtaining their L2 pragmatic knowledge through living and studying experience in English-speaking countries. Rose and Ruby also reported gaining L2 pragmatic knowledge through research into this domain during their postgraduate studies. The other five TEs in Group A reported engaging in self-study of L2 pragmatics because they were interested in it and recognized its importance for language teaching and learning. Even Sarah, the only TE in this group

who had not undertaken PhD study at the time of the study, provided insightful comments about L2 pragmatics. For example, in response to a question about her integration of L2 pragmatics in practical skills courses (i.e. Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing), she said:

I think when studying about practical skills, besides forms and language functions, students need to know about contexts in which they use those language functions. They need to be aware of when to use those language functions and when not, and whether their language use in each specific context is in accordance with the culture of their interlocutors.

In contrast, the responses from Group B TEs showed superficial and patchy knowledge of L2 pragmatics. Most of these TEs admitted that they were not confident about their L2 pragmatic competence and not familiar with pragmatic concepts. Both Ann and Queenie viewed their status as non-native speakers of English as the reason for this gap:

I am not a native speaker of English and thus not very sure about some situations of English usage. (Ann)

I find myself not knowledgeable and experienced of sociocultural and language form issues of English language as I'm not a native speaker of English nor a resident in an English-speaking country for a long period of time. (Queenie)

Maggy indicated that she was able to recall some information, but not well:

I learned this subject nearly 10 years ago, so I can't remember the exact way of calling its aspect but I still remember about the content of knowing the ways to express the ideas such as using appropriate intonation, body language in different contexts.

Because of this lack of knowledge TEs in this group often left questions in the questionnaire blank or gave short or partial answers. For example, in response to the question regarding their integration of pragmatic knowledge in practical skills courses (i.e. Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking), one of the seven Group B TEs did not answer, and the answers from the other six were brief, as follows:

I often integrate pragmatic knowledge in the whole lesson (of Reading, Writing, etc.). (Ann)

Compare with students first language (L1). (Melinda)

Mainly explaining in speaking classes and usually inpromtu [sic] situations occur in classes. (Queenie)

Explicit teaching. I just tell my students directly the cultural differences in the use of L1 and L2. (Bella)

I don't think there is enough time to cover this knowledge well in the course of Listening as I am teaching because I must cover all listening tasks and also give some extra exercises, so I

only have about 15 minutes in Pre-listening to talk about the topic and share some knowledge as well as exchange some information, which can be related to pragmatic knowledge. (Maggy)

I just explained the pragmatic points whenever I think I have knowledge about that point. I often do it inpromtu and it is just like sharing with my students about what I know. So, I think I do not use any particular methods or approaches here. (Tammy)

The paucity of their L2 pragmatic knowledge was confirmed in the interviews when they often asked the researcher to explain and illustrate L2 pragmatic concepts before they could answer the questions. Even with the researcher's explanations and illustrations, their answers were still brief and offered little information about L2 pragmatics. Nevertheless, these TEs had some practical knowledge of L2 pragmatics, which they reported having acquired through their studying time in English-speaking countries where they learnt from observing and participating in natural interactions involving small-talk topics, use of body language, how to open and close a conversation, and how people address each other. For example, Ann said:

What I can observe clearly is eye contact. In Vietnamese culture, we are shy to have eye contact with other interlocutors. However, in Western cultures, if our eye contact is not direct with whom we are talking to, it can be problematic.

In summary, the 14 TEs in this study fell into two contrasting groups distinguished by the extent of their knowledge and interest in L2 pragmatics. What factors might account for this contrast? An analysis of their educational background (see Table 1) shows that nearly all Group A, except for Sarah, had a PhD degree completed overseas and over 15 years of teaching experience. Although Ruby did not officially hold a PhD degree, she spent over four years of PhD study in Australia in which she focused on pragmatics. Meanwhile, Group B TEs were more heterogeneous regarding educational backgrounds and teaching experience. For example, Bella, Maggy, Melinda, and Quinley reported that they were not trained to be teachers at undergraduate level. Therefore, their teaching practices were mainly based on their experience of learning and using English rather than English language teaching theories.

2 TEs' beliefs that hinder their teaching of L2 pragmatics

Regarding the TEs' beliefs about L2 pragmatics teaching, in the questionnaire, they were asked to respond to the following open-ended questions, which were then explored further during the interview:

1. The importance of teaching L2 pragmatics to preservice teachers;
2. Whether correcting pragmatic or grammatical errors was a priority;
3. Their view on what L2 pragmatic knowledge was necessary for preservice teachers.

All the TEs said that they did not know how to teach L2 pragmatics because they had not studied instructional pragmatics. In practice, they said they mostly relied on giving

explanations about issues related in L2 pragmatics. However, they all acknowledged the importance of teaching and learning L2 pragmatics. For example, Hannah, a TE with a strong knowledge of L2 pragmatics, commented:

As far as I could observe, a lot of students are good at grammar, good at everything, but when they communicate, they often have communication breakdown. [. . .] In my viewpoint, pragmatic knowledge is absolutely important because one could be a little bit less competent in terms of linguistics, but they need to have pragmatic knowledge because it allows them to act politely and naturally in communication.

Similarly, Tammy, who reported not having had L2 pragmatics training and feeling unconfident about it, commented:

I think when learning a language to be able to use it, students need to have a lot of knowledge dimensions. Knowledge of pragmatics and knowledge of grammar have to go together. If students don't have knowledge of vocabulary and structures, they can't communicate. However, if they are lacking in pragmatic knowledge or semantic knowledge, they could communicate on a basic level; however, they can't be effective in their communication because people may not understand what they want to say.

All the TEs acknowledged that linguistic knowledge alone was not sufficient for being an effective communicator in L2 English. However, only three of them (Hannah, Henrik, and Queenie) reported correcting pragmatic errors, suggesting that, a focus on linguistic features was still the norm. These three TEs noted that it was important to give feedback on pragmatic errors because these errors were more difficult for learners to identify and correct without the teachers' help. In Henrik's words:

Nowadays there are a lot of tools for correcting grammar mistakes. There are a lot of available software that could show spelling mistakes, grammar mistakes, running on sentences. With the development of such software, all grammatical mistakes can be corrected. Therefore, for now, the most difficult errors to identify and correct are errors in language use, or in other words, pragmatic errors. In order to correct pragmatic errors, teachers need to have knowledge of society and culture besides knowledge of linguistics. Therefore, I think pragmatic errors are the major issues that teachers need to correct for students.

Similarly, Hannah and Queenie noted that pragmatic errors could have more serious consequences than linguistic errors. As Hannah explained:

If we make pragmatic errors, we would be assessed in terms of our personality. Meanwhile, if we make some grammatical mistakes, people just think that we just don't know or haven't studied about it. Because pragmatic errors could hurt people and make them feel uneasy.

In contrast, the other TEs believed that correcting linguistic errors should be prioritized because they saw that teaching about linguistic knowledge was the main responsibility of English teachers. Six of the TEs (Ann, Amy, Melinda, Queenie, Sarah, and Tammy) also believed that L2 pragmatics was only for students at an advanced level. For example, Tammy said:

At my university for the moment, student teachers' English proficiency levels are still low. Therefore, there are a lot of basic things that they don't know yet, let alone pragmatics. So their limited knowledge makes me feel it is superfluous to teach them about pragmatics. For example, students still make mistakes in conjugating the verb 'to be', thus I am afraid that teaching them about pragmatics can be too difficult for them to understand. Hence, the extent to which I integrate pragmatics into my lessons is still limited.

Tammy's comment reveals a belief that grammatical accuracy needed to be established before teachers give attention to communicative use of English. This belief was shared by most of the participating TEs who saw L2 pragmatics as relevant only at advanced levels.

For me, I just hope that they can write correctly in terms of grammar. This is already a goal for them and me, let alone talking about appropriacy in terms of contexts. In a class, there are around 1–2 student teachers who can reach the level to learn about pragmatics. The majority of them still have to struggle with words and grammar. (Ann)

I think current student teachers' knowledge is quite limited in terms of linguistic knowledge, grammar, and vocabulary. This leads to the fact that they cannot even tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong in terms of linguistics. Therefore, it is very difficult to ask them to understand when to use and not to use this and that. Hence, it is very time-consuming for teacher educators to assure that they can have a foundation, a background in linguistics. And I think they can't understand the in-depth knowledge of pragmatics until they can achieve this foundation knowledge. This is something beyond their capacity, except for some excellent student teachers who already have a good command of the target language, then they could be aware of pragmatics. (Sarah)

We see in these findings, a tension between acknowledging the importance of teaching L2 pragmatics on the one hand and, on the other, prioritizing feedback directed at linguistic rather than pragmatic errors. This tension was much more common for Group B – those with limited knowledge about and confidence in teaching L2 pragmatics.

As to what aspects of L2 pragmatic knowledge preservice teachers needed to learn about in their teacher education program, none of them mentioned L2 pragmatics pedagogical content knowledge. Instead, they all only mentioned knowledge of L2 pragmatics, including topics such as: politeness, speech acts, body language, formulaic expressions, authentic English in different contexts, sociopragmatic knowledge, knowledge of various English-speaking cultures. Thus, for these TEs, knowledge of L2 pragmatics was primary, and knowledge and skills at how to teach it was largely invisible. Quite apart from the gap this implies in curriculum content for preservice teachers, it also suggests that they are not getting opportunities to learn how to teach L2 pragmatics from observing their TEs' teaching practices. This will be further discussed in the next section.

3 TEs' reported practices of teaching L2 pragmatics

In the interviews, all TEs reported that there was no explicit or official requirement for the inclusion of L2 pragmatics and instructional pragmatics in their EFL teacher training

curriculum. In core courses on teaching methodologies, instructional pragmatics was not included. Whilst there was one third year elective course on pragmatics, this was short and theory oriented. In practical English language skills development courses (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and pragmatics-related courses such as courses on Discourse Analysis and Cross-cultural Communication, the teaching of L2 pragmatics was dependent on TEs' awareness, preferences, and expertise. Consequentially teaching practices were highly variable. Those with a good command of L2 pragmatics (i.e. Group A), reported frequently incorporating L2 pragmatics into their teaching practices, while those without it (Group B) did not. For instance, Hannah, from Group A, said:

Whenever I have a chance, I often emphasize the significance of pragmatic competence and give them explanation and examples.

Similarly, Ruby stated that because linguistics and pragmatics are closely related, she included many pragmatic features in her teaching. For example, in speaking courses, she focused on the teaching of speech acts, in which she paid special attention to the relationship between form and function. Also, in her lessons, she often made comparisons about the cultures of Vietnam and English-speaking countries which underlay differences in speech acts between English and Vietnamese. In reading courses, she emphasized cultural knowledge to enhance reading comprehension. Commenting on this, she said:

In my teaching, whenever possible, I always remind my students of this importance, telling them stories or giving them real examples of how a paucity of this knowledge can cause communication breakdown. I sometimes give them illustrations of how the same speech act can be performed quite differently by native-speakers and by English learners.

Likewise, Daisy, Rose and Henrik from Group A emphasized L2 pragmatics in their courses. They reported including L2 pragmatic aspects relevant to the content of their lessons. For example, in speaking courses, they taught knowledge of speech acts and authentic English in real-life communication. In writing courses, they drew their students' attention to different writing genres as well as to the appropriate use of structures and words depending on the relationship between the writers and the readers. Talking about her emphasis on L2 pragmatic knowledge, Daisy remarked:

What I often say to my student teachers is you could speak English with perfect grammar and pronunciation, but if you don't know when to say what to whom, that is, to communicate in English appropriately in different sociocultural contexts, you won't be considered a competent English user. I draw their attention to pragmatic competence by asking them to analyse authentic communication situations or carry out tasks involving different types of communication and analyse their own and their friends' pragmatic strategies.

In contrast, the Group B TEs treated L2 pragmatics as not their responsibility, since to them, it was the sole responsibility of the TEs who taught the course on L2 pragmatics. In their words:

Please remember that I don't teach pragmatics. I am only in charge of those courses which are a little bit related to pragmatics. (Ann)

No one asks teacher educators to teach L2 pragmatics, so it really depends on the teacher educators. (Amy)

I am not a lecturer of pragmatics, so, I'm sorry that I cannot answer this question. (Quinley)

4 TEs' actual L2 pragmatics teaching practices

Data from class observations showed that the TEs' actual practices concerning L2 pragmatics tended to be aligned with their teacher cognition. Thus, pragmatics was minimally included in all four observed classes for courses on speaking, listening, and discourse analysis, conducted by four of the TEs (3 from Group B and 1 from Group A). During their 90-minute lessons, Ann, Tammy, Sarah, and Queenie incorporated minimal amounts of L2 pragmatics teaching to varying degrees.

There was no explicit instruction on L2 pragmatics in Ann's discourse analysis class, for which the aim was to analyse texts in terms of genres. The class focused solely on analysing surface features of genres, such as formats and structures. Pragmatic concepts related to intended audience and language use were merely mentioned by name, without any detailed discussion. Given the aims of her lesson, pragmatic aspects such as textual interpretation by people from different cultures and societies, and the felicity conditions of a genre (Paltridge, 1995), could have been included. In other words, there were opportunities to incorporate more pragmatic knowledge, but Ann did not take advantage of them.

In Tammy's listening class around 8 minutes was spent discussing L2 pragmatics. The aim of this class was for preservice teachers to learn about making inferences and understanding humour. Despite her efforts in showing students how to make inferences based on the speakers' tone, intonation, and language use, she did not provide authentic examples of how English-speaking users expressed their intentions through verbal and non-verbal means. Below is a shortened excerpt of her explanation of inferences:

In making inferences, you need to understand more than the actual meanings of what you hear. For example, when you hear 'I think I need to offer more than 10 bucks for the book', this means 10 bucks is too little for the book. [. . .] You can make inferences based on the language, but also on the tone of the speakers. Sometimes the speaker is so sad, and you can see that the tone is not very positive. And if the voice is so high, maybe that means excitement. And sometimes you can base on the attitude of the speaker. For example, if the speaker speaks slowly, it can mean that he or she is not sure about the information he or she is saying. Or if the intonation falls down, it may mean that the speaker is hesitant. So you need to have the feeling of the language and also a lot of exposure to the real life conversations in order to guess the meanings behind the language.

Tammy used the same approach in her instruction on understanding humour. She introduced the four ways of creating humour in English – understatement, overstatement, exaggeration, and irony – by explaining the meanings of these terms. However, she did not provide real-life examples of these types of humour in English. In her words:

Humour is about making fun, making other people laugh. Here we can pay attention to the intonation. And humour can be made through an understatement, or an overstatement, or

exaggeration, or irony. Irony means something like criticism, it is like attacking other people but using humour. [. . .] You can identify irony through people's tone or voice. But it's not easy. Sometimes we hear the voice. We can catch the tone, but we don't know whether it is humour because we are not expert in that language. Also, the irony can be done by words. You can feel the words. [. . .] Also, humour can be made through exaggeration. [. . .] And humour can be made through understatement. Understatement is *nói giảm nhẹ, nói tránh* [she translated the word understatement into Vietnamese]. For example, you have 10 marks, but you say you have 7 marks. This example is not about humour, but it is about understatement.

In her reflection note, she acknowledged her limited knowledge as follows:

Understanding inferences in communication is not easy at all, especially when English is a foreign language to student-teachers. [. . .] There is no explicit explanation about why I should choose a or b (in 3 multiple choice questions) regarding the three dialogues in the Humour part, which made me feel difficult to explain the answer to my students. I feel I do not have enough knowledge and understanding to figure out clearly the message hidden behind each dialogue. I guess perhaps listening to CD is a bit different from listening to real conversations in real life, so grasping the figurative meaning hidden behind the conversation in a recording is also more challenging than in real-life communication.

I think I should improve my inferencing ability first. I also should listen more to have a more acute sense of inferencing.

Sarah's and Queenie's speaking classes were both focused on the speech acts of asking for and giving advice and making suggestions and included, respectively, 6 and 18 minutes of L2 pragmatics teaching. Queenie elicited from students the expressions they had learnt for making suggestions by giving hints and prompts. Next, she explained the formality of some expressions in both English and Vietnamese and then organized students into pairs to perform the role-play activity in the course book. Queenie wrote in her reflection note that she did not focus much on pragmatic aspects because they were not the foci on the lesson. She also stated that if there had been more time, she would have had more sample dialogues of making suggestions in formal and informal situations for the lesson to be more interesting and for students to be more aware of the formality of the situation and appropriacy of language in use.

Sarah provided her students with expressions of how to give advice with the use of modal verbs and some expressions like *I advise . . .*, *I would advise you . . .*, *Why don't you . . .?* After this, she gave some examples of giving advice and then played the role of a person seeking for advice and asked students to give her advice. Overall, Sarah focused on giving students linguistic resources rather than exploring pragmatic nuances of meanings in the various expressions. In her written reflection, she wrote that for the teaching of knowledge related to pragmatics to be more effective, she would have needed to 'make use of more authentic examples through video clips' so that she could 'illustrate how pragmatics work in real situations'.

In summary, the study found that TEs' knowledge and beliefs influenced the extent to which they incorporated L2 pragmatics into their teaching. TEs with more knowledge about L2 pragmatics were more likely to include it in their teaching. Similarly, the value

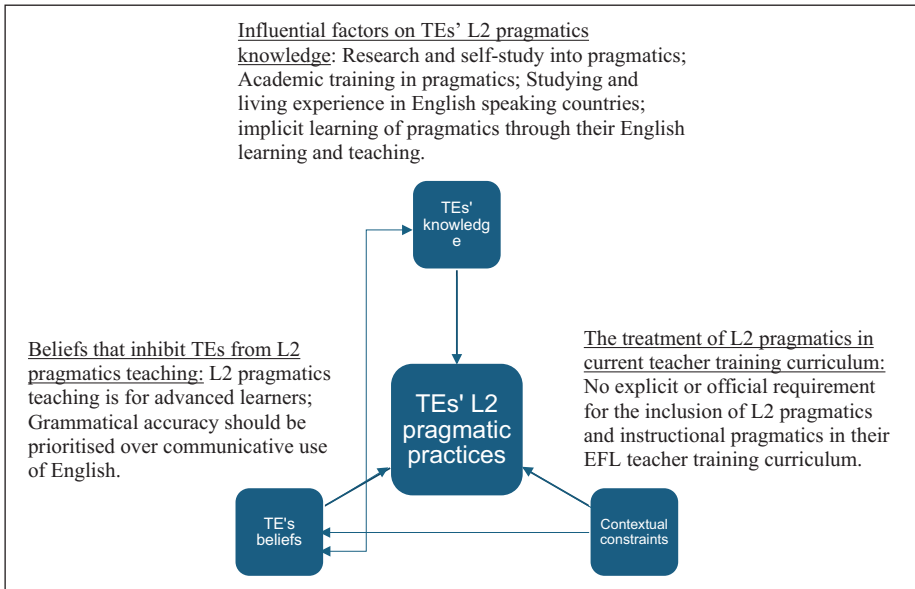


Figure 2. The relationship of teacher educators' (TEs') cognitions and practices of second language (L2) pragmatics teaching and impacts of various factors on their cognitions and practices.

they placed on L2 pragmatics impacted the effort they invested in teaching it. The relationship between TEs' knowledge, beliefs, and practices in L2 pragmatics teaching, along with the factors influencing these elements, is illustrated in the following Figure 2, which is based on Borg's (2003) framework and the study's findings.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the L2 pragmatic practices of TEs were primarily shaped by their L2 pragmatic knowledge. This study identified a key factor influencing the accumulation of this knowledge: their research or self-study in pragmatics. Additionally, TEs' beliefs played a role in determining whether to incorporate L2 pragmatics into their teaching. A significant finding revealed that Group B TEs, who believed L2 pragmatics should be delayed until preservice teachers achieved high linguistic competence, excluded it from their teaching. This belief may stem not only from limited L2 pragmatic knowledge but also from contextual constraints, such as the absence of explicit or official requirements for L2 pragmatics in the EFL teacher training curriculum. The interaction between internal factors (knowledge and beliefs) and external factors (curriculum and departmental requirements) shaped the TEs' L2 pragmatics instruction.

V Discussion

The findings showed that the 14 TEs were divided equally into two groups (Group A and Group B) based on the extent of their understanding of L2 pragmatics. Group A demonstrated a consistently well-developed understanding, while Group B did not. Although

observation data was limited to only four teachers (mainly from Group B), those who reported to most consistently integrate pragmatics into their teaching were from Group A. These findings were aligned with Jo's (2016) study that teachers who had been exposed to pragmatics in their teacher education were more likely to incorporate it into their teaching.

The findings also revealed that, whilst all TEs recognized the importance of L2 pragmatics, they acknowledged lacking the pedagogical content knowledge required to teach it. Previous studies by Jo (2016) and Vu (2017) highlighted a lack of subject matter knowledge on L2 pragmatics among EFL teachers. However, this study identified a lack of both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge among teacher educators with respect to L2 pragmatics as presented in Ishihara's (2022) framework (see Figure 2). These knowledge gaps are particularly concerning as they limit preservice teachers' opportunities to learn about L2 pragmatics and how to effectively teach this aspect to their future students.

The study also identified some misconceptions about L2 pragmatics teaching. For instance, some of the TEs in Group B believed that pragmatics should only be taught to advanced learners, contrary to the widely accepted view that pragmatics can be taught at all proficiency levels (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Tateyama, 2001; Yates, 2004; Yates & Wigglesworth, 2005). Another misconception was that pragmatics should be taught separately from linguistic features, which led some TEs to exclude pragmatics from their teaching practice. This belief contradicts the recommended integrated approach (Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2021).

The relationship between knowledge, beliefs, and reported teaching practices was complex and sometimes contradictory. Whilst the TEs' knowledge of pragmatics influenced their teaching, the relationship between knowledge and practice was not straightforward and appeared to be mediated by their beliefs. In some cases, beliefs did not align with their knowledge of pragmatics. Borg and Sanchez (2020) noted that it is not only important for teacher cognition to be consistent with teaching practices – contextual factors play a significant role – but also for teachers to be 'aware of their own cognitive processes, including their beliefs and the extent to which these are aligned with their practices, and to understand the causes of any nonalignment' (pp. 17–18). Given that teacher beliefs are relatively stable and resistant to change (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017), overcoming such misalignments may require significant effort to ensure the inclusion and practice of L2 pragmatics in teacher training programs.

A key factor influencing the quality of the TEs' L2 pragmatics knowledge was their experience in research or self-study on the topic. All five TEs who reported engaging in research or self-study on L2 pragmatics were part of Group A and were enthusiastic about including pragmatics in their teaching. This finding supports the value of teacher research in higher education in Vietnam (Truong, 2018). Since conducting research is now a compulsory task for lecturers at Vietnamese universities (Truong, 2018), encouraging TEs to conduct more research in this field could enhance their ability and willingness to incorporate L2 pragmatics into their teaching, both as subject matter knowledge and, more importantly, as pedagogical content knowledge.

Finally, external factors such as the institutional context also influenced the TEs' practices. In this teacher training program, L2 pragmatics had been largely overlooked in

curriculum documents and professional development, leaving it to individual teachers to decide whether or not to include it.

VI Conclusions

The findings from this study support the need to incorporate explicit L2 pragmatic instruction in teacher education programs to enhance teachers' awareness and competence in pragmatics (Cohen, 2016; Ton-Nu & Nguyen, 2023). They also align with calls to integrate instructional pragmatics into EFL teacher education curricula (e.g. Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009; Yildiz Ekin & Damar, 2013). However, in the context of the Vietnamese EFL teacher training program examined in this study, these recommendations have not been implemented. This may be reflective of a broader trend across similar programs in Vietnam and other regions, perpetuating the gap between research findings and the practical application of L2 pragmatics teaching in classrooms (Cohen, 2016).

The recognized significance of pragmatic competence in enhancing learners' L2 communication abilities (Culpeper et al., 2018; Ishihara, 2022; Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2021) necessitates that teacher education programs better prepare preservice teachers with knowledge of both L2 pragmatics and instructional pragmatics. Adequate training in these areas would enable teachers to help learners develop comprehensive communicative competencies, including intercultural competence, thus equipping them to function effectively as global citizens in the twenty-first century (Cohen, 2016; Ishihara, 2022).

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher cognition in L2 pragmatics. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for stakeholders looking to improve the quality of EFL teacher education in Vietnam and similar contexts. This can be achieved through curriculum updates informed by current research and through the systematic implementation of professional development (PD) programs focused on L2 pragmatics for in-service teachers. Given the limited research on teacher PD that directly addresses the development of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in L2 pragmatics, future studies should explore this area further to identify effective PD models for L2 pragmatics instruction.

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ORCID iDs

Anh T. Ton-Nu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8043-9838>

Jonathan Newton  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7264-6829>

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Appendix A: Interview preparation questionnaire

Instructions: As part of a research project on the teaching of pragmatics at Australian and Vietnamese TESOL teacher education universities, we would like to know your view on this issue. Please take your time to complete this questionnaire about your understanding of pragmatics and your classroom teaching of pragmatics. (It can take you 60 minutes to complete this questionnaire.) Please be informed that this is not a test and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. We are interested in your personal opinions. Your sincere answers will be of great value to us as they can ensure the accuracy of the data. The information provided by you will be confidentially secured and used only for the purposes of the intended research. Thank you very much in advance for your co-operation and assistance.

Notes: There is no space limit for your answers. The space provided is just a signal of the place for you to write your answers to the asked questions.

Personal information

Your name:

(N.B.: The name is for coding purposes. You can provide a pseudo-name/nickname here, but you should remember it in case you withdraw from the research.)

Please check the (✓) the relevant box and provide your answers to the asked questions:

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
2. How long have you been teaching English to prospective English teachers?
 - Less than 5 years
 - 5–10 years
 - More than 10–15 years
 - More than 15 years
3. What is the highest degree you have?
 - Bachelor
 - Master
 - Master of Research/Master of Philosophy
 - Ph.D.
4. Did you study for your degree(s) overseas or have you had any overseas English learning experience?
 - Yes. Which country / countries? And how long?
 - No.
5. Did you study pragmatics as part of your degree(s)?
 - Yes. What aspects of pragmatics did you study?
 - No. Do you feel the need of learning about pragmatics? If yes, how do you accumulate knowledge in this dimension of linguistics?
6. What courses do you teach to prospective English teachers?

The questionnaire

Part 1: Your view on teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a means for their English communication skills development.

Please read the questions carefully and answer in as much detail as possible:

1. When you teach English language lessons in the compulsory courses of speaking, writing, listening, and reading, do you provide your student teachers with cultural knowledge of the target language and appropriate language use in the target language? Please give justification and example(s) for your answer.
2. To what extent do you think English pragmatic knowledge (knowledge about how to communicate in English appropriately in different sociocultural contexts) is important to your student teachers' development of communicative abilities in English? Do you often raise their awareness of this importance? How do you draw their attention to this area and encourage them to learn about it?
3. What aspects of English pragmatics do you often teach in your lessons?
4. How comfortable do you feel when teaching sociopragmatic (sociocultural) and pragramlinguistic (language-form) issues of the English language?
5. When teaching these issues, do you compare with or draw on your student teachers' L1 pragmatics?
6. As a native Vietnamese speaker and an English language teacher educator, what kinds of Vietnamese pragmatic features that you think are distinctively different from English ones and require attention from both teachers and learners when teaching and learning English pragmatics?
7. Do you think that EFL student teachers can develop their pragmatic competence by themselves without receiving instructions in class? Please explain your answer.

Part 2: Your view on teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a discipline for their professional knowledge in the EFL context of Vietnam

8. In your opinion, in order to be able to incorporate pragmatic knowledge into the teaching of the English language in the EFL context of Vietnam, what pragmatic information should student teachers be provided during their teacher training course?
9. Is how to teach pragmatic knowledge covered in the courses of English Language Teaching Methodologies at your universities? If yes, how is it included? If no, do you think that it is necessary for it to be included? Why or why not?

Part 3: Your practices of teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a means for their English communication skills development, and as a discipline for their professional knowledge in the EFL context of Vietnam

10. When teaching English pragmatic knowledge as an integrated part in such English communicative courses as Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking to

- your student teachers, what approach(es) and method(s) do you apply? Could you give a brief example to demonstrate your used approach(es) and method(s)?
11. When teaching knowledge of English pragmatics as a discipline for your student teachers' professional knowledge (for example, when you teach the definitions of pragmatics and its related concepts like speech act, politeness, conversational implicature), what approach(es) and method(s) do you use?
 12. Do you teach your student teachers specific methods and techniques to teach pragmatic knowledge to their future EFL students in your teaching methodology courses? If yes, please share about the methods and techniques that you teach. If no, please explain why. (Please write n/a if you do not teach the courses of teaching methodologies).
 13. On the whole, are you satisfied with the way pragmatics is integrated into the curriculum at your university? What could be changed?

Appendix B: Interview protocol

Part 1: Your view on teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a means for their English communication skills development

1. Through the Interview Preparation Questionnaire, the issue about the importance of English pragmatic knowledge in the overall communicative competence of student teachers has been raised.
So, how important do you think it is to teach student teachers pragmatic knowledge?
What do you think about the current practices of incorporating pragmatics into such English communicative courses as Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking at your university?
Is it explicitly stated in each course description or given to teacher educators' choices?
2. Please tell me about your favourite example(s) of incorporating pragmatic knowledge into these English communicative courses.
3. Besides the above-mentioned English communicative courses, in what other courses of teacher education at your university is pragmatics likely to be covered? What areas of pragmatics are often taught in these courses?
What pragmatic knowledge is covered in the course of Pragmatics?
4. In your opinion, what areas of Pragmatics must be taught to your student teachers? What can be skipped if there is limited time?
5. How do you use pragmatic materials and tasks in your classroom teaching?
Could you tell me about an example in which you use pragmatic materials and tasks in your class?
6. Do you have any difficulties or challenges when teaching student teachers pragmatic knowledge? If yes, what are they? How do you deal with them?
7. Please tell me about an experience you had that involved solving a difficulty or challenge when teaching pragmatic knowledge to your student teachers.

8. When teaching English pragmatic knowledge to your student teachers, what do you do if you do not feel like an authority on some aspects of target language pragmatics?
9. In what areas of Pragmatics might you want to obtain more information and knowledge?
10. Which errors do you think are more serious for your student teachers? Grammatical or pragmatic errors? Why?
If your student teachers make a pragmatic error, how would you correct it? Could you give some examples?
11. Do you think learners of English as a second or foreign language need to develop understanding of other Englishes other than native English (American, Australian, British English)? Why? / Why not?
Now I would like to hear more about how you have learnt about English pragmatics as experience as learners may shape your teaching to some extent.
12. How have you learned pragmatic knowledge?
13. Is your way of learning pragmatics in particular and English in general influenced by your mother tongue and by other people around you? If yes, how is it influenced?

Part 2: Your view on teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a discipline for their professional knowledge

14. Is there a course in the teacher training program at your university that provides prospective English teachers specific knowledge and skills required to teach English pragmatics? If yes, could you describe that course in detail? If no, do you suggest to create that course? Why?
15. In your opinion, what types of English pragmatic knowledge and teaching methods should be compulsorily taught in the above-mentioned course?

Part 3: Your practices of teaching English pragmatics to prospective English teachers as a means for their English communication skills development, and as a discipline for their professional knowledge in the EFL context of Vietnam

16. In your opinion, what are the most suitable and effective approach and method to teach target language pragmatics in Vietnam in particular and in other EFL contexts in general?

* Other questions to both parts 1, 2, and 3 are based on teacher educators' answers to the interview preparation questionnaire completed prior to these interviews with them.