

English Language Proficiency and Cultural Competence within Vietnamese English Language Teacher Education Programs: Requirements and Preparations

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Abstract

English Language Teaching and Learning (ELTL) in Vietnam has been dramatically developing to address more challenging requirements of the new socio-economic context. The Government remains a view that improving ELTL will be a strong support for the country's performance in the global economy. A series of policy innovations have been implemented including redesigning curriculum, producing textbooks, and providing lecturers with targeted professional development opportunities.

This study is aiming at investigating preparations of the English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) curriculum for graduate's standards, particularly linguistic and cultural competence so that graduate students can perform effectively and appropriately with people of another language-culture background on their terms, which is essential in the globalisation era. The study was conducted at ELTE institutions in all parts of Vietnam. The data included surveys, interviews, and policy documents.

The results of the study reveal a strong alignment between curriculum and standards of English language knowledge but a weak alignment in English language proficiency skills. The variations in English language courses and requirements across the participating institutions, and the variations in curriculum and standards of socio-cultural courses are also reported. Not many participating lecturers show their confidence with their curriculum providing sufficient preparation for students' cultural competence.

It is recommended to develop and/or revise curriculum based on national standards and social expectations so that students are better prepared to be proficient in multicultural teaching contexts. The study findings and implications are meaningful for multiple educational stakeholders, including policy makers, administrators, instructors, employers, and learners.

Keywords: alignment, cultural competence, English language proficiency, requirements, standards