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**THE PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND  
LEARNING AS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS  
IN TWO CONTEXTS: CHINA AND NEW ZEALAND**

**XIUFANG WANG**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the process of tertiary English language teaching and learning as experienced by teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts: China and New Zealand. Specifically, it explored classroom practice in terms of six key perspectives: instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks by means of questionnaires, the Adapted Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme, stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) and interviews.

Data for this study were collected from six regular scheduled lessons randomly selected and videotaped in the two tertiary contexts, as well as from the perspectives of 120 Chinese students (104 EFL and 16 ESL) and their 6 teachers (3 in each context) who experienced and/or viewed these videotaped lessons.

This thesis uses three theoretical strands: (1) English language teaching (ELT) contexts – definitions and distinguishing EFL and ESL; (2) ELT approaches – the Grammar-Translation method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT); and (3) ELT classroom practice – instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction and classroom tasks. It revisits the background of Chinese traditional educational culture and its influences on Chinese English education, discusses the GTM and CLT in the Chinese EFL context, and covers the literature on ELT classroom practice in both contexts. These strands are used in theorizing the current research.

This research aims to enable the views of Chinese EFL and ESL tertiary students and their EFL and ESL teachers on ELT in these two contexts to be heard or studied. It is an attempt to better comprehend the various factors which might aid

or hinder the development of Chinese EFL and ESL students' English communicative competence in these English language classes. This includes addressing how EFL and ESL teachers might best help their Chinese students to achieve communicative competence in the classroom setting and which teaching approaches are the most effective in doing so.

The findings showed that a conventional teacher-centred instructional approach continues to have considerable purchase for Chinese EFL and ESL students in both contexts. The findings suggest that it is important and also necessary, to some extent, to have teacher-centred instruction and grammar teaching according to students' needs and students' language levels. Nonetheless, it also revealed that the Chinese ESL students who shared the same Chinese culture and English education background as the Chinese EFL students had different perspectives on classroom tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL context after they experienced the Western English education for a short time in New Zealand. Another finding of this study was that age-appropriateness should be taken into consideration by ESL teachers when they design their classroom tasks for Chinese ESL tertiary students.

## **DEDICATION**

**To my kind and considerate husband, Owen Quin Casey**

**And**

**To my dear and lovely daughter: Yanzi, who accompanied me and looked after me in the time of hardship and whose love and patience supported me in the process of my research and the writing up of this thesis.**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- L2 --- second language
- ESL --- English as a second language
- EFL --- English as a foreign language
- ELT --- English language teaching
- GTM --- grammar-translation method
- CLT --- communicative language teaching
- TBLT --- task-Based Language Teaching
- FonFS --- Focus-on-FormS
- FonM --- Focus-on-Meaning
- FonF --- Focus-on-Form
- IRC --- Intensive reading course
- SRI --- the stimulated recall interview
- Int --- the interview
- COLT --- communicative orientation of language teaching
- CNT --- the Chinese EFL key teacher participant
- CNS --- Chinese EFL student participants
- NZT --- the New Zealand ESL key teacher participant
- NZS --- New Zealand ESL student participants
- NZL1, 2, 3 --- Videotaped Lesson 1, 2, 3 in the New Zealand ESL context
- CNL1, 2, 3 --- Videotaped Lesson 1, 2, 3 in the Chinese EFL context

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

English is the most commonly spoken language in the world, when combining native and non-native speakers in the world (Crystal, 2003). Because English is so widely spoken and because it is used in prestigious domains around the world, it has often been referred to as a “global language” (Crystal, 2003, p. 1), the lingua franca of the modern era. English is the language most often learned by non-native speakers around the world in two ways: one is learning English as a second language (ESL) in English speaking countries, for example, New Zealand; and the other is learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in many countries around the world, especially in Asian countries, for example, in China (see Section 2.2). It is estimated that non-native English speakers now outnumber native speakers by a ratio of 3 to 1 (Crystal, 2003, p. 69). Therefore, English language education in ESL and EFL contexts has become a significant world-wide industry, and research on English language teaching and learning has played an important role in the development of English language education. Even though there are many researchers focused on English language education, there are relatively few studies which have compared EFL and ESL practice. There are also few studies that have directly compared the EFL and ESL classroom practice in the New Zealand and Chinese contexts, hence the significance of this current study.

The chapter firstly describes the researcher’s personal research background and the origin of the researcher’s personal interest in some problems she encountered in the Chinese EFL context and in the New Zealand ESL context. Following this, this chapter discusses the classroom practice experienced by the Chinese EFL and ESL tertiary students and their EFL and ESL teachers in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. In this thesis, firstly an overview of the Chinese EFL context since 1980 is given. Then the New Zealand ESL context is introduced. Finally, the structure of the thesis will be outlined.

## **1.2 Personal research background**

I started to study English when I was a high school student in China in 1974. I went to university in China in 1979, majoring in English. In China, all teachers were trained to be “a teacher who should have a bucket of water if he will give students a cup of water”. That is to say, a teacher should be a scholar, an authority of knowledge and a giver of knowledge. So I studied very hard. I obtained my diploma and Master’s degree majoring in English Literature and Applied Linguistics in China. After graduation, I worked firstly as an associate lecturer, then as a lecturer, a senior lecturer, and lastly as an associate professor teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a university in China until I went abroad in 1999. My twenty-five-year EFL learning and EFL teaching experience in China had laid a solid foundation in Chinese traditional educational culture and the Chinese traditional teaching methodology. At that time, year after year I taught my tertiary students written English following nationally published textbooks, which would be examined by my university or by the Chinese government in the Chinese EFL context. I learned English as a foreign language by means of teacher-centred instruction, Grammar-Translation Method and I taught my students English in the same way that my teachers had taught me in the text-oriented examination EFL educational system in China.

In 1999, I worked as an academic scholar in a university of Australia, and then I immigrated to New Zealand in 2001. Since 1999, I have thus had many opportunities to live or work with Chinese international ESL students in Australia and New Zealand. My English language teaching background and my curiosity concerning how Chinese international ESL students learned their English in the English-speaking countries led me to pursue some informal investigations. The voices I heard from most of the Chinese international ESL students around me on their English language learning experience in Australia or in New Zealand were negative. Most of them commented that their expectations of learning English efficiently abroad could not be satisfied. They complained that they felt that they had learnt nothing but played games in class and thought that it was a waste of time and money to study English abroad.

In 2004, I obtained a part-time position as an ESL teacher for New Zealand’s largest settlement agency, the National Association of ESOL Home Tutor Scheme. The aim

of the Scheme is to provide English language skills and social support for effective resettlement of adult refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand (ESOL Home Tutors, 2008). In contrast to my previous teaching experiences back in China, in this position, I taught English for daily life without authoritative textbooks and without exams but with a huge variety of teaching references and resources. According to my Chinese students' learning experiences and backgrounds and their learning needs, I edited a dialogue for every lesson, focusing on vocabulary and daily oral English. I printed these dialogues and gave them to the students so that they could review after class. That is to say, I taught useful daily oral English which could help my Chinese ESL students to deal with issues of their daily lives in the English-speaking country, New Zealand. I would teach grammar incidentally when the students felt confused at some language points or when they made serious errors. If necessary, sometimes I would teach them some grammar systematically. Many Chinese adult students with advanced English came to my class from other classes of English-native speaking teachers so as to learn some grammar to deal with some English language phenomenon which confused them. Based on my teaching experience with the adult ESL Chinese students in New Zealand, I observed that an appropriate amount of teaching language knowledge, such as vocabulary and grammar, could help them to acquire communicative competence of English language quickly and solidly. I was convinced by my teaching experience in New Zealand that such a teaching approach is appropriate for Chinese adult ESL students or immigrants.

My interest in describing and comparing Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL teaching practice comes from hearing the long-standing dissatisfaction of many Chinese ESL and EFL students with some areas of the current teaching approaches and classroom practice in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. It is my view that these dissatisfactions could be understood and thus could perhaps be addressed by describing and exploring the processes of English language teaching and learning experienced by Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers in the two contexts: China and New Zealand in terms of comparative perspectives. In this study, I do this by investigating the complex classroom situations in the EFL and ESL contexts experienced by Chinese tertiary students and their EFL and ESL teachers in terms of three significant areas of SLA theorizing: ELT contexts; ELT approaches; and some issues relating to ELT (instructional approaches, language pedagogies, use

of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks) in terms of comparative perspectives. The development of learners' communicative competence may be influenced by many factors, such as motivation, age, gender, personality, capabilities and so on (Mitchell & Myles, 2004), which, however, are not the focus of the present study. Chinese cultural influences and ELT classroom practice in these two contexts will also be addressed.

There is a paucity of systematic and empirical research that may enable Chinese EFL and ESL students' voices to be heard or studied. There are few studies which examine how Chinese EFL and ESL students perceive teaching and learning in the New Zealand ESL context as well as in the Chinese EFL context and how Chinese EFL teachers and New Zealand ESL teachers perceive English teaching in the two contexts: China and New Zealand. In addition to describing the two contexts, this research, records the voices of both Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers. The intention is to understand the perspectives of both Chinese tertiary EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers concerning the classroom practice of English language teaching and learning in each context. It is also an attempt to better comprehend the various factors which might aid or hinder the development of the Chinese EFL and ESL students' English communicative competence in these English language classes. This includes how EFL and ESL teachers can effectively help their students to achieve communicative competence in the classroom setting and which teaching approach is the most effective way in doing so. As classroom-centred research, it will follow a descriptive qualitative comparative case study approach and provide a holistic account of the phenomena being studied.

### **1.3 The Chinese EFL context**

In the last two decades or so, economic development in the People's Republic of China has been growing at an astonishing pace and there has been an explosion in commercial, technological and cultural exchanges with other parts of the world. This has given rise to a pressing demand for English proficiency (Hu, 2002b; Liao, 2002; Wu, 2001). Events such as the People's Republic of China's entry into the World Trade

Organization and a successful bid for the Olympics, held in 2008, have created more nationwide zeal for learning English.

As in many EFL countries in Asia, the educational system in China is centrally controlled, with the government specifying both the context and methodology of teaching (Liao, 2004). The State Education Development Commission (SEDC) is “the official authority for setting educational policy”, and is “the representative of the highly centralized Chinese system of education” (Liao, 2004, p. 271).

China has the largest training and testing centre for the International English Language Test System (IELTS) in the world. It also has the largest population of English EFL teachers and English students in the world. Recently, it has been estimated that there are more than 1 billion primary, secondary, and tertiary school EFL students and approximately 300 million people learning English in China (Liu & Teng, 2006) . Among these are 500,000 secondary school EFL teachers and 1.5 million primary school EFL teachers (Liao, 2000).

English is a compulsory course mandated by the Chinese Ministry of Education for millions of Chinese students from junior high schools right through to graduate schools. It is required that there are four class hours of ELT a week, 18 weeks a term, for 12 terms in a high school and four-eight terms in a university. In many regional capital and coastal cities, ELT starts at primary school for four hours a week. On average, a Chinese student would spend 1200 hours learning English at middle school<sup>1</sup>, 380 hours (minimum) in undergraduate<sup>2</sup> study and another 320 hours in post-graduate study<sup>3</sup> (Zhang & Gao, 2001).

---

<sup>1</sup> *Yinyu Jiaoyu Dagang - English Syllabus* was particularly designed by the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) in 1993 and revised in 2000 for all students of junior and senior high schools in China.

<sup>2</sup> **Daxue Yingyu Jiaoxue Dagang (College English syllabus)** was designed by the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) in 1999. This syllabus is specially designed for national, non-English-major, university students.

<sup>3</sup> There is no national English syllabus for the post-graduate level. Generally, M.A. students take 320 hours to learn advanced English in the first two years of their three-year study program.



The importance of knowing English in China has experienced two stages. In the first stage, in the 1980s, English was regarded by the public as the “wings of a tiger”, a clear advantage for those who could master English alongside their own other university major. In the second stage, from the 1990s, accompanied by the rapid development of economics, science and technology in China, this perception has changed. English language competence has been deemed to be “one leg of a man” by Chinese society. Without the ability of English, a man cannot walk well or fast in his career. For instance, a large-scale investigation in 1999 (He, Yin, Huang, & Liu) revealed that the number of professions which require employees to be qualified, not only in their own university majors but also in English language ability, has increased dramatically with the development of economics, science, and technology in China. Therefore, it is clear that English language competence has become increasingly important in Chinese people’s lives.

Owing to the highly centralized Chinese system of education, English language teaching (ELT) in China is promoted by a national campaign backed by state policy. ELT is not only an educational issue but also a wider social and political issue, because English is perceived by the Chinese government as a necessary means of realizing its modernization program, and an important cornerstone of international competition (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Maley, 1986, 1995). According to the promotion policy in China, English language is deemed to be an essential qualification for all scientists, academics, and professionals working in state sectors all over the country. It is a prerequisite for promotion and the granting of academic titles. (Exceptions are made for teachers of primary and middle schools and people whose fields of study are typically “Chinese”, such as traditional Chinese medicine and classic Chinese language and literature.) It is not uncommon to see senior lecturers, doctors and engineers sitting in the classroom learning or improving their English in order to be eligible for promotion to higher professional ranks by means of passing specially designed national English examinations for professional promotion.

However, ELT in China has historically experienced “several rises and falls” in the status of EFL teaching since the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949 (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 64). In fact, English has been deemed to be a “barometer of modernization” (Ross, 1992) with the result that English has come to be widely

accepted as an effective tool for realizing modernization in the economy, science, technology, and national development. However, English has sometimes been viewed as “a pathway to individual and cultural transformation” to Westernization (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 64). The conflicting and contradictory feelings about ELT in China can be seen in questions of “whether learning a foreign language is a kind of ‘spiritual pollution’, or whether modernization means Westernization” (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 64).

It has been more than two decades since the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was introduced to China, and the various components of ELT, including curriculums, syllabuses, textbooks, tests, and teachers’ professional competence, have been upgraded (Hu, 2003b). The Ministry of Education in China has based the country’s English language teaching objectives on a general goal of developing students’ communicative abilities (Liao, 2004) since CLT has spread into China. The general objectives of the Intensive Reading Course (IRC), one of key compulsory courses in Chinese universities, according to *the Higher Education Specialized English Syllabus* (a new edition), are to try to help students to develop all-round communicative ability in the four language skills --- speaking, listening, reading and writing --- and an ability to use English for communication (Higher-Education-English-Specialist-Group, 2000). However, many research studies in China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002a, 2005a; Leng, 1997; Liao, 2002; Ng & Tang, 1997; Yu, 2001) report that the implementation of CLT in ELT in China has been blocked by constraints associated with factors such as the economy, administration, culture, population, the educational system, and teacher quality as well as CLT itself. The studies show that CLT principles are rarely found in the classroom, especially in a tertiary classroom. The weak or strong versions of the Grammar-translation method still continue to prevail in Asian countries, especially in many parts of China (Fotos, 2005; Hu, 2003b, 2005a). However, the literature also suggests that English language teaching in China is actually based on a traditional language methodology, and its long lasting effects in China will be discussed below.

#### **1.4 The New Zealand ESL context for mainland Chinese students**

The rapid economic development in Mainland China has caused a global phenomenon of many Chinese students going abroad to study in various English-speaking countries in the world (Gao, 2006), such as the United States, England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As reported in the census conducted by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2002), significant rates of growth were recorded in the number of Mainland Chinese students undertaking study in New Zealand. More recently, there were 38,950 Chinese students in New Zealand in June 2004. This accounts for 56% of the total population of international students in New Zealand (Chinese students' survey, 2004). China continues to be the top country of origin for international students in New Zealand (Chinese students' survey, 2004, p. 4). Because of the high percentage of Chinese ESL students among all international students in New Zealand (Chinese students' survey, 2004), recognising the differences between the EFL context in China and the ESL context in New Zealand is important to understand the success or otherwise of the Chinese international students' adaptation to ESL education.

ESL has been offered in a number of contexts in New Zealand, such as language schools/centres, primary or high schools, and tertiary institutions. A Ministry of Education census (2002) reports that although the English language schools/centres in New Zealand are the smallest sector among providers of ESOL programmes for international students by number among tertiary institutions, primary or high schools, they have the largest numbers of international students enrolled. To my knowledge, most Chinese international students first undertake a full-time English language program in New Zealand language schools/centres to improve their English proficiency as the pre-admission study for further academic study if they do not meet the English requirements of New Zealand tertiary providers. Therefore, New Zealand English language schools/centres, though being the smallest in the sector, play a vitally important role not only in the education industry in New Zealand but also in the development of Chinese international students' English language learning, as well as their further tertiary study in New Zealand.

However, the New Zealand education industry has had a challenging time in maintaining its reputation as a high quality provider of export education in some Asian

countries, especially in China (Education, 2003; Li, 2004; Mallard, 2002; Sinoski, 2003). The literature shows that there were thousands of complaints from Chinese ESL students about New Zealand education quality, such as the poor standards of ELT and lack of qualified teachers in English language schools in New Zealand (Li, 2004; McLeod, 2003; Quirke, 2002). Some international students even felt that they had been cheated because they had become the ‘cash cows’ (McLeod, 2003) of “New Zealand’s failing educational system” (Li, 2004, p. 3).

A survey on students’ perceptions and views in two New Zealand English language schools undertaken by Li (2004) indicated that not all Asian student participants were satisfied with their learning in New Zealand. His findings reveal that communicative language teaching (CLT) methods adopted by New Zealand teachers are “culturally incompatible with Asian students’ learning conceptualisations” and “there exists a significant mismatch with Asian students’ learning expectations” (p. 3). Li also reports that student negative perceptions of the educational quality and unhappy experiences in the New Zealand language schools made them feel it was ‘a waste of time and money’ to come to New Zealand to study the language and they thought they could learn more English in China than in New Zealand.

Li’s survey further revealed that these unmet expectations of Asian students “are associated with many complicated issues, but teacher competence, teaching pedagogy and intercultural communication issues have emerged as three key interrelated issues.” (2004, p. 15). However, an explanation from *the New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (the Framework) (Framework, 2005) indicates that there exists a mismatch between familiar and new approaches to teaching and learning for Asian students: “it can be difficult, especially for some older learners, to become accustomed to learning through methodologies that are different from those they are used to or prefer” (p. 9). It is difficult for adult international students to shift from a familiar teaching approach to a new one in the new language context.

Hence, it is inevitable that many New Zealand language schools/centres have had to face questions about how to provide a successful language learning experience for their Chinese ESL students, given apparent differences between New Zealand and Chinese cultures of learning. It is thus important and significant for us to describe and

compare how Chinese EFL and Chinese ESL students are taught and to examine how Chinese ESL students perceive ELT in the New Zealand ESL context.

The present study attempts to fill in the gap in the literature by examining classroom practice in the Chinese tertiary EFL context and the New Zealand tertiary ESL context. Through a qualitative approach, the classroom practice in the two contexts is investigated in terms of six key perspectives: instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks.

The main aims of the thesis are to enhance English language teaching and learning in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts, by means of unfolding the real stories happening in the classrooms of China and New Zealand, and to investigate how Chinese traditional English education benefits Chinese tertiary EFL students in China; how New Zealand English education benefits Chinese tertiary ESL students in New Zealand; and how Chinese and New Zealand English education could adjust or improve so as to meet the Chinese EFL and ESL students' language requirements.

## **1.5 Thesis outline**

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study and the contextual issues that led to its conception. Chapter 2 explores the key theoretical rationales on which this study is based. Three theoretical areas are reviewed: ELT contexts, ELT approaches and ELT classroom practice. In Chapter 3, the revisiting of the background of Chinese traditional culture and its influences on Chinese education are presented, and the literature review concerning ELT classroom practice in the two contexts is discussed separately. In Chapter 4, the methodological design and approach for the present study are revealed. The procedures and instruments that were selected and modified for the investigation of the process of English language teaching and learning of each participating context are examined in turn. In Chapters 5 and 6, it is presented that the findings of this study regarding EFL classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context and ESL classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context in terms of six areas related to ELT: instructional approaches,

language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction, and classroom tasks. In Chapter 7 the similarities and differences of EFL and ESL classroom practice in these two contexts are discussed as perceived by both Chinese EFL and ESL tertiary students and their Chinese EFL teachers and New Zealand ESL teachers. From this, theoretical and pedagogical implications are drawn, followed by a description of a newly developed definition of instructional approaches. This includes a new classification of the language teaching pedagogical approaches, which indicates a novel perspective on relationships between the approaches, and an outline of the main trends of the development of English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL two contexts. In Chapter 7, the limitations of the study are also indicated and suggestions are provided for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is to discuss three English language teaching (ELT) aspects, ELT contexts, ELT approaches and ELT classroom practice in terms of six perspectives: instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction and classroom tasks.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine theory and research that have addressed the creation of effective learning environments in both the English as foreign language (EFL) classroom contexts and the English as second language (ESL) classroom contexts. However, the literature regarding to tertiary English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context, as well as in the New Zealand ESL context, is lamentably thin. Rigorous, data-based empirical researches on the extent to which different teaching approaches can facilitate Chinese tertiary students to efficiently develop their communicative competence in these two contexts in terms of a comparative perspective are even scarcer. Some empirical research focuses on English language teaching (ELT) conducted at an elementary school level (in the East Asian contexts, e.g. in Japan, Korea and Taiwan) (Butler, 2005) and some at a secondary school level (e.g. in China, Hu, 2002b) but not at a tertiary school level.

The present research attempts to illuminate how EFL for Chinese tertiary students is experienced in China and how ESL for Chinese international tertiary students is experienced in New Zealand. It also studies on that to what extent and in what ways the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) and the Task-Based Language Teaching Approach (TBLT) are used in these two different contexts. This research aims to examine (A) what similarities and differences there are between tertiary English language classroom practice in

China and in New Zealand; (B) what kinds of classroom tasks are appropriate to Chinese students at the tertiary level and how classroom tasks efficiently help Chinese students to acquire communicative ability in both EFL and ESL contexts; (C) how Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers in the selected classes of the two contexts interpret their classroom practice; and (D) to what extent the perspectives of Chinese EFL and ESL students or their EFL and ESL teachers in these two contexts are aligned. Moreover, the present study will also investigate what teachers' and students' reactions are to English teaching in the other setting, which has not been undertaken in the ESL research literature to date.

To understand thoroughly existing researches in English language teaching and learning in China and New Zealand, it is essential to provide an overview of ESL and EFL contexts; to outline different teaching approaches, such as the Grammar-Translation method (GTM), the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and the Task-based Language Teaching approach (TBLT); and to have a general understanding of concepts related to some specific issues of ELT classroom practice so as to bring to light the cognitive and pedagogical basis of English language teaching and learning, instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction and classroom tasks. All these issues will be addressed in order to theorize the findings related to this study's research questions (Section 3.7).

## **2.2 ELT contexts**

Many education scholars have considered context in education as “a highly significant variable” (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & LeCornu, 2003, p. 24). Gibbons (2002) points out there are two kinds of contexts in respect of language usage, a context of culture (see Chapter 3 in this thesis) – a culture with “particular assumptions and expectations”, and a context of situation (discussed in this section) – “the particular occasion on which the language is being used” (p. 2). Much literature argues that it is the learning and teaching context that makes the difference (Liu, 2001). As Prabhu (1990) has noted, there is no single teaching approach or method that works for all



contexts and no single method works best for a particular context. In a similar vein, Li (2002) states that “there is no such a thing in language teaching as the ‘master key’ that would solve all problems” in different contexts (p. 14). Some researchers (e.g. Holliday, 1994) have warned that a method cannot easily be exported from one context to another, which is very similar to Groundwater-Smith’s (2003) argument for teaching in accordance to specific contexts. That is, a method is not equally suited to all contexts, and different methods suit different teachers and students in different contexts. Mitchell and Lee (2003) reveal that it is both complex and challenging to transfer effective pedagogies directly from one context to the other. Li (2002) claims that “it would be pedagogically naïve to directly transplant models developed in ESL contexts to an EFL context” (p. 14). This is because, as Pica (2005) argues, that pedagogies are not only context-dependent but also cultural products. That is to say, a successful teaching pedagogy in one country cannot achieve similar results when applied to a culturally different classroom setting in which learners’ particular expectations, role assumptions, learning needs, goals and environments are different (Li, 2002). Hence, it is argued that both ESL and EFL teachers need to be aware of the specific cultural and contextual pedagogies of ESL and EFL.

Many researchers (Braine, 1999; Fotos, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 1998c; Liao, 2002; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Tomlinson, 2005) report that EFL is very different from ESL. In Nayar’s (1997) view, the blurring of ESL-EFL differences is “not academically or pedagogically advantageous” (p. 27). However, some researchers (e.g. Liao, 2004) advocate that Western language teaching approaches (e.g. CLT) can be transferred directly into the Chinese EFL context with support from the government of China.

Benson (2000) comments that Harold Palmer’s “enthusiasm for phonetics and direct teaching suffered badly when he was confronted by the realities of institutional language teaching in Japan” (pp. 120-121). Most methodologists seem to agree that “language teachers must pay attention to local conditions rather than taking a set of ideas” around the world with them (Stubbs, 2000, p. 16) and that both curriculum and methodology should be determined only after a consideration of local conditions. For example, Byram & Cain (1998) describe that in an experiment, learners of French in English schools and learners of English in French schools were helped to acquire

cultural competence. They found out that although the principles, aims and objectives were the same in both countries, the methods had to be different because “the teaching contexts prevailing in each country were entirely different” (p. 32).

This present research aims to investigate:

1. to what degree tertiary EFL and ESL teachers in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts are aware of EFL-ESL distinctions,
2. how they adopt appropriate teaching methods and classroom tasks in ways that are meaningful and satisfying to the needs of Chinese tertiary EFL and ESL students in both contexts, China and New Zealand, and
3. what were the effects of language contexts on classroom teaching practice in these EFL and ESL contexts.

What we need is “a language teaching approach that focuses primarily on the learning context in its methodology” (Butler, 2005, p. 425). It is, hence, necessary to distinguish ESL contexts from EFL contexts before we discuss real ELT tertiary classroom practice in both the ESL and EFL contexts, New Zealand and China, respectively.

### **2.2.1 Definitions of EFL and ESL**

English language teaching contexts, generally speaking, can be divided into two kinds, EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language). Both EFL and ESL are the English language teaching contexts that bear directly on the use or study of English by non-native English speakers (NNES) “who already use at least one other language” (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 137). EFL indicates the study of English in a non-English-speaking region, such as by Chinese students of English in China. ESL refers to “the learning of English in an English-speaking environment, such as by foreign students in English” or “a second language as the non-home but official language of a nation which must be learned by its citizens for full social, economic, and political participation in the life of that nation” (Paulston, 1992, p. ix). Not surprisingly, there are considerable differences between the ways English is taught in these two contexts.

### 2.2.2 Distinguishing EFL and ESL

According to Li's research (2002) on the classroom communication between Chinese learners and expatriate teachers in China, differences between EFL and ESL contexts include:

- make-up of the student population
- purposes of learning
- learning tasks
- requirements of language proficiency
- quality and quantity of language interactions
- socio-cultural contexts in which teaching and learning take place

(Li, 2002, p. 12).

However, the main differences between EFL and ESL in the present research are the geographical context, the purposes of learning English, the teaching methodologies, and the English teachers themselves. Each of these will be discussed below.

One factor in the distinction between EFL and ESL is *the geographical distribution* in which a language is spoken (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). English language in ESL situations is widely used outside the classroom, such as in commerce, administration and education; however, English plays no such roles in an EFL situation. The ESL context, such as that in New Zealand, provides a language environment for learners to practise English outside the classroom, while the EFL context, as in China, cannot do this.

Another is *the purpose of learning English* which is difference between EFL and ESL contexts. In an EFL context, English language is learned for qualification of enrolment as required to pass exams as a necessary part of one's education, or for career progression while working for an organization with an international focus, or for travel, for pleasure, or for greater insight into one's own language. Whereas, in an ESL context, English is learned in order to function in the new host country, for example, within the school system (if being a child), to find and hold down a job (if being an adult), to perform the necessities of daily life, and to use English within an

English-speaking region, generally by long-stay or permanent residents or refugees, immigrants and their children (Johnson & Johnson, 1998c).

The third factor is the different employment of *the teaching methodologies* between EFL and ESL contexts. In an EFL context, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is often adopted (see Section 2.4) and classroom pedagogy is thus essentially teacher-centred (Mitchell & Lee, 2003). “The curriculum is dominated by knowledge to be transmitted and the emphasis is on convergence of behaviour and thought” (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 139). In an ESL context, the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) tends to be used (see Section 2.4) and classroom pedagogy is generally student-centred.

*English teachers* are also found different between EFL and ESL contexts. Nearly all EFL teachers are non-native English speakers (NNESs) whereas most ESL teachers are native English speakers (NESs). As a result, the teachers’ English proficiency in ESL and EFL is another distinction. Other differences may include the availability of authentic English materials, classroom settings and so on. Many researchers claim that awareness of the ESL-EFL distinction may enable ESL and EFL teachers to adopt appropriate teaching pedagogies and to achieve successful English language teaching and learning in culturally different contexts (Butler, 2005; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Holliday, 1994; Li, 2002; Pica, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005).

### **2.3 ELT approaches**

The dominant ELT approaches are the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and the Task-Based Language Teaching approach (TBLT). Each will be discussed separately. GTM is normally dominant in EFL countries; CLT is mainly used in ESL countries. Some key issues relating to these three approaches will also be discussed in the following sections. Firstly, definitions will be given. Secondly, teacher roles will be discussed. The design of an instructional system is considerably influenced by the roles of teachers, for example, how teachers contribute to the learning, how teachers demonstrate language to learners, how teachers control activities in the classroom. Thirdly, learner roles will

be reviewed because pedagogical design is normally influenced by the roles of learners, for example, how learners are considered, how learners contribute to the learning process and how learners play or control roles in the classroom activities. The learner roles in an instructional system reflect explicitly or implicitly the language teaching and learning at the level of approach, which can be most obviously seen in, for example, the types of activities learners perform, the degree to which learners control learning content, and the degree to which learners influence each other.

### **2.3.1 The Grammar-Translation method (GTM)**

The Grammar-Translation method was the offspring of German scholarship and dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to 1940s. However, it still continues to be widely practised in some parts of the world today, especially in EFL in China.

#### ***Definitions***

The Grammar-Translation approach is a way of studying a language first by analysing its grammatical rules in detail, and then applying this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. “The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language” (Stern, 1983, p. 455). Brown (2000) describes the Grammar-Translation method as “focusing on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translation of texts, and doing written exercises” (p. 15). Therefore, the language pedagogy of GTM, as discussed in Section 2.4.2, is Focus-on-FormS (FonFS), in which pure linguistic forms or knowledge are taught purposely and systematically in a language classroom, which will be discussed further in Section 4.2.4. A large body of literature shows that the Grammar-Translation method focuses mainly on displaying linguistic elements, such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structures, purposely and systematically (Fotos, 2005; Liao, 2004; Moore, 2005). This completely concurs with the principal characteristics of the Grammar-Translation method, as follows:

- “Classes are taught in the mother tongue”, which is devoted to explaining new linguistic knowledge and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student’s mother tongue, but “with little active use of the target language” (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979, p. 3).
- The Grammar-Translation method focuses more on reading and writing and less on speaking or listening.
- Vocabulary is selected solely based on the texts used and is taught with their translation equivalents and through memorization.
- Grammar is taught in an elaborated, organized and systematic way so as to enable learners to put words together according to the grammatical rules of the target language.
- The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice, while texts are only utilized “as exercises in grammatical analysis” (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979, p. 3) as well as in translating into and out of the target language.
- Difficult classic texts are read early.
- Learners are expected to attain accuracy not only in translation practice but also in grammatical analysis.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5)

According to the Grammar-Translation method, the ultimate goal of language study is “to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from language study” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, this language pedagogy is “perfectly suited to the needs of a bureaucratic mentality for which knowledge was enclosed in texts or in prefabricated dialogues and was to be exercised through philological exegeses or imitation and repetition, respectively” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 249). The Grammar-Translation method or FonFS is used in situations where there is little or no requirement for speaking that foreign language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 7). In short, within Grammar-Translation classes, the grammatical rules are presented and illustrated, a list of vocabulary items is presented in the form of isolated bilingual word lists, and translation exercises are drilled into and out of the target language.

### ***Teacher roles***

The roles of the teacher within the Grammar-Translation method are very limited as a result of the characteristics of its method. A teacher is generally constructed as a giver or a transmitter of knowledge, a controller of activities and a knowledge authority. As a giver or a transmitter of knowledge, a teacher is required to display their knowledge in whole lectures. As a controller of activities, a teacher dominates and initiates all the language teaching and learning activities in the classroom. As knowledge authority, a teacher is the representation of knowledge and what a teacher presents in the classroom is deemed to be authoritative knowledge (Fotos, 2005).

### ***Learner roles***

With respect to the Grammar-Translation method, learner roles are generally regarded as *knowledge receivers* or *knowledge learners*. In this case, English teachers dominate the whole classroom and students are primarily constructed as passive listeners (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As a receiver of knowledge, a student is required to sit still in the classroom and try to listen attentively to what a teacher presents in class. However, Vandergrift (1999) has a different opinion about listening. He regards listening as an active learning process rather than simply passive learning.

Listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance. Coordinating all of this involves a great deal of mental activity on the part of the listener. Listening is hard work, and deserves more analysis and support.

(p. 168)

As a learner of knowledge, a student is required to master all knowledge well taught by a teacher so as to pass examinations designed by schools or governments.

### ***Limitations of GTM***

It is argued in the literature that the Grammar-Translation method “works best with teaching skill subjects such as reading, writing, grammar” (Moore, 2005, p. 227). That is to say, the Grammar-Translation method focuses more on reading and writing but hardly at all on speaking or listening. It emphasizes accuracy, is obsessed with completeness, and neglects spoken language, with students having few opportunities to practise the target language in class (Fotos, 2005). In addition, the process of language learning within traditional GTM is little more than the mere mastery of grammar and vocabulary (Liao, 2004) or Focus-on-FormS (see Section 2.4.2 for further discussion). Most EFL students are silent throughout a GTM class. There are few interactions between a teacher and students, or among students, so that the class can be perceived as boring and uninteresting. Vocabulary is selected solely based on the texts used and is taught with their translation equivalents and through memorization. With a strong emphasis on grammar and correction, the Grammar-Translation method, therefore, “is not proven to be very successful in terms of the development of either linguistic or communicative competence” (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 16). However, the literature also shows that there are certain positive effects of traditional GTM or Focus-on-FormS in relation to teaching and learning, especially in the Chinese EFL context (see Section 3.4.2 for further discussion).

### **2.3.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) came into being at a time “when language teaching in many parts of the world was ready for a paradigm shift” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 172) from earlier language teaching methods such as audiolingualism<sup>4</sup>, grammar-translation and situational language teaching<sup>5</sup>. The

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<sup>4</sup> Audiolingualism: a methodology common in the US and British from 1950s until the communicative revolution in the mid-1970s, deriving from the structural approach which “follow the orthodox four skills and required a considerable amount of aural-oral drill work based on the structures selected from grade syllabus” (Howatt, 1984, p. 225).

<sup>5</sup> Situational language teaching: an approach developed by British applied linguists in the 1930s to the 1960s, and which had an impact on language courses still being used in some places today. Situational Language teaching uses a structural syllabus, a word list, a situational presentation of new sentence patterns and drills to practise the patterns.



Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a “[non]unified but broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching” (Brown, 2000, p. 266). Earlier methods drew on a view of language as a set of linguistic systems (phonological, lexical, and grammatical), while CLT, which originated from a theory of language as communication, ultimately aims to develop the ability of learners to use language in real communicative contexts. Thus, the language pedagogy of CLT, as discussed in Section 2.4.2, is Focus-on-Meaning (FonM), which refers to an instruction where the learner is required to focus on communication as well as understanding the meaning of an utterance in a real-time communicative classroom in second language acquisition. CLT, as identified by Brown and Yule (1983), is directed at enabling learners to communicate successfully and appropriately in terms of two general goals: an interactional function, where language is used to establish and maintain contact, and a transactional function, where language is used to exchange information (Ellis, 2003). CLT aims to develop learners’ communicative competence, instead of merely focusing on linguistic competence (e.g. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1998; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Littlewood, 1984; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It thus appears “to stand in stark contrast” to the Grammar-Translation method “that has been the norm in China” (Butler, 2005, p. 424).

### ***Definitions***

There are numerous interpretations as to what CLT should include (Brown, 2001). Richards and Rodgers (2001) claim that the CLT principles discussed below also reflect a communicative view of language and language learning:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error (p. 172).

The characteristics of CLT, as proposed by Brown, H. D. (2000) are:

- Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and are not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.
- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times, fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.

(p. 267)

Nunan (1991) listed the following five features as characteristics of CLT: 1) a focus on communication through interaction; 2) the use of authentic materials; 3) a focus on the learning process as well as the language itself; 4) a belief that learners' own experiences can contribute to learning; and 5) a linkage between language learning in the classroom and real-life activities.

Johnson and Johnson (1998a) also identify five core characteristics that underlie current applications of communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology.

- ***Appropriateness***: language use should be appropriate to the situation, the roles of the participants, and the purpose of the communication. Thus formal as well as casual styles of language can be used to achieve this goal.

- **Message focus:** the real meanings of messages should be created and comprehended correctly and effectively by learners. CLT activities, therefore, focus on conveying meanings and interpreting meanings.
- **Psycholinguistic processing:** CLT activities encourage learners to engage in the use of cognitive and other processes in second language acquisition.
- **Risk taking:** learners are encouraged to employ a variety of communicative strategies to guess what is beyond what they have been taught and learnt from their errors.
- **Free practice:** CLT emphasizes the use of “holistic practice” involving the use of all subskills, instead of isolated individual skills.

Canale and Swain (1980), in focusing on classroom activities with respect to teaching the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching, advocate that:

it is crucial that classroom activities...must be as meaningful as possible and be characterized (at increasing levels of difficulty) by aspects of genuine communication such as its basis in social interaction, the relative creativity and unpredictability of utterances, its purposefulness and goal-orientation, and its authenticity.

(p. 33)

Communicative Language Teaching also “focuses on pragmatic meaning in a context rather than semantic meaning in the code” (Widdowson, 1998, p. 715), so as to enable learners to develop pragmatic competence<sup>6</sup> to achieve communication successfully and appropriately. Maley (1986) adds that CLT is more motivating and more likely to aid learners to produce pragmatic competence and equip learners with the appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> Pragmatic competence is “an aspect of communicative competence and refers to the ability to communicate appropriately in particular contexts of use. It contrasts with linguistic competence, which refers to the mastery of the general rules of language abstracted from its use” (Johnson & Johnson, 1998b, p. 249; Richards & Schmidt, 2002)

skills for coping with the language in the real world. Language teachers, thus, should indeed pay attention to facilitating learners' pragmatic competence. However, this can only be obtained by creating conditions that "make the language a reality for particular communities of learners so that they can authenticate it" (Widdowson, 1998, p. 715) because "communicative activities require real situations, real roles and real needs and purpose for communication" (Leng, 1997, p. 38).

In short, the ultimate goal of CLT language teaching is to develop learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). Li (1984), in her study *Defence of the Communicative Approach*, points out that "language is communication, and learning a language is learning to communicate" (p. 2). That is to say, language teachers should enable the language learners to acquire their communicative competence by means of real communicative activities in the communicative classroom. Thus, English teaching and learning should be "about communication, by communication and for communication" (Mei, 2000).

### ***Teacher roles***

There are several roles advocated for teachers in a Communicative Language Teaching approach. Breen and Candlin (1980) describe these as an organizer of resources, a guide in the classroom, and a researcher and learner, which are explained as follows:

1. ***As an organizer of resources***: a role for the teacher is "to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, between these participants and the various activities and texts" ( p. 99).
2. ***As a guide in the classroom***: "to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group" during classroom procedures and activities (p. 99).
3. ***As a researcher and learner***: a role for the teacher is being a researcher and learner, "with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities" (p. 99).

Besides these roles mentioned above, Richards and Rodgers (2001) add that a CLT teacher is also required to be:

1. **analyst** who takes a responsibility for “determining and responding to learner language needs” (p. 167);
2. **counsellor** who is expected to “exemplify an effective communicator seeking to maximize the meshing of speaker intention and hearer interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation, and feedback” (p. 168); and
3. **group process manager** who is responsible for “organizing the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities” (pp. 167-168).

Therefore, the primary role of the teacher is to *facilitate* learning, and to foster responsibility and autonomy among learners.

### ***Learner roles***

The design of a pedagogy is generally influenced by the roles assigned to learners, for example, how learners are considered, how learners contribute to the learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 27), and how learners play or control roles in the classroom activities. The roles of the learner within a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach are completely different from those in more traditional language classrooms, such as GTM, where very limited participatory roles are available to learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

According to Breen and Candlin (1980), the first role of learners in CLT is as a *negotiator*. The negotiation learners would carry out is between the learners themselves, in the learning process, as well as within the group and the classroom procedures and classroom activities. Thus, it is required that the learner “should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way” (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 110).

*Interactor* is the second role of learner in a CLT context. Being interactors, learners “are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 166). Therefore, successful communication may be achieved when learners play or control their roles well, both as negotiators and as interactors in classroom activities.

### ***Limitations of CLT***

Even though some researchers, such as Liao (2004), advocate CLT as the best approach for EFL regions, and even though it has been imposed and/or accepted widely in EFL countries, many claim that it could be problematic to introduce CLT from an ESL context into EFL contexts such as in China (Liao, 2002). Li (2002), in his survey of EFL tertiary students in Chinese universities, for example, found that the pedagogical communicative problems between expatriate English language teachers and Chinese university students became more obvious when transplanting Western educational models into Chinese classrooms. These problems included particular expectations, role assumptions, pedagogies and cultural influences.

CLT has met some problems in Western ELT as well. In recent times, more and more language educators and researchers in the West and in the East have become aware that CLT is not always the best for second language acquisition (Ellis, 2002, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1998; Nunan, 1991; Pham, 2005; Robinson, 2001). CLT does aid learners to achieve some levels of fluency and stronger confidence with communication in the language classroom than those approaches that primarily focus on linguistic forms of a language (Focus-on-FormS), such as GTM (Lightbown & Spada, 1990). However, there is also some evidence that CLT does not necessarily lead to high levels of accuracy in learners, especially for adult learners whose language abilities are limited to such ESL contexts (Higgs & Clifford, 1982; Hu, 2005a; Phan, 2004). Many researchers and educators have come to realize the importance of grammar in language teaching and learning and have found that teaching linguistic knowledge can also help to develop communicative ability (Ellis, 2002, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1998; Nunan, 1991; Pham, 2005; Robinson, 2001). Recent literature suggests that appropriate grammar lecturing in the language classroom can improve learners’ ability effectively and quickly to use a

language for communication. Therefore, bearing this in mind, this present research will investigate student and teacher perceptions of grammar lecturing in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts.

### **2.3.3 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach has recently come to take a central place in second language acquisition research and has begun to supplement or replace other language pedagogies (Corson, 2001; Ellis, 2003), in line with this recent return to a focus on form (see Section 2.4.2), alongside a meaning-approach to English language teaching. This is evident in the large number of current publications in relation to TBLT (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Doughty, 2001; Ellis, 2003, 2005a; Nunan, 1989; Pica, 2005; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1996, 1998, 2003a, 2003b; Skehan & Foster, 2001; Williams, 2005), which contribute to our understanding of task-based instruction. These studies show that providing learners merely with comprehensible input or merely with interaction opportunities may not be sufficient to ensure the development of learners' language competence. In addition, they claim that it requires some degree of Focus-on-Form (FonF), in which linguistic forms are focused incidentally in the process of communication in the language pedagogy (see the details in Section 2.4.2) (Doughty & Williams, 1998b; Ellis, 2003; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 1999; 2002; Long & Robinson, 1998; Skehan, 2003b). These studies also "seek to elicit samples of language use from learners" in a real-time communicative classroom (Ellis, 2003, p. 1). Such samples from task-based learning and teaching are believed to provide rich information for probing into how second language teaching and learning takes place and how learners can be helped to learn. Such samples can also serve as evidence that successful second language learning is taking place in real-time communication (Ellis, 2003). Recently, this overall view has played a significant and important role both at a research and an application level with respect to second language acquisition.

As we have already seen, the communicative approach was widely embraced in language education fields from the 1970s onwards (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Skehan, 1998, 2003a). At that time, the idea of focusing only on language structure gradually

gave way to “the concern of developing the capacity to express meanings” and “the implications of these pedagogic developments” led to “an early (and influential) proposal for the use of task-based approaches” (Skehan, 2003a, p. 1).

There were two early applications of a Task-Based Language Teaching approach involving communicative tasks: the Malaysian Communicational Syllabus (*English language syllabus in Malaysian schools, Tingkatan 4-5*, 1975) and the Bangalore Project (Beretta, 1990; Prabhu, 1987), which is “an innovation all the more remarkable” for its Task-Based Language Teaching (Skehan, 2003a, p. 1).

However, the role of tasks has gained further support from some researchers, who are interested in developing pedagogical applications of second language acquisition theory (e.g., Long & Crookes, 1993). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is regarded as “a logical development” and “an extension of the principles” of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and “an attempt by its proponents to apply principles of second language learning to teaching” since it draws on several principles that underlie the nature of language learning underpinning CLT, such as real communication, meaningful tasks and meaningful language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 223). Because of “its links to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology and support from some prominent second language acquisition theorists”, TBLT has obtained considerable momentum within applied linguistics, even though there have been few applications of it and little documentation relating to its implications or effectiveness for syllabus design and classroom teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

### ***Definitions***

In recent years, a number of researchers have attempted to define the concept of a task. Many of them claim that a task is an activity in the classroom, which is regarded as a basic unit of planning and teaching (Austin, 1962; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Richards & Schmidt, 2002) and is also understood to be discrete and complete in itself (Nunan, 1989). Prabhu (1987) in his study adds that a task can be used by teachers to control and regulate their teaching. However, the most salient feature identified by most researchers is the observation that tasks are planned to achieve an outcome or a



particular learning goal (Bygate et al., 2001; Prabhu, 1987; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Skehan, 1996, 2003a). In a similar vein, Corson (2001) considers that “a task is one activity set in the real world of the students that leads to some outcome that gives the task, and the language it involves, a meaning or significance in the world of the learner” (p. 139).

Nunan, in his definition of tasks, focuses specifically on the particular cognitive processes that learners can be fully engaged in. He states, “the communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (1989, p. 10).

As tasks are developed from communicative pedagogy, there is also the strong understanding that tasks are primarily meaning focussed. It is argued that tasks are principally focused on meaning rather than form (Bygate et al., 2001; Nunan, 1989) and Skehan also agrees that “tasks ... are activities which have meaning as their primary focus” (1996, p. 20). Tasks are also designed purposely to make use of authentic language in the classroom. According to Ellis’ (2003) definition, authenticity is one of the main dimensions of a task. Moreover, Skehan adds, “tasks generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use. So task-based instruction takes a fairly strong view of communicative language teaching” (1996, p. 20).

The Task-Based Language Teaching approach shares several principles that form part of Communicative Language Teaching theories:

- ***The communicative principle***: “activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning”.
- ***The task principle***: “activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning” (Johnson 1982).
- ***The meaningful principle***: “language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process”.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 223)

However, there are also some additional learning principles in the task-based language teaching theory, put forward by Richards and Rodgers (2001).

The first learning principle is *the input and output principle*: activities that involve both input and output are necessary for language acquisition in Task-Based Language Teaching process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Comprehensible input has long been regarded by Krashen as a critical criterion for adequate second language acquisition, while Swain (1985) has insisted that productive output and not input alone is also a necessary principle for successful language learning. For example, the evidence from a number of sources of the lack of sustained production development in immersion educated children (Swain, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1982) suggested that input alone is not sufficient. However, it is said that tasks can provide adequate opportunities for both input and output of language requirements, which are regarded as key processes in language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The second learning principle is *the motivational principle*: task activity and achievement should be motivational (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 229). Tasks can promote learners' motivation and thus improve learners' learning because tasks expect learners to use authentic language by natural repetition for various kinds of purposes in real-time communicative classrooms. This, in turn, motivates students to listen "because they have just done the same task and want to compare how they did it" (Willis, 1996, p. 62).

The third learning principle is *the purposeful principle*: activities or tasks can be designed purposefully for particular learning difficulties or particular pedagogies (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 229). Long and Crookes (1991) propose that tasks "provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners – input which they will inevitably reshape via application of general cognitive processing capacities – and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty" (p. 43). In addition, Skehan (1998) supports this proposal in more detail. He argues that a transaction between cognitive processing and focus on form can contribute to selecting or designing tasks. If the task is too difficult, fluency may be achieved at the high cost of accuracy. He thus suggests that tasks can

be selected and designed in a way that both the fluency and accuracy of learners' language can be developed.

The learning principles discussed above “play a central role in Task-Based Language Teaching theory” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 228). They address the conditions that are required to promote second language learning as well as the processes of language acquisition.

### ***Teacher roles***

Teacher roles in the Task-Based Language Teaching approach can be as a selector and sequencer of tasks, preparing learners for tasks and consciousness-raising (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

- *Selector and sequencer of tasks.* According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the teacher's central role is choosing, adapting and creating the tasks, then organizing them in such a way as to meet learners' requirements, interests and language competence.
- *Preparing learners for tasks.* It is suggested by most Task-based Language Teaching advocates that learners “not go into new tasks ‘cold’ and that some sort of pre-task preparation or cuing is important”, for example, “topic introduction, clarifying task instructions, helping students learn or recall useful words and phrases to facilitate task accomplishment, and providing partial demonstration of task procedures” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 236). Such activities may be “inductive and implicit or deductive and explicit” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 236).
- *Consciousness-raising.* Recent researchers on Task-based Language Teaching claim that if learners acquire language through tasks they need to pay attention to linguistic features of the language they perform, which is referred to as ‘Focus on Form’ (see below).

### ***Learner roles***

It is assumed that there are a number of primary roles for learners in Task-Based Language Teaching, some of which overlap with the general roles for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The primary roles are group participant, monitor, risk-taker and innovator (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

- ***Group participant.*** Many tasks in Task-based Language Teaching are conducted in pairs or small groups. It therefore requires of students some adaptation to group work in the role of participant.
- ***Monitor.*** Tasks in Task-based Language Teaching are utilized as a means of facilitating learning. They are designed to provide learners with opportunities to use language in real-time communication. This also requires learners to monitor not only communicative meaning but also the linguistic form.
- ***Risk-taker and innovator.*** Learners are required in many tasks to create and develop messages that are beyond their language competence. In this respect, it often requires learners to retell, paraphrase, draw, and use body language, facial expression and so on. It may also require learners to develop skills of “guessing from linguistic and contextual clues, asking for clarification, and consulting with other learners”.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 235)

What the advocates of Task-based Language Teaching emphasize is that this does not mean taking a grammar lesson before carrying out a task but rather means “employing a variety of form-focusing techniques, including attention-focusing pre-task activities, text exploration, guided exposure to parallel tasks, and use of highlighted material” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 236).

### *Summary*

The Task-Based Language Teaching is a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the core units for planning and delivering instruction in language teaching (Ellis, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Skehan, 2003a). Such an approach is said to be designed to involve meaningful and purposeful communication, interaction and negotiation during the process of the language teaching and learning (Feez, 1998; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Skehan, 2003a). One of the characteristics of Task-based Language Teaching summarised by Feez (1998) is that “learners learn a language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaging in the activities and tasks” (p. 17). Negotiation of meaning is another characteristic of task-based language teaching put forward by Long (1989). *Negotiation*, according to Richards and Schmidt (2002), refers to “what speakers do in order to achieve successful communication” (p. 356). Thus, negotiation is adopted by Task-Based Language Teaching in order to ensure that conversation progresses naturally and speakers are able to understand each other.

Task-Based Language Teaching is also believed to enable learners to acquire grammar as a result of immersing students in authentic language use (Long & Crookes, 1991, 1992; Skehan, 2003b). With the help of this teaching approach, learners can achieve their learning goals in real life, created in a language classroom. A procedural syllabus is adopted in such teaching which focuses on process rather than product (Ellis, 2003; Feez, 1998). In short, Task-Based Language Teaching is a teaching approach that is based on tasks designed for particular communicative and interactive pedagogical purposes.

TBLT thus adopts an intermediate approach drawn from both CLT and GTM principles of language teaching and learning that focuses not only on language competence but also on communicative competence, which may enable the development of Chinese students’ communicative competence. More recent research has explored how to combine CLT, Focus-on-Meaning (FonM) with GTM, Focus-on-FormS (FonFS) (see more details in Section 2.4.2) in language development, which should also be included in natural communicative interaction in language classrooms (Hu, 2003b, 2005a; Liao, 2000, 2004; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Montgomery & Eisenstein, 1985).

Thus, a tempting solution to the tensions between GTM and CLT in the EFL context as well as in the ESL context is an eclectic combination of methods and activities, with grammar, vocabulary, and translation activities retained and communicative activities added that contain abundant uses of target L2 structures and vocabulary, thus permitting exposure to target structures and providing opportunities for negotiated output in the target language (Fotos, 2005, pp. 667-668). In the present study, evidence of the use of CLT and GTM, as well as TBLT, in the New Zealand and Chinese contexts will be examined. One aim is to ascertain to what extent these approaches are being used in the New Zealand and Chinese contexts (see Chapter 5 & 6).

In sum, this literature and the data of the present research on ELT approaches has the potential to play a significant and important role both at a research and an application level with respect to second language acquisition. It also helps us to explore how EFL operates in the tertiary English education context in China as well as how ESL operates in a language institute in New Zealand. At this point, based on the literature just discussed, TBLT might be thought of as a very important theoretical tool to bridge CLT and GTM (see Section 2.4.3).

This present study explores what happens in an EFL tertiary classroom in a Chinese context as well as in an ESL tertiary classroom in a New Zealand context based on data collected from real classroom practice procedures in these two contexts. The following section reviews how and to what extent GTM or/and CLT or/and TBLT are used in a language classroom in terms of six perspectives of classroom practice, instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction, and classroom tasks.

## **2.4 Six perspectives relating to ELT**

In order to provide an overarching interpretation of English language teaching and learning experienced by teachers and students in the two contexts, New Zealand and China, this section reviews six perspectives on classroom practice under the headings:

instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction, and classroom tasks. The categories used to measure these features have been derived from theories of communicative competence and communicative language teaching, as well as from research in second language acquisition (SLA) that suggests a number of factors which influence the language learning process. These six key perspectives in ELT will provide a theoretical framework for describing the ELT processes in the Chinese EFL context and the New Zealand ESL context. Specifically, it will allow us to investigate to what extent GTM and/or CLT and/or TBLT are used in the complex phenomena of English tertiary classroom practice in the two contexts, China and New Zealand, and will also help illuminate what are the enabling conditions for Chinese EFL and ESL students' language learning efficiently in both EFL and ESL classrooms.

#### **2.4.1 Instructional approaches**

An instructional approach “can influence students directly through focused teacher-directed instruction or influence them indirectly by actively involving them in their own learning” (Moore, 2005, p. 141). An instructional approach in this present study refers to the way in which students are taught and are organized. Two basic types of instructional approaches are differentiated in this section: teacher-centred and student-centred. This section is developed to describe distinctions between teacher-centred and student-centred instructions, as well as some features associated with them, such as group work, pair work, and individual work in second language (L2) classrooms.

##### ***Teacher-centred and student-centred***

The teacher-centred instructional approach, “characterized by teacher talk” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135), one of the main features of GTM as mentioned in Section 2.3.1 above, is “more traditional or didactic, with students acquiring knowledge by listening to the teacher, by reading a textbook, or both” (Moore, 2005, p. 141). In this form of instruction, the teacher is “the purveyor of knowledge” and students are recipients of information or “auditory learners” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 133). As mentioned in Section 2.3.1 above, the role of a teacher in teacher-centred instruction is as a giver or

a transmitter of knowledge, a controller of activities, a knowledge authority. Being a major information provider, a teacher presents facts, rules, or action sequences, with explanations, examples, and opportunities for practice and feedback, which calls for teacher-student interactions involving questions and answers, review and practice, and the correction of students' errors (Moore, 2005, p. 227). In teacher-centred classes, there are very limited roles available to learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and learners tend to spend more time responding to the teacher's questions and rarely initiate discourse (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 15).

Some researchers have found that students, especially EFL students, "learn basic skills more rapidly when they receive a greater portion of their instruction directly from the teacher", such as in teacher-centred instruction (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135). Holt and Kysilka (2006) claim that those skills are learned when the teacher is clearly in control of the content, which has generally been identified as an efficient method (p. 135). They argue that "a well-organized lecture delivered by a skilled teacher may cover a wide array of information and contain conceptual structure and applications from a number of subject areas. When learning objectives are narrowly defined as facts or skills, research indicates didactic (direct) instruction is especially efficient" (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135).

In contrast, *student-centred instruction* occurs when the learner comes first. As mentioned in Section 2.3.2, the roles of learners within the CLT approach are as *negotiators* and *interactors*. In this form of instruction, the learners carry out negotiation among themselves, contribute as much as they gain (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 110) and interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). In other words, a student-centred instructional approach encourages "students to participate actively in their own learning experiences" (Moore, 2005, p. 141). In this case, error correction or specific linguistic knowledge may be ignored or given "infrequently" in class (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

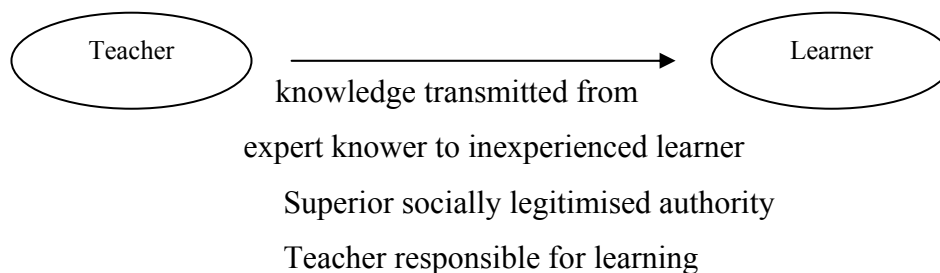
The roles of a teacher in the student-centred instruction of CLT, as mentioned in Section 2.3.2, are as an organizer of resources, as a guide in the classroom, as a researcher and learner, as a facilitator, as an analyst, as a counsellor, and as a group process manager who may provide a rich array of materials, give emotional support,



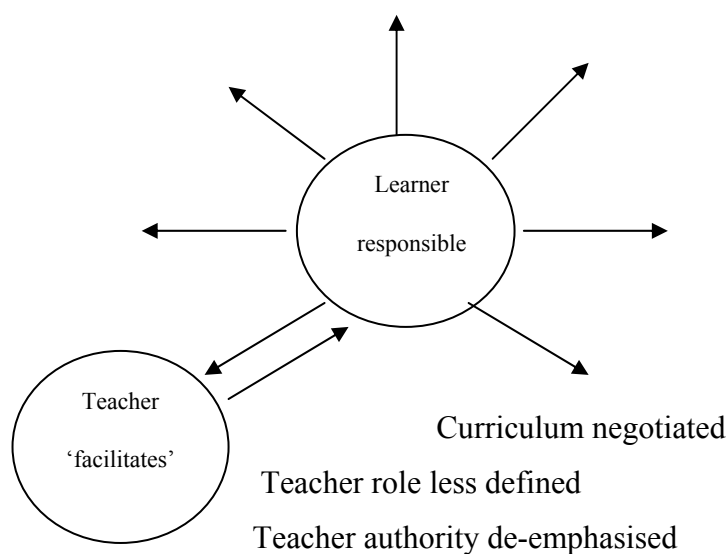
feedback and clarify dialogue (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 230). Therefore, the primary role of the teacher in student-centred instruction is to facilitate learning, and to foster responsibility and autonomy among learners.

**Figure 1: Two instructional approaches (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2003, p. 87)**

1. teacher-centred, transactional and controlled



2. learner-centred



These two approaches, thus, are summarized by Groundwater-Smith et al. (2003), as seen in Figure 1. Both models, according to Groundwater-Smith et al.'s view, however, "are restricted and it is perhaps misleading to polarise the two, as many teachers would see merit in both approaches according to the specific learning experience being implemented" (2003, p. 87). Therefore, Susan et al. argue, effective English language teaching and learning calls for "the third approach, a critical

approach to teaching and learning, [which] incorporates and transcends the first two models and provides a more inclusive framework” (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2003, p. 89).

### ***Group work, pair work and individual work***

Group work in language learning refers to a learning task which involves a small group of learners working together (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Pair work in language learning refers to a learning task which involves learners working together in pairs (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Individual work is a learning task where learners work on their own. In the literature on Communicative Language Teaching, group work is considered as “an integral part of communicative methodology” (Johnson & Johnson, 1998c, p. 157) and is considered “to be essential in the development of communicative competence”, in which learners are “encouraged to negotiate meaning, to use a greater variety of linguistic forms and functions and to develop overall fluency skills” (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 15), which contrasts with teacher-centred instruction mentioned above. Group work is generally based on an information gap (Johnson & Johnson, 1998a); that is, “learners work on the same task, but each learner has different information needed to complete the task” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 27). Since group work is more likely to focus on developing students’ communicative competence in the expression and negotiation of meaning, and less likely to focus on the accuracy of utterances, classes in which learners are engaged in more group work are generally considered to be more communicatively oriented (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

In summary, teacher-centred instructional approaches are often more systematically structured than student-centred instructional approaches. However, according to Chinese traditional cultural philosophy (see Chapter 3), everything has two sides. Moore (2005) has argued that “the two instructional approaches are equally effective in bringing about learning” (p. 141). Burden and Byrd also claim that the lesson objectives “may determine what type of approach is more appropriate” (2003, p. 213). What we need then is to take the advantages of both instructional approaches, along with the lesson objectives and contents. In my view, an effective and experienced teacher may adopt both instructional approaches in a language class, ranging from

teacher-centred to student-centred, or vice versa. Hence, students should be given the opportunity to learn a language through a variety of instructional approaches (Burden & Byrd, 2003). However, bearing this in mind, these two instructional approaches will be examined in the current study in order to have a clear understanding of: to what extent the teacher-centred instructional approach continues to have purchase for Chinese EFL tertiary students in the Chinese EFL context and to what extent the student-centred instructional approach is emphasized for Chinese ESL tertiary students in the New Zealand ESL context.

#### **2.4.2 Language pedagogy**

In terms of language classroom practice, “one of the crucial issues in second language learning and teaching is whether the primary focus of instruction should be on meaning or form” (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 16) or on both, which is termed “language pedagogy” (Ellis et al., 1999, p. 2) in the present research. In other words, language pedagogy refers to how a language is taught, such as focus on formS (plural) (FonFS), focus on meaning (FonM), or focus on form (FonF).

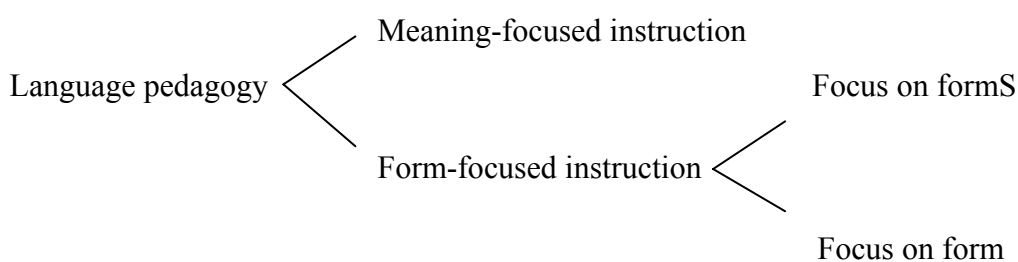
##### ***General principles and distinctions of these approaches***

Given the complexity of the various approaches to English language teaching discussed thus far, it is worth reviewing and summarising key definitions and terms at this point. Both the pedagogic and the second language acquisition (SLA) literature share similar definitions to distinguish Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning and Focus-on-Form (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; Ellis et al., 2002). FonF was proposed by Long in 1988 as an instructional approach based on some evidence that CLT does not lead to high levels of accuracy of learners, especially for adult learners whose language abilities are limited to ESL contexts (Higgs & Clifford, 1982). Such recognition of the importance of attending to form does not diminish the fact that CLT clearly does aid learners to achieve higher levels of fluency and stronger confidence in communication than those approaches that primarily focus on linguistic forms of a language (Lightbown & Spada, 1990). The advocacy of FonF attempts to stress the need for classroom language learners to focus on linguistic elements which occur

incidentally in the process of the CLT approach (Ellis et al., 1999). Focus-on-FormS is equated with the traditional language teaching of “discrete points of grammar”, the knowledge of a language such as grammar, phonetics, vocabulary in isolated lessons, as seen in the GTM (Sheen, 2003, p. 225). Focus-on-Meaning refers to an instruction where the learner’s attention is focused on communication as well as understanding the meaning of an utterance, as seen in CLT. Focus-on-Form is defined as “a brief allocation of attention to linguistic form as the need for this arises incidentally, in the context of communication” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 205), as seen in TBLT. In Focus-on-Form, “meaning and use must already be evident to the learner” (Doughty & Williams, 1998a, p. 3) and students’ attention is drawn to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long & Crookes, 1991, pp. 45-46).

In order to have consistency in terminology in this research, it is necessary to clarify the catalogue as well as the relationship among these language pedagogical options. According to Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, the relationship and classification among the language pedagogical options are displayed in Figure 2, shown below.

**Figure 2: Some basic pedagogical options (Ellis et al., 1999, p. 2)**

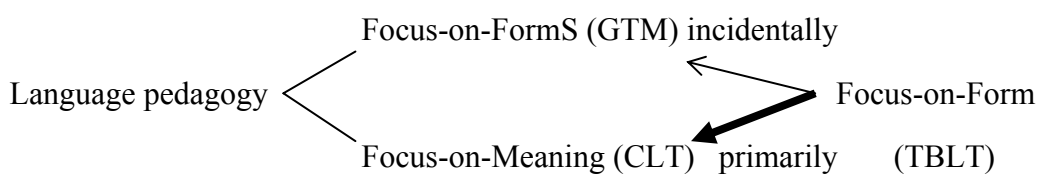


In terms of the perspective of Ellis et al. in Figure 2, language pedagogy can be implemented by means of meaning-focused instruction or form-focused instruction. The former refers to instruction where the learner’s attention is focused on communication as well as understanding the meaning of an utterance, which is the same as *Focus-on-Meaning*. The latter refers to instruction where the learner’s attention is primarily directed at linguistic forms and the meanings these convey (Ellis et al., 1999; 2002), which is similar to *Focus-on-Form*. Here, *Form-focused*

*instruction*, “namely grammar instruction”, according to the view of Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, can be of two basic types: *focus on formS* and *focus on form* (see Figure 2 above). *Focus on form* was first termed by Long (1988, 1991), then accepted by Ellis et al. (2002; 1999).

However, in the present research this description of the relationships among these approaches cannot be accepted. Instead it is proposed that the relationship should rather be developed as below (Figure 3), in terms of the historical developmental perspective of second language learning as well as in terms of the developmental process of FonF.

**Figure 3: The relationship of some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches**



The thick arrow represents that the language pedagogy of language teaching and learning primarily focuses on meaning; while the thin one stands for incidentally covering some linguistic forms during communicative-based or meaning-based activities.

In my opinion, language pedagogies are catalogued in this way for three key reasons. First, there is a distinct difference between *formS* (plural) and *form* even though they look similar. *FormS* means pure linguistic elements which are taught purposely and systematically; while *form* refers to linguistic elements which are focused on by teachers as they occur incidentally during the communication-based or meaning-based lessons. Second, Focus-on-Form cannot belong to form-focused instruction together with Focus-on-FormS as Ellis et al. (1999) argued (see Figure 2), because the primary focuses of these two approaches are completely different, one mainly focuses on grammar and one on meaning. Lastly, Focus-on-Form is developed from Focus-on-Meaning in terms of a historical perspective, similar to the way in which TBLT

originated from the theory of CLT. Put simply, the three language pedagogies can be expressed in the following formulaic way:

*FonFS* = *linguistic elements (only)*

*FonM* = *meaning (only)*

*FonF* = *meaning (mainly) + linguistic elements (incidentally)*

**Figure 4: Language pedagogies in a formulaic way**

The following table summarizes the content, characteristics and teaching approaches of three different language pedagogical options described in this section. Links are made to the three teaching approaches known as GTM, CLT, and TBLT.

**Table 1: Some basic pedagogical options**

<b>Language pedagogies</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Teaching approaches</b>
FonFS	linguistic elements	purposely, systematically	GTM
FonM	meaning, communication	purposely, unsystematically	CLT
FonF	linguistic elements	Incidentally, unsystematically	TBLT
	meaning, communication	mainly, purposely	

Following from this, we can conclude that the Task-Based Language Teaching approach (TBLT) is an attempt to utilize the benefits of a Focus-on-Meaning (FonM) approach as CLT does. However, TBLT places greater emphasis on use of focus on form (FonF) (see Section 2.3.3) (Long, 1985; Long & Crookes, 1992; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). It is believed that TBLT constitutes a strong version of CLT (Ellis, 2003).

### ***The Psycholinguistic Rationale for Focus on Form***

The psycholinguistic rationale for a Focus-on-Form is put forward based on a number of claims proposed by some researchers. Prabhu (1987) claims that the opportunity is crucial for learners to engage in Focus-on-Meaning instruction so as to develop their ability in using linguistic forms. Such opportunity will also ensure full acquisition of the new linguistic forms if learners are also able to attend to form while performing a communicative activity. Long (1991) also emphasizes the importance of an opportunity for learners to learn linguistic forms in second language acquisition and agrees that this is the only way to draw learners' attention to form in the process of communicative language use of L2 acquisition and thereby to improve developmental inter-language<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to assist learners to attend to form during Focus-on-Form instruction. As Doughty (2001) notes, "the factor that distinguishes focus on form from other pedagogical approaches is the requirement that focus on form involves learners briefly and perhaps simultaneously attending to form, meaning and use during one cognitive event" (p. 211).

Ellis (1999) makes three claims for the psycholinguistic rationale in terms of a comparative analysis on the efficiency of FonM, FonFS and FonF instruction in language teaching and learning. He firstly argues that Focus-on-Meaning instruction does not lead to a high level of linguistic competence even though it is effective in developing fluency in a language. Then he proposes that FonFS instruction may not enable learners to develop their inter-languages. Finally, however, he claims that only FonF instruction can result in learners being able to achieve fluent communication skills with accuracy "because it creates the conditions for inter-language restructuring to take place" (Ellis et al., 1999, p. 6).

A further psycholinguistic rationale for FonF can also be described in the kind of skill-developing theory proposed by Johnson (1988, 1996). Johnson discovered that communicative skills could be developed in the process of learners obtaining feedback, which is most effectively used by learners when it happens in real language communicative contexts. In addition, FonF can also make a great contribution to acquisition in another respect – it offers the impetus, namely "pushed output" termed

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<sup>7</sup> Inter-language refers to "the type of language produced by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 267).

by Swain (Swain, 1985, 1995). Ellis et al. give more detailed analysis on the pushed output in the language classroom as follows:

The output can stretch the learner's competence through the need to express an idea in language that is accurate and appropriate. When teachers respond to student errors through corrective feedback they potentially create conditions for students to attempt to produce the correct forms themselves. Doing so may help to foster the acquisition of these forms so that on subsequent occasions the students are able to use the correct forms without prompting.

(Ellis et al., 1999, p. 9)

Therefore, all the claims above show a clear psycholinguistic rationale for FonF, with the evidence that learners need to develop their English proficiency only by attending to formS while engaging in FonM communicative activities. This research will examine the extent to which this is used in both EFL and ESL classrooms in China and New Zealand.

### **2.4.3 Use of textbooks**

Textbooks are defined as books “on a specific subject used as a teaching learning guide, especially in a school or college” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 550). According to Hu (2002a, p. 38), textbooks are crucial to the quality of ELT in the world, especially in EFL contexts. To some extent, textbooks generally fit more with a teacher-centred instructional approach. With textbooks in hand, teachers can prepare their lectures easily, impart knowledge systematically and logically and make teaching and learning effective because textbooks are generally edited as “a graded series covering multiple skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar) or deal with a single skill (e.g. reading),” especially in foreign language teaching and learning contexts (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 550). Hence, students can also easily preview or review what teachers teach before or after class with textbooks in hand. The current study will examine the use of textbooks in the New Zealand and Chinese contexts and



Chinese EFL and ESL students' perceptions of the use of textbooks in their classrooms.

#### **2.4.4 Student modality**

Student modality in language teaching is “the mode or manner in which language is used”, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 489). Speaking and writing are, sometimes, called the “active/productive skills” and reading and listening, “the receptive skills” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 293). Some researchers regarded speaking and writing as skills of output, reading and listening as skills of input.

Johnson and Johnson (1998c) state that traditional language teaching instruction isolated the teaching of not only grammatical features but also modalities for the purpose of pedagogically convenient learning. This meant that students were often engaged in listening activities separately from speaking activities, for example. One of the arguments in the literature, clearly derived from the development of the communicative language teaching approach, is that students should be encouraged to integrate their skills practice to reflect a more authentic use of language (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). Nunan (1989) is aware that the integrated language lesson should contain an explicit pedagogic focus, allowing for the itemization of language and learning factors in order to facilitate acquisition. Byrne (1981) also suggests that an integration of skills on communicative principles necessarily entails some degree of contrivance to match the classroom environment. The teaching of integrated skills, then, “is best seen as a natural development of communicative methodology tempered by the specific requirements of learning in classrooms” (Johnson & Johnson, 1998c, p. 324). Some practitioners in the Chinese EFL context have incorporated an integrated skills perspective directly into teaching materials and classroom tasks, for example, a series of course books simply entitled *Integrated Skills* (Zou, 2005). In this case, “all four skills are practised in the context of topic-focused units (such as sport, jobs, holidays) and are also broken down into a wide range of component sub-skills within the overall goal of providing a realistic learning framework” (Johnson & Johnson, 1998c, p. 323).

The present research will examine whether Chinese students in language classrooms of the two contexts, China and New Zealand, were primarily listening, speaking, reading or writing. In other words, this research will examine whether isolated skills were taught or integrated skills were taught in the language classroom in these two contexts. This research will also identify the various skills involved in a classroom activity and investigate whether a differential focus on the skill areas contributed differently to communicative competence of Chinese students' use of their skills in the both contexts.

#### **2.4.5 Error correction**

Error correction refers to feedback in response to learners' errors in second language acquisition. According to Ellis, correction has a narrower meaning, which constitutes an attempt to supply 'negative evidence' in the form of feedback that draws the learner's attention to the errors they have made (Ellis, 1994, pp. 583-584).

Error correction plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning a second or foreign language. Tarone and Yule (1989) believe that learners will not progress beyond a certain error-prone stage without error correction and students whose use of a second language or a foreign language contains consistent grammatical errors which are not corrected in the earlier stages of acquisition may become learning proof; that is, learners will be unable to learn the correct forms at all. They suggest that error correction is an inseparable part of second language teaching. More convincing evidence comes in support of error correction in classroom settings. Carrol, Swain and Roberge (1992) found highly positive results in favour of error correction when they corrected their French learners on French nominally.

However, the dilemma of "to correct or not to correct, when to correct or how to correct, that is the question" has been argued widely in the English language education field. Concerning the logic of correction, Lyster and Ranta (1997) acknowledge that there is a certain dilemma in this regard: if teachers do not correct errors, opportunities for students to make links between form and function are reduced; if teachers do correct errors, they risk interrupting the flow of communication" (Lyster & Ranta,

1997, p. 41). Their assertion implicitly highlights the issue of timing and manner in error treatment. Moreover, it is not the error correction that is to be blamed for interrupting the flow of communication but the way in which teachers apply it which can be inappropriate, inconsistent, and ambiguous.

The present research will address how error correction was conducted in ESL and EFL classrooms and how Chinese ESL and EFL students and their ESL and EFL teachers viewed error correction in their teaching and learning classroom in terms of four themes: importance, timing (immediately and delayed), manner (implicit and explicit) and accuracy or fluency.

#### **2.4.6 Classroom tasks**

A task can be defined as a basic unit of classroom activity-interaction, purposely designed to control and regulate the teaching of meaning, focused so as to achieve a particular goal and outcome by using authentic language in the classroom (see Section 2.3.3 above). Richards and Schmidt (2002) advocate that “the concept of task is central to many theories of classroom teaching and learning” (p. 540). In the present study, six learning principles of language classroom tasks, *the communicative principle, the task principle, the meaningful principle, the input and output principle, the motivational principle* and *the purposeful principle* (see details in Section 2.3.3), which “play a central role in Task-Based Language Teaching theory” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 228) will be used to illuminate the complex phenomena of real classroom tasks in China and New Zealand contexts. These six learning principles also address the conditions that are required to promote second language learning, as well as the processes of language acquisition.

Undoubtedly, the literature on CLT and TBLT, and research on second language acquisition have not yet provided a solid understanding of what constitutes ‘communicative abilities’ and thus what constitutes ‘teaching for communicative purposes’ in EFL or in ESL tertiary contexts. There is little literature concerning classroom tasks for Chinese students in the EFL Chinese context or in the ESL New Zealand context. The effectiveness and appropriateness of classroom tasks at the

tertiary school level in EFL and ESL contexts is still unknown (Butler, 2005). The present research attempts to illuminate what kinds of classroom tasks are perceived as appropriate to Chinese EFL and ESL students at tertiary level, which tasks are used in the EFL and ESL contexts, and how they are perceived.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The purpose of this research is to examine teaching approaches used both for Chinese tertiary students learning English as a foreign language in the tertiary classroom in China and for Chinese tertiary international students to acquire English as a second language in language schools of New Zealand. Therefore, the aim of this chapter has been to introduce the key literature and key research studies used in theorizing the present research.

In order to provide the theorizing on which my research will be based, in this chapter I have outlined some of the central second language acquisition (SLA) topics in the following three sections: ELT contexts, ELT approaches and six perspectives in ELT: instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction, and classroom tasks. In this study, I will be investigating the complex classroom situations in ESL and EFL contexts experienced by Chinese students and their teachers in terms of these three areas of SLA theorizing: ELT contexts; ELT approaches; and some issues in ELT (instructional approaches, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks). Before arriving at the specific research questions of the present study, it is necessary to address the literature relating specifically to the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts.

The next chapter will discuss how Chinese educational cultural values continue to impact upon ELT in China and how ELT occurs in China. In addition, some existing empirical research on the six issues of classroom practice, covering in Chapter Two (instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks), in both the Chinese EFL and the New Zealand ESL contexts, will be reviewed.

## **CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Having reviewed the three English language teaching (ELT) approaches and perspectives referred to in the present research, I now focus on the literature on ELT in the two contexts, China and New Zealand, relevant to this thesis. This chapter describes 1) ELT research in China, 2) the Chinese culture of learning, 3) ELT in China, 4) classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context, and 5) classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context in terms of the six areas introduced in Chapter Two.

This chapter will thus give readers an overview of how English language teaching operates in the Chinese EFL context; what the effects are of Chinese traditional language methodology; and what progress and resistance there has been to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in China. It will discuss how the Chinese culture of learning influences Chinese ELT, which partly explains the reasons for why the Grammar-Translation method (GTM) still dominates in the EFL Chinese context and why China cannot fully embrace CLT as an ESL context often does. It will also provide a review of the literature on the four aspects of classroom practice (discussed in Section 2.4) in both the Chinese and New Zealand contexts. The aim is to provide a deeper and fuller understanding of the differences and similarities between the EFL Chinese context and the ESL New Zealand context, especially for Chinese tertiary students. The literature in this chapter will be used to theorize the findings in the present research.

### **3.2 ELT research in China**

Research on ELT in China has reflected the transition from its infancy to its adolescence since the opening up and reform of China in the late 1970s. Chinese researchers initially “were overwhelmed by the developments of linguistics and applied linguistics in the West” after being free from “the self-imposed isolation from the world during the Cultural Revolution” (Hu, 2002a, p. 43). As a result, they were completely engaged in introducing or translating Western language theories and teaching materials into Chinese (Gao, Li, & Lu, 2001). Most of the so-called research studies were “a general summary of the authors’ achievements in the past with anecdotal support, followed by general suggestions for future practice” (Gao et al., 2001, p. 3). Others focused on “impressionistic discussions of the application of imported theories and teaching materials on the basis of personal experience in the classroom” (Hu, 2002a, p. 43). There was, however, “little empirical research on ELT until the strong voice claimed repeatedly by university-based leading ELT specialists for a shift from work-reportism to rigorous, data-based research” (Hu, 2002a, pp. 43-44). Since the late 1980s, research has increased remarkably (Gao et al., 2001), but most of this has centred on the secondary level of ELT in China. A collection of 47 empirical studies, *ELT in China 1992: Papers from Tianjin Conference*, for example, is a first sample of data-based plus computer-assisted research, focusing on China’s ELT (Xu, 1996, p. 8). Despite some progress and encouraging trends, however, “there is an apparent need for more research that seeks to answer clear and specific research questions, adopts systematic data collection, and employs rigorous analysis techniques” (Hu, 2002a, p. 44). There is also a need for more research that includes students’ and teachers’ voices on English classroom practice at a tertiary level. This is an important lacuna, or gap, addressed in this current research.

### **3.3 The Chinese culture of learning**

“Different cultures have different norms, values and expectations and these cultural differences have a strong influence on educational practice” (Ho, Holmes & Cooper, 2004, p. 4). What has greatly influenced Chinese conceptions of education is

Confucian educational philosophy (Biggs, 1996; Hu, 2002b; Lee, 1996; Scollon, 1999). The Chinese culture of learning in the present research refers to “a whole set of expectations, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, preferences, experiences, and behaviours that are characteristic of Chinese society with regard to teaching and learning” (Hu, 2002b, p. 96). The Chinese culture of learning has deeply influenced educational practice in Chinese society and has also “underpinned Chinese models of teaching and learning” (Hu, 2002b, p. 96) not only in Chinese general education but also in Chinese English education. In relation to Confucius’s educational thinking, there are several aspects related to English classroom practice which may well prevent many Chinese teachers and students from embracing CLT and perhaps lead them back to GTM. These aspects are: the importance of education and CLT classroom tasks, knowledge and textbooks, the teacher-student relationship, the respective roles of teacher and learner, and learning strategies (Four R’s) (Hu, 2002b), which will be discussed as follows within the Chinese culture of learning.

### **3.3.1 Importance of education and English classroom tasks**

Education is deeply revered in China. Confucius put great importance on education and proposed that “*everything is low, but education is high*” (wan ban jie xia pin wei you du shu gao, 万般皆下品，唯有读书高). He claimed a good education would change people for the better. That is, by a good education, it is possible to turn an ordinary person (xiao ren) into a superior one (jun zi), like being successful officials or politicians. As a traditional saying goes, “*the purpose of education is proving one’s academic superiority and becoming an official*” (xue er you ze shi, 学而优则仕). A good education would also be regarded as a means of changing a weak nation into a strong one (Cheng, 2000; Guo, 2001; Hu, 2002b; Zhu, 1992). Hence, since Confucian times, education in China has played an important role, not only in cultivating people but also in strengthening a nation. Confucius also emphasised that education can bring about not only personal development (Guo, 2001) but also social recognition and material rewards (Hu, 2002b; Lee, 1996; Llasera, 1987; Zhu, 1992). Indeed, “the significance and objectives of education in the Confucian tradition were implanted so firmly in Chinese people’s minds that Chinese society, even today, is education-minded to an extraordinary degree” (Yao, 2005, p. 61). This partly explains why

Chinese people have “powerful motivating forces to aspire to success in education” (Hu, 2002b, p. 97) and why so many Chinese parents send their children to pursue higher education in Western advanced countries (Yao, 2005).

However, the importance of education also affects the English educational field in China. For example, Chinese English teachers and students regard English language teaching and learning as a serious task “that is least likely to be associated with light-heartedness but requires deep commitment and painstaking effort” (Hu, 2002b, p. 97), which fits well with the GTM principles. Consequently, if teachers do not present their knowledge in class, or if they play games with students or ask students to play roles in class, as is common in CLT, they are criticized as being lazy and unqualified (Liao, 2002, p. 6). Many Chinese “tend to associate games and communicative activities in class with entertainment exclusively... are skeptical of their use as learning tools” (Rao, 1996, p. 467), and view them as “wasting time by messing around” (Liao, 2002, p. 6), which is in conflict with one of the core CLT principles that communicative activities are essential for language learning in the classroom (see Section 2.3.2).

### **3.3.2 Knowledge and textbooks**

Traditionally, education has been regarded in China as “a process of accumulating knowledge” rather than as “a practical process of constructing and using knowledge for immediate purposes” (Hu, 2002b, p. 97). Yu (1984) illuminates the relationship between accumulating knowledge and using that knowledge with a vivid example – saving money in the bank and spending that money later. He states that “when you put your money in the bank it is not important to be sure what you are going to do with it; but when you do need the money for some emergency, it is there for you to use” (p. 35). Hence, Chinese students absorb knowledge teachers teach for future use in the classroom. This perception of learning as a knowledge-accumulating process is largely irreconcilable with the tenets of CLT that “advocate the practice of teaching to specific needs and play down the acquisition of authoritative knowledge” (Hu, 2002b, p. 97).

Knowledge, as viewed by traditional Chinese education, has generally been recorded in written texts, such as textbooks, for students to learn. As mentioned in the previous



chapter (see Section 2.3.3), the Chinese conceive textbooks as one of two major sources (textbooks and teachers) of knowledge for students, partly because of the belief that true knowledge has been held in written texts, especially classics and authoritative works (Hu, 2002b; Scollon, 1999; Wang, 2001). According to the Chinese culture of education, learning is equated with reading books. For example, “*it is always useful to open a book*” (kai juan you yi □□□□□) and “*when the time comes for you to use your knowledge, you will hate yourself for having read too little*” (shu dao yong shi fang hen shao, □□□□□□□). This emphasizes the significance of textbooks in Chinese education, which fits well with the principles of GTM. However, such a view of textbooks is largely against the CLT principle that students are negotiators of and contributors to knowledge (Hu, 2002b).

### 3.3.3 The teacher-student relationship

A particular relationship between teacher and student is another feature of traditional Chinese education. It is idealized as “a hierarchical but harmonious relation” like that of son to father (Hu, 2002b, p. 98), as the famous saying goes, “*being a teacher for only one day entitles one to lifelong respect from the students that befits his father*” (yi ri wei shi zhong sheng wei fu, □□□□□□□□). Students are required to respect their teacher and take on the responsibility of obeying the teacher by sitting quietly in the classroom as knowledge-receivers while teachers act as knowledge-givers (see Section 3.3.1). Such a teacher-student relationship accords with the Grammar-Translation method but contrasts with a Western CLT approach that advocates that the teacher facilitate learning and foster responsibility and autonomy among learners (Hu, 2002b).

### 3.3.4 Teacher roles

Traditional Chinese education has developed its own special model of teaching and learning and what is required of a good teacher with high qualities (Hu, 2002b, p. 98).

There are some expectations of the qualities that a good teacher should possess. Firstly, a highly-qualified teacher is expected to have profound knowledge of his/her university major. This is most clearly reflected in the maxim that “*a teacher must have a full bucket of water to dispense in order to give students a bowl of water*” (yao gei xue sheng yi wan shui, lao shi yao you yi tong shui 教师要有一桶水). If a teacher cannot meet such an expectation or cannot display rich knowledge to students in class, he or she would be regarded as a lazy or an unqualified teacher.

The second fundamental assumption underlying the Confucian tradition of education is that everyone has the right to be educated. Confucius held the view “*no distinctions should be made in dispensing education*” (you jiao wu lei, 有教无类) and believed that the innate ability of a person does not determine his/her success or failure in education. That is, everyone is educable and capable of attaining perfection no matter what differences in intelligence and ability exist or what differences in social status and wealth. What contributes to educational achievement is nothing but effort, determination, steadfastness of purpose, perseverance, and patience (Biggs, 1996a, 1996b; Hu 2002b; Lee, 1996). Hence, in the Confucian tradition, education should be open to all. This strongly requires a teacher not to refuse to instruct those who are willing to come to be educated.

Last but not least, and in a similar vein to the above, it is considered in Chinese education that “*there are no students who cannot be taught well but there are teachers who cannot teach well*” (mei you jiao bu hui de xue sheng, zhi you jiao bu hao de lao shi, 没有教不会的学生, 只有教不好的老师). To some extent, it is an extraordinary expectation upon teachers. However, it is a strong emphasis again that everyone is educable and perfectible if with a good teacher. It also requires a highly-qualified teacher who should possess a profound knowledge as well as rich teaching experience to assist all students to achieve in their education.

### 3.3.5 Learner roles

From the perspective of Chinese traditional culture, when Chinese children are very young (even as young as two or three years old), they are normally taught to learn knowledge that should be learned, instead of what they are interested in, owing to high

expectations from parents and high competition in the Chinese job market. There is a famous saying in China, “*wang zi cheng long, wang nv cheng feng*” (□□□□□□□□□□), which means that every Chinese parent dreams and expects that some day his/her son will be a dragon (the king of all animals in the Chinese culture) and someday his/her daughter would be a phoenix (the queen of all birds in the Chinese culture). Consequently, with high pressure from parents, schools, and society, nearly all Chinese children have to work very hard in schools or universities, especially at subjects which they are not necessarily interested in. They are expected to possess the diligence, fortitude, perseverance, and patience so as “to *grind an iron bar into a needle*” (tie gun mo cheng zhen, □□□□□□), and to attain high academic achievement in order to be useful people to the society “to *glorify their ancestry*” (guang zong yao zu, □□□□□□), and to bring pride to their family (Hu, 2002b; Lee, 1996; Salili, 1996).

### 3.3.6 Four R's

The strategies of learning generally practised in the Chinese culture of learning can be summed up as four R's, *reception*, *repetition*, *review* and *reproduction*, which are perceived as key elements of successful learning (Hu, 2002b; Wang, 2001).

The Chinese culture of learning deems learning as essentially a process of *reception*. Students are expected to receive knowledge bit by bit every day, imparted by teachers and textbooks just as “*collecting every tiny lump of earth makes a mountain; gathering every brook makes a river / heaped-up earth becomes a mountain, accumulated water becomes a river*” (ji tu cheng shan, ji shui cheng he, □□□□□□□□□□) and “*water constantly dripping wears holes in a stone*” (di shui chuan shi □□□□□□). Hence, learning is also a process of accumulating knowledge (see 3.2.2). In order to receive all knowledge learnt in the classroom and pass all examinations in the most competitive country with the largest population, all Chinese students have to be trained to take notes in the class of different kinds of subjects when they are young. The belief in the role of taking notes in helping to receive new knowledge given by teachers or displayed in textbooks is reflected in the famous Chinese saying “*Good memory as rotten written*” (hao ji yi bu ru lan bi tou, □□□□□□□□□□). Consequently,

students are very attentive to what the teacher says in class, and are always ready to take notes of explicit explanations of English grammar and vocabulary which may be tested later (Hu, 2003b, p. 298).

*Repetition* is also viewed as an important element for successful learning. Students have to study repeatedly what they do not understand so as to obtain full comprehension, because it is believed from the Chinese saying, “*read one hundred times, and the meaning will emerge*” (shu du bai bian qi yi zi xian, □□□□□□□□).

Learning is also a process of *review*. Good students are expected “to review what they have received and repeated not only to consolidate learning but also to gain new knowledge and to deepen understanding” (Hu 2002b, p. 101), as Confucius advocated, “*by reviewing the old, one learns the new*” (wen gu zhi xin, □□□□). That is, it is a strong belief that students can acquire new knowledge from constantly reviewing what they have already learned (Hu, 2003b).

*Reproduction* is also a key element to success in Chinese education. Students are expected to be able to accurately reproduce the acquired knowledge from teachers and textbooks (Paine, 1992; Rao, 1996). “Failing to do so is generally taken as an indication of lack of mastery of required knowledge” (Hu 2002b, p. 101).

The discussion above shows that the great influence in Chinese education of traditional Chinese culture also underpins Chinese models of language teaching and learning. The traditional Chinese culture has many elements which favour the GTM approach, but it is in potential conflict with some of the most important tenets and practice of CLT in several important aspects. This stems from fundamental sociocultural differences, such as philosophies about teaching and learning, the relationship of teacher and student, respective roles, and learning strategies (Hu 2002b; Scollon, 1999). Hence, there is an argument for “taking a cautiously eclectic approach and making well-informed pedagogical choices” so that English language teaching takes heed of the Chinese culture of learning (Hu 2002b, p. 103).

### **3.4 ELT in China**

Historically, GTM has given way to more communication-orientated language teaching approaches, such as CLT and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in many countries in the world. However, even though CLT was introduced to China more than two decades ago, much literature reveals that GTM still dominates in China as well as some other Asian countries (Hu, 2003b; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004). This section investigates why GTM is still dominant in ELT in China and why CLT has not been widely adopted in the Chinese EFL context and how TBLT is in China. The literature in this section will review the extent to which GTM still predominates in Chinese English classrooms and the reasons which mitigate against China embracing CLT in its classroom practice.

#### **3.4.1 GTM in China**

The Grammar-Translation method (GTM) in China can be traced back to Confucian traditional education in 520 BC (Zhu, 1992). Indeed, it accords very closely with Confucian teaching and learning principles (see above). GTM advocates that the teacher/student relationship should be that of *knowledge-giver* and *knowledge-receiver* (mentioned above) (Zhu, 1992). It is a transmissionist approach to learning and teaching, which is a knowledge-based approach. This approach was reinforced in the 1950s-60s by Vygotsky's theories, which were brought to China with the economic and technical aid the former Soviet Union gave to China. The original books of Vygotsky have been translated, and Vygotskian ideas have more thoroughly been introduced in some of the nation's higher educational textbooks particularly in educational psychology and child psychology. Chinese psychology was very much and is still influenced by Russian psychology, in which Marxist dialectical materialism is an important guideline for all areas of psychological research and practice. Particularly in this case, Vygotsky's psychological theory based on Marxism has not only been well introduced and reviewed, it has also been absorbed, elaborated and reconceptualized, being integrated in many theoretical frameworks developed by Chinese psychologists. This is most apparent in the nation's leading theories in child psychology and psychology of thinking development (Z. X. Zhu, 1979; Z. X. Zhu &

Lin, 1988) and in educational psychology (Pan, 1980). (Hong J., Yang N., & Cheng, 2007, p. 118). One of Vygotsky's theories is "the central fact about our psychology is the fact of mediation" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 166), which is that "the human mind is mediated" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1). "The zone of proximal development (ZPD)" is another key theoretical notion widely adopted in Chinese education. According to Vygotsky, imitation and instruction play a major role in leading children from one developmental stage to another, which is often considered as "merely a mechanical process" (Butler, 2005, p. 426).

I would argue that the principal characteristics of traditional Chinese English language education can be summarized as "three centres, one orientation and one method". Put simply, it is teacher-centred, textbook-centred, classroom-centred and exam-orientated. It relies predominantly on the traditional Grammar-Translation method. There are believed to be many positive effects that both teachers and students can obtain from Chinese traditional ELT methodology. Each of these characteristics is discussed in more detail below.

### **3.4.2 Effects of GTM**

As discussed above, according to Chinese traditional education philosophy, teachers are knowledge-givers, which require that teachers dominate the whole classroom and display their knowledge from the beginning of the class to the end. Therefore, Chinese teachers always try their best to present knowledge to students as fully as possible, or as much as possible. Such teachers would be regarded by the wider public as qualified teachers. The positive effects of a teacher-centred approach are that teachers can display knowledge systematically as they plan before class without worrying about being interrupted by students' questions, and students can also learn a lot of language knowledge in class that may benefit them greatly to perform in knowledge-based examinations (Hu, 2002a).

With respect to the effect of ELT in China being textbook-centred, Hu reveals that textbooks are "crucial to the quality of ELT in the Chinese EFL context" (2002a, p. 38) because they are one of two major sources (textbooks and teachers) of English input to

Chinese students in Chinese traditional language methodology. There are three effects of using textbooks in the English language classroom. Firstly, with textbooks in hand, teachers can prepare their lectures easily and efficiently, and students can also easily preview or review what teachers teach before or after class. Secondly, with good textbooks teachers can teach English systematically and students can learn English systematically as well. Thirdly, both teachers and students can use the advantages of textbooks to prepare fully and easily for various kinds of English examinations that are designed mainly around textbooks. Textbooks are not only the product of Chinese traditional methodology but also the product of the text-oriented examination educational system in China (Hu, 2003b; Liao, 2004).

One set of effects associated with Chinese traditional methodology are examination-orientated effects. China is a country with a long examination history starting from the Confucian era (520 BC). More than any other country in the world, China relies on examinations for assessment throughout its education system and within career structures. That is, China is a country with great competition in education, career, markets and so on. Chinese people normally start taking examinations when they are first-year students in primary schools. Besides graduation examinations, a Chinese person has to achieve in exams if he/she wants to be enrolled in schools or to be promoted in a career. That is why you can see so many Chinese middle-aged or aged men and women studying in evening schools after work, preparing for exams so as to be promoted in their careers. It is roughly estimated by the researcher that a Chinese person who graduates from high school would have sat more than 100 formal examinations administrated by schools or the state and that it is a common for a Chinese person to sit more than 150 school or national examinations during his or her life.

With respect to the special nature of the Chinese EFL context, there are at least two effects of examinations which impact on teachers and students. The first effect is that examinations in China can be used as a kind of motivation that can push both teachers and students to work harder to achieve in competition. The second is that an examination in China can be viewed as a way to evaluate not only the outcome of students' learning but also the quality of teachers' teaching, with the result that

students can be aware where they are and teachers can know clearly how they should aid students to progress further.

Another effect of Chinese ELT traditional methodology is GTM itself. Chinese students, it is traditionally thought, can get some benefit from the Grammar-Translation method (Fotos, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005). For instance, they can acquire rich knowledge of English grammar, high levels of analytical skills and high levels of reading competence, which helps them to learn new sentences or texts by themselves (Fotos, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005). It is noticeable that many students who graduate from universities have a very high level of reading competence and they can read very academic articles in English. According to its supporters, the Grammar-Translation method benefits not only students but also teachers. It makes few demands on teachers. This results in easy preparation and presentation of knowledge for teachers.

There are some positive effects discussed above that both teachers and students can obtain from the Chinese traditional ELT methodology. The Chinese English language teaching approach, as revealed in the study of Cortazzi and Jin (1996), tends to emphasize English language knowledge, content, teacher-centred classrooms and exam results. What Cortazzi and Jin identify is not just confined to ELT but also reflects general philosophies in Chinese education influenced by Confucius (see 3.3).

A large-scale investigation conducted on second language learning (SLL) by Campbell and Zhao (1992) revealed that Chinese students believed that grammar analysis was important, textbooks and classrooms exercises were necessary, and teachers who did not display knowledge were regarded as lazy and unqualified. According to Jones' (1995) survey on Chinese EFL students' evaluations of the teacher of graduate-level business writing courses, Chinese EFL students saw a responsible teacher as one who could teach what students needed (Jones, 1995). Chinese students believe that what happens in the classroom will be of vital importance in determining their subsequent achievement in English. It is accepted that this Chinese traditional ELT methodology has a major influence on the Intensive Reading course (IRC), "which is still a major course" in the Chinese universities today (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 64) and which will be discussed in the present study. In short, the Grammar-Translation method is still used in situations where understanding



literary texts is the primary focus of foreign language study and there is little need for being able to speak the language.

### **3.4.3 CLT in China**

It has been more than two decades since the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was introduced into China, as a reaction against the traditional teaching method, the Grammar-Translation method (GTM) which dominated and still dominates in Chinese language education, and which focused on grammatical knowledge and translation skills (Liao, 2002). As a result, great changes have taken place in terms of language policy, the teaching syllabus, textbooks and so on. However, CLT has encountered many difficulties that constrain its adoption in China (Liao, 2002).

Currently, the Chinese open-door policy requires a large number of academic professionals, such as scientists, technicians, teachers, doctors, managers and so on, to keep up with advanced science and technology in other Western countries, and to make use of these in their own fields. So the purpose of English language teaching (ELT) has become more and more about successful communication between China and the rest of the world. With China's entry into the World Trade Organisation and with China as the host of the 2008 Olympic Game, Hu (2002a) claims that there is "an even greater commitment to, and stronger enthusiasm for, raising the quality of ELT at all levels" (p. 45).

Accordingly, the State Education Development Commission (State Education Commission, 1993) designed a new English teaching syllabus for tertiary English students, which requires that English teachers use CLT in the classroom by introducing the concept of communicative competence as one of the main teaching goals. A new set of textbooks, *Integrated Skills English* (Zou, 2005), was published in China. It is "soaked with the ideals of communicative language teaching" and "built around a topic-based, skills-integrated and culture-rich curriculum" (Kettemann, 1997, p. 191), especially designed by the Ministry of Education for English majors in Chinese universities.

However, many research studies in China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002a; Leng, 1997; Liao, 2002; Ng & Tang, 1997) report that “though teachers in China on the whole realize the importance of CLT and are trying to catch up with the new trend” (Leng, 1997, p. 38), the development of practical innovations in ELT is constrained by such factors as the economy, administration, culture, population and the teacher’s academic ability, and that CLT principles are rarely practised in the classroom, especially in college classrooms. There is an inconsistency between teacher attitudes and their classroom practice, which, as revealed in the research of Ng and Tang (1997), reports that teachers would like to apply CLT but still do not use it. One researcher describes this teaching situation as “new bottles, old wine” (Leng, 1997).

#### **3.4.4 Research concerning CLT**

In recent years, a large body of the research literature has focused attention on the lack of uptake or rejection by Asian teachers of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. Hird, for example, found “only limited possibilities for the use of Western methodology” (1995, p. 22) in Asian classroom teaching. He regarded the teachers’ doubts about CLT as related to three factors: past traditions, current practice, and the way in which CLT has been interpreted. Yu discusses constraining factors in terms of economy, culture and teacher quality. However, Liao (2002) makes a more specific analysis of constraints associated with the teacher, the students, the educational system as well as CLT itself, which block the implementation of CLT in China. This will be discussed further in the following sections.

##### ***Teacher responses***

Some issues associated with CLT implementation in China are voiced in English teacher responses which are discussed here. One of the issues with Chinese English teachers is their *limited spoken English*. According to Liu and Gong (Liu & Gong, 2001), many Chinese English teachers are unqualified English teachers who know basic grammar quite well but cannot speak English fluently in the classroom, owing to their low level of education and language training. Liao (2002) reveals that some teachers with low language proficiency have had to give CLT up and “return to the traditional methods and use the first language (L1)” (p. 4). It is noticeable that “for

them the Grammar-Translation method is the most acceptable because they can basically teach English in Chinese” (Yu, 2001, p. 197).

One issue with CLT discussed by Liao (2002) is *teachers’ lack of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence*. This relates to a widespread belief that “language and culture are closely related and teachers should strive to develop students’ cultural knowledge” (Liao, 2002, p. 4). However, according to an investigation conducted by Burnaby and Sun (1989), Chinese teachers have little knowledge about the target culture.

Another issue associated with teachers is *lack of training in CLT* (Liao, 2002). Many teachers in China lack special training for CLT. Therefore it is difficult for them to create an English-speaking atmosphere in the classroom or school.

*The pressure to teach “exam English”* is an issue associated with English teachers in China. Many writers report that English teachers in China are under pressure to teach exam English (Be, 2003; LoCastro, 1996; Tomlinson, 2005). That is, rather than communicative competence, Chinese English teachers have to teach students linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar which are especially designed in authoritative textbooks and will be examined by the Ministry of Education. English teachers will only be regarded as qualified teachers by society, as well as the Chinese government if their students achieve in these examinations.

Based on research in a comparable context, LoCastro (1996) states, with reference to the introduction of a new, more communicative curriculum in Japanese high schools, classroom teachers are always under pressure to teach “exam English”, as Chinese teachers are. She suggests that a new curriculum with CLT principles will be virtually ignored unless the examination system is totally changed. Be (2003) also makes a similar point in relation to examination innovation in Vietnam. Hence, it is a general phenomena that despite the introduction of CLT at a government level, teachers in China as well as in other Asian countries are under pressure to teach exam English rather than communicative English with the examination-orientated education system.

However, it is necessary to mention that there is also an inevitable washback of “exam English” that has often uninended consequences, both negative and positive, for

Chinese language education. Its effects have influenced all aspects of language teaching, such as curriculum, textbooks, assessment. This washback effect has begun to attract the Chinese government's attention recently. As a result, the government has tried to employ washback in the Chinese language education positively so as to improve further the quality of Chinese education. There is also a phenomenon of washback from "exam English" in the Chinese EFL context in the present study. However, it is not the focus in the present study.

### ***Student responses***

As mentioned above, there are some issues associated with CLT in China from the perspectives of English students themselves. One of the issues with CLT is Chinese English students' *low spoken English proficiency*. According to Leng (1997), it is difficult for many Chinese students with low English ability to understand teachers as well as to convey themselves in English, and consequently, they often keep silent or inactive in the classroom, which thus makes teachers frustrated with CLT and encourages them to return to more traditional methods.

Another issues associated with CLT is Chinese students' *lack of motivation for developing communicative competence*. "In a non-native English speaking country like China, students do not have many opportunities to use English for real-life communication outside of the classroom" (Liao, 2002, p. 6). Instead, they concentrate on grammar knowledge in order to pass or get higher scores in grammar-oriented examinations to enter universities, "which has immediate and practical benefits" (Liao, 2002, p. 6) for students' future lives.

*Resistance to class participation* is also an issue associated with Chinese students. Owing to the deep influence of Confucian ideas, teachers are viewed as knowledge-givers and dominate the classroom, while students learn knowledge receptively by sitting motionless as listeners and resist participating in class activities. Students believe that knowledge can only be acquired from the teacher's instruction by taking and memorising notes but not from activities (Liao, 2002).

### ***Responses within the educational system***

Other responses to CLT are associated within the educational system. Liu (1998) complains that the conditions that face EFL teachers in China (e.g., large class sizes, poor resources, a didactic tradition, the examinational system) mean that they cannot teach in the same process or discovery-oriented ways as their counterparts, Western ESL teachers, who teach small, well-resourced classes characterised by interaction, group work and student-centred approach. Tomlinson, after teaching English in a traditional university in Japan, found, for example, that “most of the [Japanese] staff, while appreciating my [communicative] approach theoretically, continued to teach English in the more didactic ways with which they felt comfortable” (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 142).

Obviously, one of characteristics of EFL in China is *large class size*. It is very common in China to have more than 50 students in a class. One of the teachers in Ng and Tang’s investigation (1997) complained, “we have 50 students in a class, and if each student speaks one sentence, it will take up the whole lesson” (p. 77). Thus, it is difficult for a teacher to administer class activities in such a big class. This factor of class size will be examined in the present research.

*The Chinese grammar-oriented examination* is another issue which has challenged CLT practice in China. Nearly all national examinations developed by the State Education Development Commission are grammar-oriented, which emphasize the development of reading comprehension skills through knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and which have no content related to communicative testing. “Passing it or getting a high score in it in order to enter universities is the most important consideration for students as well as for teachers” (Liao, 2002, p. 7). Whether teaching is judged to be successful or not largely depends on whether students are successful in an examination or not. Therefore, to help students to achieve a high score in all examinations, teachers have to concentrate on grammar knowledge instead of communicative skills, unless grammar-oriented examinations are changed into communication-oriented ones.

Another issue within the Chinese educational system is *insufficient funding*, which also blocks the implementation of CLT in China. Economically, “China is developing fast, but teachers as a whole are still relatively underpaid” (Leng, 1997, p. 38). As a result, Yu finds that “the low incomes of English teachers drive them into taking a second or even a third teaching job” (2001, p. 196), which is a very common phenomena in the Chinese education profession. As a university English teacher in China, for example, I, the researcher, also had a second teaching job outside my university in order to improve my family’s living standard. Some of my colleagues even had two or three part-time jobs or ran a business outside the university and only turned up in a classroom when they had to give lectures. As a consequence, “few university teachers will spend time analysing learners’ needs or designing their own syllabi, nor will they collect suitable materials to create communicative tasks and activities” (Leng, 1997, p. 38).

*Lack of support* is another problem for CLT in China. It is noticeable that English teachers have generally had a lack of support from administrators who usually guide teachers but have no professional knowledge about language teaching and learning or about CLT (Leng, 1997).

### ***Some issues associated with CLT***

Another issue with CLT in China is the nature of CLT itself. The need to distinguish EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) is important. It is obvious that EFL is very different from ESL (see the details in Section 2.2). The context of learning is the most important difference between EFL and ESL. The target language in ESL situations is widely used outside the classroom. As described in section 2.2, other differences include the purpose of learning English, teacher English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials. CLT originated in an ESL context. Consequently, the pedagogical communicative problems became more obvious when CLT was transplanted directly from the ESL context into EFL contexts such as China (Liao, 2002, p. 8). Similarly, as mentioned in Section 2.3.2, Li (2002) in his survey of some issues of cultural influences on role expectations in intercultural settings found that it could be problematic to introduce Western educational approaches into Chinese classrooms.

*Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments* is another issue that has challenged CLT practice in China. With respect to English assessment, Liao points out that it would be “a big problem for the teacher to conduct communicative evaluation because giving oral tests to so many students is very time-consuming... and there are no prescribed, ready-made assessment tools for communicative competence” (Liao, 2002, p. 8).

All these responses discussed in this section above are summarized in the following table.

**Table 2: Responses to CLT in China**

<i>With teachers</i>	<i>With students</i>	<i>With the educational system</i>	<i>With CLT itself</i>
<i>Limited spoken English</i>	<i>Low spoken English proficiency</i>	<i>Large class size</i>	<i>The need to distinguish EFL and ESL</i>
<i>Lack of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence</i>	<i>Lack of motivation for developing communicative competence</i>	<i>Grammar-oriented examination</i>	<i>Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments</i>
<i>Lack of training in CLT</i>	<i>Resistance to class participation</i>	<i>Insufficient funding</i>	
<i>Under pressure to teach “exam English”</i>		<i>Lack of support</i>	

Partly in response to these factors, the state education ministry has taken many measures to overcome these difficulties, including teacher re-training, test reform, and the issuing and publication of communicative syllabus and teaching materials. Many teachers have tried their best to “change the dominant teaching procedure, but quickly get frustrated, lose their initial enthusiasm, and acquiesce to tradition” again (Campbell & Zhao, 1993, p. 4). It is noticeable that transplanting Western educational models into Chinese classrooms, specifically CLT from the ESL context into the EFL China context, has met many obstacles caused by limitations in respect of teachers,

students, the educational system, CLT itself and finance. These factors are “powerful and often out of the teachers’ control” (Liao, 2002, p. 14).

It is strongly believed by many Chinese teachers that communicative methods are good for teaching Chinese students who will soon go to English-speaking countries to live and study, while Chinese traditional Grammar-Translation methods are more suitable for facilitating students’ analytical skills and knowledge of English grammar that they will need in certain kinds of work in China, such as reading academic, technical articles and translations of documents (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Li, 2002). There is also a widespread belief that traditional teaching methods are useful in preparing English-major graduates completely for living in an English-speaking country. In other words, “the Chinese use their own methods not just because contextual constraints make it difficult for them to use communicative methods but also because it suits their students’ purposes” (Burnaby & Sun, 1989, p. 226).

### **3.4.5 TBLT in China**

In the last quarter century, English language education has been deemed by the Chinese government as having a vital role to play in national modernization and development (Adamson, 2001; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002a, 2005b; Jin & Cortazzi, 2003). Therefore, the Task-Based Language Teaching approach, “the latest methodological realization of CLT” describe by Nunan (2003, p. 606), has been chosen by the Ministry of Education as the new pedagogical platform in the primary school in the Chinese EFL context. The national English Language Standards, published in 2001, “strongly advocates task-based teaching, the latest methodological realization of communicative pedagogy” (Hu, 2005b, p. 15). Since then, TBLT has been tried out and implemented with the new curriculum in the primary schools of many national experimental districts throughout the country. There are some researchers tracing the TBLT reform in the primary school (Hu, 2005b; Littlewood, 2007; Zhan, 2007; Zhang, Bunton, & Adamson, 2007; Zhu, 2007), which discuss some ways in which teachers have responded to the challenges by adapting new ideas and developing methodologies suited to their own situations. However, there is a



shortage in the literature on how TBLT is used or complemented in a Chinese tertiary EFL classroom. It is hoped that the present study will try to fill these gaps by addressing how classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context happens and to what extent TBLT is used in the Chinese tertiary EFL context.

### **3.5 Classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context**

The purpose of this section is to review literature research that has addressed what instructional approaches are used by Chinese teachers to teach English as a foreign language in the classroom in China since the introduction of CLT and what classroom practice appear to facilitate Chinese students' language communicative competence in the classroom. In other words, current literature concerning issues of instructional approaches, use of textbooks, student modalities and classroom tasks described in a previous section (see Section 2.3) will be reviewed in order to provide a whole picture of what research tell us about how English language teaching and learning is undertaken in a tertiary classroom in the Chinese EFL context.

#### **3.5.1 Instructional approaches**

The literature on second language acquisition shows that teacher-centred instruction and pair work are still the main instructional approaches in many Asian countries (Hu, 2003b; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004). In Hu's (2003b) survey on regional differences in ELT in China, with 439 post-secondary Chinese student participants, he found that "the economically and socioculturally developed regions differ notably from the less developed ones in the development of ELT" (p. 290). However, as for instructional approaches, Hu's findings show that a majority of student participants from both developed and undeveloped areas in China indicated that "their secondary English classes were largely teacher-centered, with teacher talk usually taking up most of the class time... teachers typically exercised tight control over the content and pace of lessons" and classroom tasks were restricted to pair work (2003b, p. 296). Moreover, other researches (Hu, 2005a; Nunan, 2003; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004; Sakui, 2004) show that English language teaching, to some extent, is still

teacher-centred and formS-focused in China, and similar in this respect to many Asian countries. In fact, China has not embraced CLT in the way that many “absolutist” researchers expected (Kuo, 1995; Leng, 1997; Li, 1984; Liao, 2004). As has already been discussed, there are many reasons for this, such as the deep influence of Chinese traditional cultural of education (Cortazzi, 1999; Hu, 2002b), the long-historical domination of the traditional GTM in the ELT in China (Hu, 2003b), the special EFL context, the constraints on CLT, and CLT itself (Liao, 2002).

Nonetheless, the English language teaching and learning profession has been under increasing pressure to transfer from the traditional GTM to CLT, because economic development in China has been growing at an astonishing pace (Hu, 2002b; Liao, 2002; Wu, 2001). Events such as China's entry into the World Trade Organization and a successful bid for the 2008 Olympics have created more nationwide zeal for Chinese people to learn proficient English. Two decades have passed since the introduction of CLT to China, so it is necessary and significant to see what has changed and what is really happening in the classroom of ELT in China.

The State Education Development Commission (State Education Commission, 1993), the official authority for setting educational policy in China, is the representative of the highly centralized Chinese system of education and has reedited new textbooks with the principles of CLT for Chinese high schools and universities and required all English teachers to use them. Two decades have passed, however, and the recent literature related to ELT in China reports that some of these features of GTM have been kept but others not. Li's survey (2002) in nine Chinese southeastern tertiary institutes, for example, reported that the Chinese teacher's main role is still a knowledge-giver, “to transfer knowledge mainly from textbooks to students”, while the student's primary learning role, thus, a knowledge receiver, “to master the knowledge that the teacher presents from textbooks” in a logical, systematic and interlocked way (p. 16). Li (2002) discovered that Chinese students still prefer teacher-centred instruction and tend to adopt an analytic and reflective approach in learning English. In a similar view, the survey conducted by Hu (2003b) with 439 Chinese students from different parts of China showed that secondary English classes were still largely teacher-centred with teacher talk taking up most of the class time, especially in inland regions of China. Teachers typically exercised tight control over

the content and pace of lessons. They wanted to explore every aspect of the language, searching for perfection, and they were intolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty (Rao, 2001). In the Chinese EFL context, the teacher's authority is based on "his/her profound knowledge of the subject and his/her techniques in the delivery of it" and "such a practice reinforces the teachers' authority and the teacher-student relationship" (Li, 2002, p. 16). However, there is little empirical research on instructional approaches used at a tertiary level in the Chinese EFL context, which the present research attempts to investigate, for example, what kind of instructional approaches are used in an actual English tertiary classroom in China and to what extent and in what ways such instructional approaches hinder or facilitate Chinese students' communicative competence in English.

### **3.5.2 Language pedagogy**

The literature shows that language pedagogy in the Chinese EFL context is still Focus-on-FormS and teacher-centred rather than Focus-on-Meaning and student-centred, especially in the inland areas or underdeveloped areas of China, even though CLT has been introduced to China for more than two decades. For example, the results from Li's findings from the surveys on Chinese EFL students in nine Chinese south-eastern tertiary institutions show that the Chinese EFL teacher's main role is still a knowledge-giver, "to transfer knowledge mainly from textbooks to students", while the student's primary learning role is, thus, a knowledge receiver, "to master the knowledge that the teacher presents from textbooks" in a logical, systematic and interlocked way (Li, 2002, p. 16). Li (2002) also discovered "the content of their lessons included grammar, vocabulary, collocations, figures of speech and so on". Hu (2003b) reports that Chinese EFL teachers frequently explained grammar rules to their students and provided exemplary sentences illustrating the grammar rules taught. Contrastive analyses of English and Chinese were frequently conducted to draw students' attention to similarities and differences between the two languages. There was also teacher correction of students' errors. In addition, there were frequent grammar exercises (such as sentence manipulation, pattern drill, cloze passages, fill-in-blanks exercises) and many translation exercises (from English into Chinese and vice versa). Hu states that "finally, test and quizzes were frequently given to test

students' knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. Instructional practice like these are typical of time-honoured grammar-translation method" (2003b, p. 297). The present study attempts to explore how language pedagogy, like Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning or/and Focus-on-Form are used in the Chinese EFL and ESL context and to what extent grammar teaching is important to Chinese students in terms of perspectives from both Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers in these two contexts.

### **3.5.3 Use of textbooks**

With respect to the aspect of use of textbooks, a large body of literature review (Coombs, 1995; Hu, 2003b, 2005c; Kettemann, 1997; Li, 2005; Liao, 2004; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004) show that textbooks are still important and crucial to EFL in many Asian countries, especially in China.

As a centrally-controlled educational system, textbooks in China have been specified and published nationally by the Government (Liao, 2004, p. 271). Textbooks for all kinds of subjects used compulsorily in the different kinds of schools in China are nationally published. Textbooks are the product of the text-oriented examination educational system in China (Hu, 2003b; Liao, 2004). Before the 1980s, each subject had only one authorized textbook, which was called "Student's Book". Some series of reference resources were provided to support teachers in their use of student's textbooks, such as "Teacher's Book", "Workbook", "Test and practice files" DVD (including Model Test, Worksheets and Self-assessment of Worksheets) and cassette tapes of texts. Many studies indicate that English textbooks have played an important role in the English language teaching and learning profession in the Chinese EFL context (Coombs, 1995; Hu, 2003b; Kettemann, 1997; Li, 2002; Li, 2004). Textbooks can be regarded as "the foundation stone on which the teaching of a subject is based" (Coombs, 1995, p. 36). This approach is associated with the Chinese culture of education in which textbooks are widely used in all subjects from primary schools (even from kindergartens) to universities in China. Kettemann (1997) comments that English textbooks in China "have satisfied the language learning needs of the Chinese learners" (Kettemann, 1997, p. 192). Take a textbook edited by Zou (2005) called

*Integrated Skills English* as an example. It is “soaked with the ideals of communicative language teaching” and “built around a topic-based, skills-integrated and culture-rich curriculum” (Kettemann, 1997, p. 191), specially designed by the Ministry of Education for English majors in Chinese universities. Hu (2002a, p. 38) also states that textbooks are crucial to the quality of ELT in the Chinese EFL context because they are one of two major sources (textbooks and teachers) of English input to most Chinese students. In Li’s survey (2002), voices from Chinese students indicate that “teaching without any purpose, any textbooks, and any preparation” would be regarded as “purposeless and irresponsible teaching” which “cannot help the students to reach a high level of proficiency” and such teachers would be regarded as teachers “failing to play their roles as teachers” (p. 11). A course program would be thought to be poorly organized if it started without a textbook.

Undoubtedly, English textbooks have made a great contribution to English language teaching and learning in the EFL Chinese context. However, the literature also argues that English textbooks have been overused by teachers in China. Chinese teachers have a “close adherence to the prescribed textbooks, and there were few teacher-developed learning materials except grammar exercises” (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). Hu indicated that it was teachers who “typically exercised tight control over the content and pace of lessons” (2003b, p. 296) in an English language classroom in China. In a similar vein, Coombs (1995) also suggested that many Chinese teachers “always made the fullest possible use of the textbook” as “an invaluable teaching aid” by following the text sentence by sentence (p. 36). There are many factors which may cause English textbooks to be overused in the Chinese EFL context, such as traditional Chinese education views, Chinese cultural values, the text-oriented examination educational system in China, individual identity and so on. The high value associated with textbooks by both Chinese teachers and Chinese students can also be derived from the Chinese epistemological view, that is:

knowledge is believed to reside in the teacher-expert and authority-textbook. Teachers use textbooks as a source to prepare lessons, organize classroom activities, systematically transmit the knowledge, and assess students’ learning outcomes. For students, textbooks are an inseparable part of their learning. The teacher’s main

task is to transfer knowledge mainly from textbooks to students, while acting as a moral and intellectual model.

(Li, 2002, p. 11)

In the Chinese EFL context, in fact, it is easy for Chinese teachers to closely adhere to the prescribed textbooks. It is also easy for Chinese teachers to analyze texts in the prescribed textbooks sentence by sentence, explain and exemplify language points in detail, paraphrase sentences and so on (Hu, 2003b, p. 298).

The overview of the literature on the use of English textbooks in the EFL Chinese context provides us with a context to further investigate how and why English textbooks are used in the tertiary classroom in the Chinese EFL context.

#### **3.5.4 Student modalities**

The literature mentioned above (see section 2.5.1) claims that student modalities (the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be taught as an integration of skills on communicative principles in order to facilitate natural acquisition. That is to say, students should be encouraged to integrate their skills practice to reflect a more authentic use of language (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). The teaching of integrated skills, then “is best seen as a natural development of communicative methodology tempered by the specific requirements of learning in the classroom” (Johnson & Johnson, 1998c, p. 324). However, the research on ELT in the Chinese EFL context indicates that these four language modes are focused on in the secondary English classroom at different stages. For example, according to Hu’s (2003b) investigation, emphasis was placed on “the development of the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, though different skills seemed to be emphasized at different stages” in secondary English teaching and learning in China. In fact, in many cases, attention was given to “the development of reading and writing skills at the expense of listening and speaking skills” (p. 298).

However, as far as this researcher is aware, there is no empirical data in the literature which focuses on student modalities at tertiary school level in the Chinese EFL context. The present study will thus attempt to investigate whether isolated skills were taught or integrated skills were taught, in other words, whether these language skills occurred in isolation or in combination in the tertiary language classroom in the Chinese EFL context.

### **3.5.5 Error correction**

The literature in English language education shows that there are many studies on error correction in written English in China (Liu & Dong, 2002; Wen, 2001). However, there is a paucity of systematic and empirical research that investigates how error correction on students' speech is conducted in an EFL classroom in China. It is hoped that the current study will try to fill this gap and explore how error correction in oral English was conducted in one Chinese EFL tertiary classroom and how Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers view error correction in classroom teaching in the Chinese EFL context.

### **3.5.6 Classroom tasks**

As Hu (2003b) points out, it is very important and necessary for “English teachers to adopt appropriate language games/activities resembling real-world tasks to create interactive contexts for practising both language knowledge and skills” (p. 297) to meet the special Chinese EFL context.

The research indicates that more and more Chinese English teachers have increased their awareness of students' communicative needs and have tried to design and create and organize activities (e.g. student lecture task<sup>8</sup>) to increase students' exposure to the target language (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). Some literature indicates, however, that English language teaching, to some extent, is still formS-focused and teacher-centred in the

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<sup>8</sup> Student lecturing task is a task conducted by students as a teacher does in the class.

Chinese EFL context (Hu, 2005a, 2005c; Nunan, 2003; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004; Sakui, 2004)<sup>9</sup>. Classroom tasks in China are still predominantly pattern drills, translation and retelling. Some tasks are “individual performances in front of the class” (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). For example, students are frequently asked to read texts aloud or recite texts in front of the class (Hu, 2003b, p. 298). In fact, CLT has not been well implemented in China in the way many Chinese educators or researchers expected as has been explained previously (Kuo, 1995; Leng, 1997; Li, 1984; Liao, 2004).

However, there has been little experimental research on what are effective classroom tasks which can facilitate and create the conditions for Chinese EFL students to acquire communicative competence in the tertiary classroom in the Chinese EFL context. The present research will describe to what extent and in what ways classroom activities appear to help Chinese EFL students to acquire communicative competence effectively and it will also describe the views of Chinese EFL students and their teachers on tasks conducted in their classrooms.

It has been more than two decades since the CLT approach was introduced to China, and “tremendous effort and resources have been expended on upgrading the various components of ELT, including curriculum, syllabuses, textbooks, tests and teachers’ professional competence” (Hu, 2003b, p. 290). However, the literature above shows that ELT in China is still dominated by Chinese traditional English teaching methodology (GTM) and is deeply influenced by the Chinese culture of learning in many important aspects of classroom practice. The successful implementation of CLT in China has been impeded by the deep influence of the Chinese culture of learning, effects of Chinese traditional English methodology and factors associated with teachers, students and the educational system. It would appear that CLT principles are rare in the classroom, especially in college or university classrooms. It could also be problematic to introduce CLT directly from an ESL context into an EFL context of China (Fotos, 2005; Hu, 2002b, 2005; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002). As discussed, Li (2002),

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<sup>9</sup> Hu (2005a, 2005c) examines secondary EFL classrooms, EFL teachers’ education and continuing professional development in the workplace and through formally organized in-service programs in China. Nunan (2003), Pham (2005), Phan (2004) focus on university English classrooms in Vietnam; Sakui (2004) investigates CLT implementation in Japan from the voices of Japanese secondary school teachers.



in his survey, found that the pedagogical communicative problems between expatriate English language teachers and Chinese university students became more obvious when transplanting Western educational models into Chinese classrooms. Therefore, to some extent, while CLT is generally believed to be valuable (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Li, 2002; Li, 1984; Liao, 2004; Wu & Fang, 2002; Yu, 2001), the weak or strong versions of the Grammar-Translation method still notably continue to prevail in parts of China today, especially in inland areas (Fotos, 2005; Hu, 2003b, 2005a). Note that little research has been done in tertiary contexts. Hence, it is worth investigating how ELT is being delivered in the EFL Chinese context and it is also worth investigating ways of developing “an eclectic combination of methods and activities, with grammar, vocabulary, and translation activities retained and communicative activities” (Fotos, 2005, p. 668) “to meet the demands of their specific teaching situations” (Hu, 2005a, p. 67) in China.

### **3.6 Classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context**

There is also little empirical research on ELT issues in English language schools/centres in New Zealand, and there is “a paucity of systematic and empirical research that may enable the voices of Asian students, especially Asian students in language schools, to be heard and heeded” (Li, 2004, p. 5) in New Zealand. Therefore, the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) policy specially designed by Ellis (2005b) for the Ministry of Education of New Zealand as a guideline for ESL teachers for facilitating the process of English language learning of international students in their own classrooms will be documented first here in order to give a general view about how ESOL is regulated in the New Zealand ESL context. Then an account will be given of a qualitative study conducted by Li (2004), from December 2002 to March 2003 at two New Zealand English language schools with 40 Asian student participants involved in this survey. This empirical research examined international students’ perceptions and views of ELT in New Zealand language schools/centers. Li’s research findings will be presented in the following sections in terms of instructional approach, use of textbooks, student modalities and classroom tasks.

### *New Zealand ESL principles*

New Zealand ESL principles were established by “examining theory and research that has addressed what constitutes an effective approach for international students to acquire English language as a second language” in an ESL classroom and “how instruction can best ensure international students’ successful language learning” in the New Zealand ESL context (Ellis, 2005b, p. 1). Ellis (2005b) points out that this is not an easy question to answer, “both because there are many competing theories offering very different perspectives on how instruction can promote language learning and because little empirical research has been undertaken on this area in English language schools/centres in the ESL New Zealand context” (p. 1). Instead, Ellis (2005b) summarizes ten general principles for successful instructed learning in New Zealand, on the basis of examining current theory and research on ESL.

Principle 1: instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence

Principle 2: instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominately on meaning

Principle 3: instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form

Principle 4: instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge

Principle 5: instruction needs to take into account learners’ ‘built-in syllabus’

Principle 6: successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input

Principle 7: successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output

Principle 8: the opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency

Principle 9: instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners

Principle 10: in assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production

(p. 1)

The ten principles above can be viewed as “provisional specifications best operationalised and can also provide a guideline for designers of language curricula as well as for classroom teachers in their own teaching contexts in New Zealand” (p. 1).

### **3.6.1 Instructional approaches**

With respect to instructional approaches, Li's (2004) research findings from 40 Asian students in New Zealand language schools revealed that a student-centred approach dominated in the ESL classrooms of New Zealand language schools. As for *group work or pair work*, the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (the Framework) (2005) points out that, “ lessons should include opportunities for repeated but varied engagement with the same material and use a variety of interactions such as whole-class, structured group, pair, and individual work” (p. 12). However, research showed that the pedagogical values or advantages of group activities were not recognized by Asian students. In Li's (2004) survey, he revealed that more than two-thirds of student participants complained that “group activities are over-emphasized at the sacrifice of linguistic forms” and they were “time-consuming and very counter-productive” (p. 8).

### **3.6.2 Language pedagogy**

There is a relative paucity of systematic and empirical research on the issue of language pedagogy in the New Zealand ESL context. There is also little literature on the perceptions of Chinese EFL and ESL students and their EFL and ESL teachers on language pedagogy in the ESL classroom in New Zealand. However, it is hoped that the present research will fill these gaps by addressing how classroom practice on language pedagogy in the New Zealand ESL context happens and how Chinese students and their teachers perceive language pedagogy in the ESL classroom in New Zealand.

### **3.6.3 Use of textbooks**

As for *use of textbooks*, Li's (2004) survey research findings showed that "textbooks were used in some classes but most classes did not use any textbooks", and instead used photocopied handouts, such as lists, strips, pictures, maps, clippings, short reading passages, and grammar and vocabulary exercises. As a result, "most Asian students felt frustrated because their teachers rejected using any decent textbooks" with which, "they could preview and review at home" and which "might enhance their learning" in all aspects, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing (pp. 9-10). In their view, learning became impossible for them without a textbook. This finding appears to reflect a mismatch between ELT in New Zealand and Chinese students' particular learning expectations greatly influenced by culturally Chinese rooted educational perspectives (See 3.3.1).

### **3.6.4 Student modalities**

With respect to student modalities, little research has focused attention on how student modalities are undertaken in English language classrooms in the New Zealand ESL context. However, according to the New Zealand Curriculum Framework, "the oral and written language modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing should each have a distinct focus, but teaching and learning tasks should integrate these modes. In addition, the range of texts used for teaching and learning should include elements of written, oral, and visual language." (2005, p. 12). Obviously, the Framework recognizes that there are links in learners' development across the four modes of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Hence, it is significant for the present research to investigate to what extent and in what way student modalities are focused on or integrated so as to facilitate English language learning for Chinese tertiary international students in the ESL classroom of an English language institute in New Zealand.

### **3.6.5 Error correction**

Most research about error correction in New Zealand has been conducted by Ellis (Ellis et al., 1999; Ellis et al., 2002). Most of his research examined error correction by way of the effects of interactional patterns (teacher-learner and learner-learner) and learners' proficiency levels (Advanced and Elementary) and so on.

However, the present study seeks to examine perceptions of both Chinese ESL and EFL students and their ESL and EFL teacher participants on error correction conducted in the ESL classroom in New Zealand in terms of error correction's importance, timing, manner, and whether it is focused on the accuracy or fluency of oral speech.

### **3.6.6 Classroom tasks**

As for the issue of *classroom tasks*, there is a little research to show how classroom tasks are conducted in English language schools/centres in the New Zealand ESL context and little research to reflect international students' views on how classroom tasks occur in real tertiary classroom practice in New Zealand. However, we can draw some information from the results of the survey conducted by Li (2002; 2004) on how Chinese students viewed the classroom tasks organized by native, English-speaking teachers in Mainland China as well as in New Zealand. Li (2002) reported that Chinese tertiary students in China "were often disappointed with expatriate teachers" (native English speakers) "who treated them like pre-teens" by using materials or games or classroom tasks appropriate for "pre-school or primary school children in their home countries and by forcing them to engage in conversation" and ignoring the existing level of linguistic competence among Chinese students. Most of these Chinese students, therefore, felt that they were "cheated and humiliated" (p. 16). In a similar vein, the survey undertaken by Li (2004) in two New Zealand language schools also revealed that some Chinese students felt humiliated by being forced (like preschool children) to play games or engage in group work and activities "that they did not find useful to their language acquisition" (p. 8). In Li's view, Chinese students at an advanced stage expected "something new, something more advanced, more

interesting, more challenging and more theoretical than endless conversations and discussions” (2002, p. 16). Therefore, the appropriateness or effectiveness of classroom tasks was one of the main issues raised in relation to Chinese students’ learning needs and, in this respect, these students were disappointed with Western ESL teachers both in China and in New Zealand.

Li’s research (2004) reported on the perceptions and views of some Asian students on ELT in New Zealand language schools/centres but did not touch upon teachers’ perceptions and views or real classroom practice. The present research will not only investigate the perceptions and views of Chinese students but also the perceptions and views of their teachers in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts, “which are equally important” (Li, 2004, p. 17). Another issue which should be mentioned is that Li’s research was purely qualitative and subjective; however, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be adopted in the present research (see Chapter 4). Quantitative methodology in this study will be used to investigate real classroom practice in these two contexts by means of audio-visual recording and the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme. It is hoped that both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will help determine the magnitude of the issues relating to English language teaching and learning in Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL tertiary contexts, respectively.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

It is apparent that empirical research on tertiary English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context as well as in the New Zealand ESL context is rather thin. Rigorous empirical research on the extent to which and in what ways different teaching approaches can facilitate Chinese tertiary students to efficiently develop their communicative competence in these two contexts in terms of a comparative perspective is even more scarce. Some empirical research merely focuses on English language teaching (ELT) conducted at a secondary school level (e.g. in China, Hu, 2002b) rather than at a tertiary school level. It is thus both important and significant to undertake a case study on English language teaching and learning in a

tertiary setting in the two different contexts, New Zealand and China. By conducting research to describe teaching approaches and student and teacher experiences in the different contexts, we can recognize the strengths and limitations of ELT practice and applied linguistics in these two contexts. As Hu (2002a) points out, “cooperation in research” between China and Western countries “should be strengthened so as to exploit both parties’ advantages and promote international professional exchanges” (p. 44). Wu (2001) also claims that “China will need to organize nationwide research teams and to draw on international expertise” so as to improve ELT in China and to make a contribution to TESOL worldwide (Wang, 2001, p. 194).

It is hoped that the present research will examine what similarities and differences there are between tertiary English language classroom practice in China and in New Zealand. It will illuminate how EFL is for Chinese tertiary students in China and how ESL for Chinese tertiary students is in New Zealand. It will explore: what kinds of classroom tasks are most appropriate to the Chinese EFL and ESL students at the tertiary level in helping them to acquire communicative ability in both EFL and ESL contexts; how Chinese EFL and ESL students or their EFL and ESL teachers in the selected classes of the two contexts interpret their classroom practice; and to what extent the perspectives of students or teachers in these two contexts are aligned. Moreover, this present study will also investigate what teachers’ and students’ reactions are to English teaching in the other setting, which has not been undertaken in the ESL research literature to date.

In sum, the data analysed in this current research on ELT approaches has the potential to play a significant and important role both at a research and an application level with respect to second language acquisition. It also helps us to explore how EFL operates in the tertiary English education EFL context in China as well as how ESL operates in a language institute in New Zealand. The literature surveyed in Chapter Two and Three lead to the following research questions which will be explored in this thesis:

- 1) What similarities and differences were there between tertiary English language classroom practice, in terms of six perspectives of instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbook, student modalities, error correction, classroom tasks in the classroom of the two contexts: China and New Zealand?

How did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students in the two contexts view them?

- 2) In respect of EFL in China, what teaching approaches were used? To what extent were GTM, CLT and TBLT being used in the Chinese EFL context?
- 3) In respect of ESL in New Zealand, what teaching approaches were used? To what extent were CLT and TBLT being used in the New Zealand ESL context?
- 4) What were the effects of language contexts on classroom teaching practice in these EFL and ESL contexts?

The literature in Chapter Two and Three will be used to theorize the findings in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The research methodology adopted in the present study will be discussed in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The major purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the process of English language teaching in terms of different language teaching approaches as well as different classroom practice as experienced by teachers and learners in two different contexts, one in China and the other in New Zealand. This chapter describes 1) research design, 2) research contexts and participants, 3) data collection schedule, 4) data collection techniques and procedures, and 5) data analysis. It also describes how the collected data were transcribed and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

### **4.2 Research design**

The overall design of the present research --- the research paradigm, research strategy, and methods of data collection and data analysis - is presented as follows. This research is largely based on a qualitative paradigm of inquiry. Therefore, a qualitative research methodology and qualitative data collection techniques were used. These included stimulated recall interviews and group and individual interviews. The interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodologies focus on actual classroom practice as well as individual experiences and understandings in contexts so as to attempt to illuminate, as in this study, what are the enabling conditions for Chinese students' language learning effectively in both EFL and ESL classrooms. Data were analysed by a process of content analysis. The reasons for the use of this approach in this study are discussed below.

### 4.2.1 Research paradigm

Paradigms are defined as basic beliefs and first principles that guide how human beings behave (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) and “shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 33). Paradigms normally operate at both a theoretical and a methodological level (Creswell, 2009). Each paradigm brings with it fundamental assumptions that necessarily influence decisions made throughout any inquiry. As Guba and Lincoln state, “inquiry paradigms define for inquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and without the limits of legitimate inquiry” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 108). Clear articulation of the research paradigm in this study is therefore important, not only for the researcher but also for the intended audience.

There are three major methodologies or strategies which can be used within interpretive paradigms “to provide specific direction for procedures in a research design”: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2009, p. 11). There is much discussion in the research literature about quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods strategies and their respective characteristics. An overview of these strategies is displayed in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Alternative strategies of inquiry**

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Mixed Methods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experimental design</li><li>• Non-experimental designs, such as surveys</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narrative research</li><li>• Phenomenology</li><li>• Ethnographies</li><li>• Grounded theory studies</li><li>• Case study</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sequential</li><li>• Concurrent</li><li>• Transformative</li></ul>

(Creswell, 2009, p. 12)

Research using a qualitative methodology emphasizes “the value-laden nature of inquiry”, such as process and meanings, which cannot be rigorously measured or examined in terms of amount, quantity, frequency or intensity. In contrast, research using a quantitative methodology emphasises the analysis and measurement of “causal relationships between variables, not processes” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 13). Science has tended to favour a quantitative approach to inquiry, which assumes an objective stance (Barbour, 2008; Creswell, 2009). On the other hand, a qualitative paradigm is concerned more with the human and social sciences and favours an interpretive approach to research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), which involves “understanding the subjective world of human experience” as well as “retaining the integrity of the phenomena being investigated” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 21).

Qualitative research, as defined by Denzin and Lincoln 2005, means “a situated activity” conducted in a natural setting that focuses the observer/researcher in the complex historical field (p. 3). It is appropriate when “attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

However, Flick (2007), in his *Designing qualitative research*, indicates that “it has become more and more difficult to find a common definition of qualitative research which is accepted by the majority of qualitative research approaches and researchers” (p. ix). He states that qualitative research is no longer just simply “not quantitative research”, but has developed its own identities as follows:

- By analyzing experiences of individuals or groups. Experiences can be related to biographical life histories or to (everyday or professional) practices; they may be addressed by analyzing everyday knowledge, accounts and stories.
- By analyzing interactions and communications in the making. This can be based on observing or recording practices of interacting and communicating and analyzing this material.
- By analyzing documents (texts, images, film or music) or similar traces of experiences or interactions.

The methodology in this research is a primarily qualitative comparative case study. The researcher in this study is mostly interested in “analyzing experiences of individuals or groups”, relating to everyday practices (Flick, 2007, p. ix) in a natural setting. The study focuses on the experiences of ESL or EFL teachers and their Chinese ESL or EFL student participants in a natural English language classroom setting, which is the place where he/she is “most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest” (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001, p. 45). From this, the study explores the advantages and disadvantages of ESL and EFL approaches in the two contexts: China and New Zealand. In an attempt to gain teachers’ and their students’ views about their English language teaching and learning, it is important that the methodology enables the researcher to hear the voices of the ESL and EFL teachers and their ESL and EFL students with respect to English classroom practice in the two contexts. Qualitative research involves a variety of empirical approaches, such as comparison and the case study, which describe “routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives so the researcher can gain a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” by means of employing a broad range of “interconnected interpretive practice” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 3-4) (see the section below 4.2.2).

#### **4.2.2 Comparative case study as a qualitative method**

Comparison is a process of studying two or more things to see how they are alike or different – gives attention to certain aspects through the copresence of the other (Epstein, 1983). Comparative education is “a field of study that applies historical, philosophical and social science theories and methods to international problems in education” (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 7). Comparative education focuses on the study of education in terms of cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Comparative education and international education have been called ‘twin fields’, and the two fields are indeed closely related and highly complementary (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 42). Isaac L. Kandel, “a leading figure in the field of comparative education during the first half of the twentieth

century” (Arnove & Torres, 2007, p. 7), believed that “internationalism was one of comparative education’s major contributions” and comparative education could lead to a greater appreciation for and understanding of other countries, as well as one’s own, and lead ultimately to “the development of an internationalism” (1933, p. xxv). George Bereday (1964) argued that “the aim of comparative education was to search for lessons that can be deduced from the variations in educational practice in different societies” (p. xi). Kubow and Fossum also point out that “comparison challenges students to suspend judgements of those foreign systems that they might derive from their own localized and limited perspectives” (2007, p. 6). In addition to learning about other peoples and cultures, comparative education helps one to know about oneself (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). In general, comparative education examines education in developed and developing countries, for example, the present study conducted in New Zealand and China.

The case study is one of several ways of conducting research in social science. It is increasingly adopted in order to understand complex social phenomena. It is used as a research tool for the researcher to explore “in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2009, p. 13) and “to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 1). Merriam (1988) describes four essential characteristics of qualitative case study research: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive:

- **Particularistic** means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon.
- **Descriptive** means that the end product of a case study is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study.
- **Heuristic** means that case studies illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study.
- **Inductive** means that for the most part, case studies rely on inductive reasoning (pp. 12-13).

The comparative case study approach as a research design adopted in the present study, as Denscombe (1998, pp. 30-31) points out, has five main characteristics: the concentration on a single instance or a point in time, the in-depth nature of the study, the focus on processes and relationships, the natural setting for the research, and the use of multiple methods and sources. In the present research, the researcher will comparatively examine the process of English language teaching and learning experienced by teachers and students in the two contexts of New Zealand and China. The present research, taking Denscombe's five characteristics of case study above into consideration, concentrates on a single instance or a point in time of the English language classroom practice, for example, error correction, classroom tasks and so on in the two contexts. It explores the in-depth natural setting of a real classroom for ESL and EFL, focused not only on processes of the English teaching and learning but also on relationships between teachers and students, and utilizes multiple methods and sources, such as stimulated recall interviews (SRIs), interviews, the Adapted Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme, and questionnaires (see section 4.5), to illuminate what actually happened in a language classroom in both contexts, China and New Zealand. This comparative case study also encouraged EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students to think about which kinds of language teaching approaches or classroom activities are appropriate for what kind of context. As classroom-centred research, this research thus follows a comparative descriptive, qualitative case study approach and provides a holistic account of the phenomena being studied.

### **4.2.3 Validity**

Validity is important in all research methods. An important question with qualitative data or data within an interpretive paradigm is: just how trustworthy are the recorded accounts? In other words, how accurate is the researcher's observation and interpretations of aspects within language contexts and how might the methodology impact on English language teaching and learning in the two different classrooms?

Stake (1995) notes that case study researchers "have ethical obligations to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding as part of their responsibility for a valid case

study” (p. 105). Whether research is logical and meaningful mainly depends on the “nearly complete control” of internal and external validity (Brown, 1999, p. 40). Internal validity, occurring in the phase of data analysis, does “pattern-matching” and “explanation-building”, addresses “rival explanations” and uses “logic models”, while external validity, in the phase of research design, uses “theory in single-case studies” and “replication logic in multiple-case studies” (Yin, 2003, p. 34). Triangulation is “a commonly used technique” which is utilized “to improve the internal validity” of an ethnographic study (Burns, 2000, p. 419). Therefore, triangulation (see section 4.2.4) is utilized in this research as a means of enhancing validity.

#### **4.2.4 Triangulation**

It has been suggested that reliance on one method of data collection may bias or distort the whole picture of the reality that the researcher is probing (Burns, 2000, p.419; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). Triangulation can be defined as a way of using two or more methods of data collection in the study of some phenomena of human behaviour (Burns, 2000, p. 419; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). It is widely recognized that triangulation is “a commonly used technique” which is utilized “to improve the internal validity” of an ethnographic study (Burns, 2000, p. 419). According to Cohen *et al.*, there are two advantages of triangulation. As mentioned earlier, firstly, the use of triangular techniques can prevent a single researcher from depending on initial impressions (Burns, 2000, p. 419; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 11). Secondly, in its use of multiple methods, triangulation can assist in overcoming the problem of “method-boundedness” (Boring, 1953), defined as method limitations. One other advantage of the use of triangulation, is that it can explore more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by means of investigating it from more than one angle, or even in some cases in terms of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Burns, 2000, p.419; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). The more the data collection methods differ from each other, the greater confidence the researcher has about the findings (Burns, 2000, p. 419; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). Hence, triangulation is adopted in this study to enhance the confidence of the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information from the data collected in the fieldwork of the present research.

There are different types of triangulation. Denzin (cited by Janesick, 2003) specifies four basic types of triangulation:

- 1) **data triangulation**: the use of a variety of data sources in a study;
- 2) **investigator triangulation**: the use of several different researchers or evaluators;
- 3) **theory triangulation**: the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data;
- 4) **methodological triangulation**: the use of multiple methods to study a single problem.

The method of triangulation the researcher employed in the present research, to some extent, employed using five data collection techniques: SRIs, group and individual interviews, the Adapted COLT observations, questionnaire, and audio-video recording. The data triangulation used in the present research was sometimes used in a classic way of triangulation (see Section 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4), but also sometimes acted as multiple lenses to give a full picture of certain phenomena of language classroom practice in both ESL and EFL contexts, China and New Zealand (see Section 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7). The disadvantages of each particular data collection technique in the present study, therefore, are overcome by data triangulation (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). This data triangulation is the one “used most frequently and the one that possibly has the most to offer” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 143).

The various data collection techniques employed in the current research are outlined in detail below.

### **4.3 Data collection techniques and procedures**

The research follows a qualitative case study approach. As described in section 4.2.4, the research questions in this study necessitated data triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information during the study. The following data collection techniques were employed as a means of triangulation: 1) group and



individual interview, 2) stimulated recall interview, 3) audio-visual recording, 4) the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme and 5) questionnaire. Each of these techniques will be described below. The procedure for administration of each technique in the study is also explained below.

#### **4.3.1 Group and individual interview**

The interview is a tool that can be used to probe participants to a greater depth. A major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which a questionnaire can never do (Bell, 2001).

The interviews, therefore, were considered necessary to probe further into teachers' and students' perceptions of the social aspects of the classroom that impacted on their learning, in particular just how and why learning was affected. The interview, however, was flexible enough to explore any interesting areas which arose. As an interview involves a face-to-face situation, it is also flexible and helps participants to offer more information. Also it gives the interviewer the chance to immediately assist the interviewee to clarify further any answers to ambiguous questions.

According to the number of participants, interviews can also be catalogued into *individual* and *group* interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), both of which were adopted in the present study. The group interview "has grown in popularity within the methodology of interviews" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 373). Watts and Ebbutt (1987) point out that the group interview can yield a wider range of responses than individual interviews. Cohen et al., add that group interviews are often "quicker" than individual interviews and hence are "timesaving" and have "minimal disruption". The group interview can also "bring together" participants "with varied opinions or as representatives of different collectivities" (2007, p. 373).

However, there are some limitations associated with group interviews. Cohen et al., indicate that group interviews "may produce 'group think', discouraging individuals who hold a different view from speaking out in front of the other group members"

(2007, p. 373). Another limitation suggested by Arksey and Knight (1999) is that one respondent may dominate the group interview.

Some measures were taken in the present study to minimize the risk in the conduct of group interviews in the real fieldwork.

- Trying to give all interviewees a chance to speak out their opinions in a group interview (Cohen et al., 2007).
- Minimizing the effect of participants tending to go along with the majority view.

When conducting group interviews, Cohen et al., point out that “the view of the whole group and not the individual member, a collective group response is being sought, even though there are individual differences or a range of responses within the group” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 374). I do not accept this point of view and did not use it in my research. Bearing in mind the importance of every voice on English language teaching and learning in the two contexts, I tended to follow the principle that all voices, even in group interviews, should be sought, heard and discussed.

This study employed individual as well as group interviews. Individual interviews were used for collecting data from teacher participants, while group interviews were conducted with student participants. The same questions on relevant topics were asked in a similar way to all of the participants in this study “for comparison to maintain a minimum of consistency” “by using an interview guide” (see Appendix X & XII (Flick, 2007, p. 64). In accordance with Barbour’s suggestion (2008) that a group of six to eight is a maximal size, a group interview in the present study consisted of five participants each time. New Chinese students were involved each time during the group SRI and the group interview due to the large class size (28 in total) in the Chinese EFL context. Each Chinese EFL student participant was coded as CNS1 to CNS15 in the Chinese EFL context. Due to the small number of the Chinese student participants (7 in total) in the New Zealand ESL context, some of them were interviewed twice or three times during the group SRI and twice and three times during the group interview. Each Chinese ESL student participant was coded and

recorded every time as NZS1 to NZS15 in the New Zealand ESL context. All the interviews in this study were conducted immediately after the classes with videotaped lessons. That is to say, all interviews in the present study were either stimulated recall interviews (see below) which were used primarily for gathering participants' comments on their own videotaped lessons or interviews where interviewees were asked to comment on videotaped lessons from the other context (see the details in Figure 6).

#### **4.3.2 Stimulated recall interview**

The stimulated recall is one subset of introspective methods that represent a means of “eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity”. It can “observe internal processes in much the same way as one can observe external, real-world events” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1). The stimulated recall process is described as a “self-reporting technique” in which audio and/or video records of participants' external behaviours are used to stimulate recall of concurrently occurring internal thought processes (Marland, Patching, Putt, & Store, 1984).

The first use of stimulated recall is often attributed to Bloom (1954), who employed audiotapes as a means of stimulating the recall of university students. Bloom sought students' comments on lectures and discussions, attempting to explore the processes of students' thoughts in two different learning situations (Gass & Mackey, 2000). After this initial use in a teaching and learning context, stimulated recall methodology has been used to address a wide range of research topics, for example, counselling. Kagan, Krathwohl and Miller also developed a form of stimulated recall using videotapes, named Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), as a means of increasing counselors' awareness of interpersonal interactions during counseling interviews (1963). In an attempt to investigate the thought processes of clinicians in simulated diagnostic situations, Elstein, Shulman, and Spaafka used stimulated recall in research on clinical decision-making (1978).

The stimulated recall technique was selected in the present research as a data collection methodology because it has been found to be useful in the process of self-

evaluation and reflection with students and teachers in the L2 setting (Wear & Harris, 1994). The success of this method of investigation has been confirmed in a number of classroom-based studies on the thought processes of participating in language teaching and learning situations in the L2 setting (e.g., Calderhead, 1981; Fogarty, Wang, & Creek, 1983; Wear & Harris, 1994). Erickson and Mohatt (1977), for example, conducted a study on individuals' perspectives on learning by means of stimulated recall technique. Some researchers like Fogarty, Wang and Creek (1983) and Calderhead (1981) employed stimulated recall to investigate teachers, including their actions, their decision-making and interactive thought processes. Other researchers (Clark & Peterson, 1981; Fogarty et al., 1983; Marx & Peterson, 1981; Peterson & Clark, 1978) adopted stimulated recall as a tool for pre-service and in-service teacher training programs and for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Johnson (1992) also used stimulated recall to examine pre-service ESL teachers' instructional actions and decisions.

Gass and Mackey (2000) point out that stimulated recall can be employed with other methodologies, "as a means of triangulation or further exploration" (p. 19). Stimulated recall in this study was utilized in conjunction with group and individual interviews, questionnaires and the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme as data triangulation to explore the process of English language teaching as experienced by teachers and learners in the two contexts: China and New Zealand.

The stimulated recall method in the present research involved the use of audiotapes or videotapes (see section 4.3.3) of a regular lesson in the classroom as some degree of support for prompting participants to recall thoughts at the time of an activity or task. All stimulated recall interviews in the present research were conducted in a semi-structured and informal situation. The semi-structured type of interview has been found to be particularly useful for researchers working in an interpretive context (Nunan, 1992) as well as to focus and sequence the discussion.

Soon after the first lesson segment in the present research was videotaped, the student stimulated recall group interview and then the teacher stimulated recall individual interview were carried out one after the other. The participants watched a videotaped lesson with the researcher. During the viewing, either the participants or the researcher

could “stop the recorder at any time and comment on what you were thinking at that point in the conversation” (Hawkins, 1985, p. 165) and discuss the thought processes at certain points. As Gass and Mackey suggest (2000, p. 38), the stimulated recall was conducted in the participants’ native language so as to avoid ambiguity. Specific prompts (Appendix X & XI) were posed to both student and teacher participants during the stimulated recall. The whole process of stimulated recall interviews was audio-recorded. The recorded data were firstly transcribed into written form by the researcher and the transcriptions were back-translated by a near native-English-speaker Chinese.

### **4.3.3 Audio-visual recording**

Audio-visual recording is “a powerful recording device” (Erickson, 1992, pp. 209-210) and has recently found a place among the collection of data collection strategies available to researchers to explore the interaction of a teacher and students and “the organization of the participation structure” in the classroom (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001, p. 112). The great advantage of audio-visual recording is that it can yield more accurate and richer data and reveal non-verbal communication (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 407) which other data collection techniques, such as questionnaires and interviews cannot. Audio-visual recording can also collect live data that is immediate, natural and detailed (Spindler & Spindler, 1987, p. 20). Comprehensive audio-visual recording can overcome the “partialness of the observer’s view of a single event” as well as the tendency towards only recording events which happen frequently. It has “the capacity for completeness of analysis and comprehensiveness of material”, reducing the dependence on prior impressions of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 407).

In the present study, audio-video recordings were employed as a supplementary data collection technique because the environment of a language classroom and English language teaching and learning contexts represent a very rich and complex social structure that cannot readily be studied holistically by statistical means. The audio-video recordings in the present research were not only adopted to generate data for the COLT observation scheme (see Section 4.3.4) but were also used to stimulate recall of

internal thought processes simultaneously occurring with external behaviours (Marland et al., 1984) of the teacher and student participants in order to obtain the participants' perspectives on the process of English language teaching in the two different contexts.

Audio-video recordings can make some people uncomfortable. However, if participants understand the purpose of the recordings and the recordings are made regularly over an extended period of time, "the inhibiting and other effects of the intruding machines are likely to lessen" (Johnson, 1992, p. 86). The classes in the present research were videotaped from the beginning of the classes so that equipment was set up with as little disruption as possible. Piloting of audio-video taping was conducted in the present research to accustom students and teachers to the equipment and the researcher (see Section 4.4.1).

In the present research, six segments, each approximately 40 - 50 minutes in length, were videotaped in each of the two contexts in which teacher participants conducted regularly scheduled lessons. In the two contexts, each key class (see Table 4) was videotaped three times: at the commencement, the middle and the completion of the three-week, fieldwork program. The other two classes were videotaped once or twice for additional material.

#### **4.3.4 The Adapted COLT Observation Scheme**

Observing natural communication in a classroom setting, particularly oral or written interactions among students and between students and teachers, is one of the most common and important data-collection techniques in case studies (Johnson, 1992). Observational data are attractive as they give the observer opportunities to gain "live" data from "live" situations (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396). Qualitative classroom observation attempts to identify patterns of behaviour inside the classroom (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1995, p. 17). Observation is used as a tool to reveal the lecturer's teaching style, classroom tasks, and the level of interaction with students. The role of the observer allows the formation of perceptions independently from either teachers' or students' viewpoints.

The observation scheme, COLT – *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme*, “one of the most comprehensive systems of analysis, which was developed subsequent to Claudron’s analysis” ((Nunan, 2005, p. 232) – is an instrument adopted to observe teaching and learning in second language (L2) classrooms (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). It was designed to be particularly sensitive to the communicative orientation of L2 teaching (Spada, 1987, p. 140). It was developed within the context of a research project investigating a number of questions related to the nature of language proficiency and its development in the classroom setting for learners of second languages (Allen, 1983; Allen, Bialystok, Cummins, & Mougeon, 1982). It can be used to describe classroom processes and examine these in relation to learning outcomes.

Although there were several observation instruments available at the time when the COLT observation scheme was developed, none of them was rooted within a theory of communicative language teaching. “Apart from its comprehensiveness, COLT is of interest because it is both theoretically and empirically motivated, being based on an explicit theory of language teaching (communicative language teaching), and a psycholinguistic theory of acquisition” (Nunan, 2005, p. 232). It thus captures features of communication in communicative language teaching.

The COLT observation scheme was used as a research instrument in the present research to investigate the different processes of instruction of teaching and learning in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. These COLT observation scheme data provided observations or descriptions as to what was happening in the English language classroom in these two contexts. The data served to verify the complexities of the classroom teaching environment, indicating various factors which might impact on Chinese students’ language learning and how and why they might aid or hinder Chinese students’ learning of English both in China and New Zealand.

The COLT observation scheme was used to systematically observe and describe the instructional practice in terms of the type of activities, and the amount of listening, reading, speaking, and writing that took place in the two participant contexts. The description or the data coding from the COLT observation scheme was not done in

“real time”; that is, while the researcher was present in the classroom as the lesson unfolded, but was obtained after class by reviewing the videotapes taken in “real time” from the classes (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

The concept of proficiency on which this observation scheme is based is that communicative competence minimally includes three components: grammatical competence (knowledge of the formal systems of lexis, morphology, syntax and phonology); discourse competence (knowledge of the ways in which sentences combine together in meaningful sequences); and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of the way in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in social contexts). The hypothesis underlying this model is that learners may develop competence in these areas separately, and that different second-language programmes may affect the second- language development of these various competence areas in different ways (Spada, 1987, p. 140).

The categories used to measure these features have been derived from theories of communicative competence and communicative language teaching (see Section 2.3.2), as well as from research in first- and second-language acquisition, which suggest a number of factors thought to influence the language-learning process.

The COLT observation scheme is divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A describes classroom activities and Part B relates to communicative features. The limitation of the COLT observation scheme is the prescribed aspects of the forms, which may not be the focus of researchers. Therefore, Part A adopted in the present research was refined to correspond with the research questions in the present study. It focused on classroom events at the level of episode and activity and consisted of six major parts: activities and episodes, instructional approach, language pedagogy, student modality, use of textbooks and materials. A full-size version of the Part A observation grid, termed as *the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme*, is provided in Appendix XIII. Part B was not adopted in this study because it deals with issues that are not the focus of the present research.



### 4.3.5 Questionnaire

Questionnaires, a series of pre-determined questions, employed in the present research, were used to gather biographical information from the participants and to explore participants' perceptions, motivations, attitudes and beliefs (Burns, 2000) in respect of English language teaching and learning in the two different contexts. Questionnaires were used in the present research because they are useful for collecting information economically and quickly (Best & Kahn, 1998, p. 230). They also allow for a degree of flexibility depending on the researcher's objectives and offer greater anonymity than interviews (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, p. 225). The advantages of questionnaires over interviews can include:

- a) greater reliability,
- b) more likely to generate truthful responses,
- c) more economical, and
- d) less time-consuming.

(Best & Kahn, 1998; Burns, 2000; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996)

The main disadvantages of questionnaires (Best & Kahn, 1998; Burns, 2000; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) are (1) low response rate, (2) no opportunity for probing, (3) require simple questions and (4) no control over who fills out the questionnaire. However, in the present research, the first limitation was overcome by providing the questionnaire to all the participants in the classroom and collecting them immediately afterwards. The response rate, thus, was 100% (see Table 4 below). The rest of the potential limitations were addressed by the advantages of triangulation of data collection as mentioned above (see Section 4.2.4).

**Table 4: All participants involved in the questionnaire of the fieldwork**

<b>Name of institutes</b>	<b>Teacher participants</b>	<b>Student participants</b>	<b>Participants In total</b>	<b>Response In total</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
FFLBTU	<i>3</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>100%</i>
UWLI	<i>3</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>100%</i>
Total	<i>6</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>100%</i>

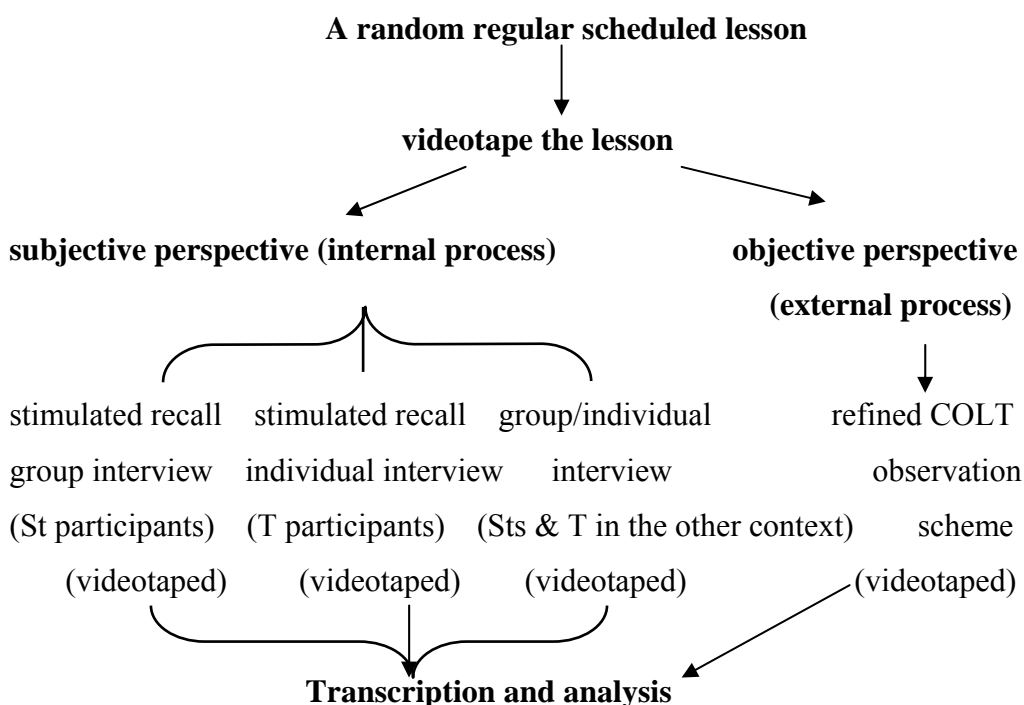
Questionnaires normally consist of open-ended, closed, or a combination of both types of questions (Best & Kahn, 1998; Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). The questionnaires in the present research adopted the last type, a combination of closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix VI). Most items were closed and the wording was simple and clear. The Chinese version was back translated. Understanding of the questionnaires was tested during the pilot phase of the present study (see section 4.4.1) in order to minimise misunderstanding in interpreting the questionnaire items. Dichotomous questions were utilized in this study to ask for information about dichotomous issues: yes/no, male/female, for instance (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, multiple choice and 5 point / 7 point Likert-scale (Likert quoted in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 326) were also employed in the questionnaires in the present research. The questionnaires for Chinese student participants were presented in Chinese so as to avoid ambiguity.

#### **4.3.6 Overview of data collection procedure**

During the data collection procedure, a random, scheduled regular lesson was videotaped, which was used for collecting internal data (see Section 4.3.2) as well as external data (see Section 4.3.4) on English language teaching and learning. The internal data are data drawn from “observing internal processes” of “the real-world events” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1). That is to say, the internal (subjective) data in the present research were obtained through the stimulated recall group interviews (with student participants) and stimulated recall individual interviews (with teacher participants) in the same class. These data were also gained through group and

individual interviews with students and teachers in the other context. The present study also adopted the videotaped lesson to collect external (objective) data by means of “observing external, real-world events” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 1) of English language teaching and learning based on the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme. The collection of both internal and external data provides a sound framework for describing English classroom practice in both ESL and EFL contexts. Finally, both sets of data were transcribed, analysed and discussed. Figure 5 summarises the above as follows.

**Figure 5: The procedure of data collection**

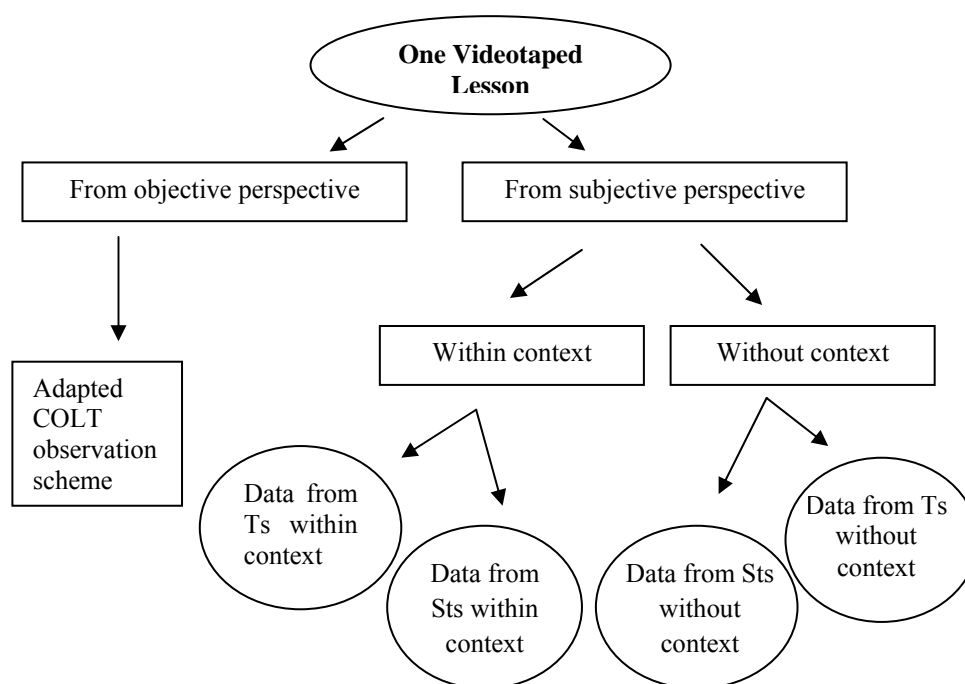


The emerging themes from the data in the present research came into being from the process of analysis of the data sources of my fieldwork. It is necessary to mention my data structure so as to provide a whole picture of the process of my thoughts on the stage of analysis and discussion.

As designed and planned, one videotaped lesson from each context in the present research was studied in terms of both subjective and objective perspective. From the objective perspective, it was coded and analysed by the Adapted COLT Observation

Scheme; from the subjective perspective, it was commented on from two different contexts, within the context and without the context, and four different aspects were planned. “Within the context” refers to participants who were involved in the videotaped lesson and “without the context” means participants who were not involved in the videotaped lesson. Four different aspects were those from teachers within the context; students within the context; teachers without the context; and students without the context; as the diagram shows below.

**Figure 6: The structure of research data**



In short, the data of one videotaped lesson was discussed and analysed from two different perspectives, two different contexts and four different aspects, thereby helping in providing a valid, reliable and holistic account of the phenomena being studied.

#### **4.4 Data collection schedule**

This research project was divided into two sections: the pilot study and fieldwork. The pilot study was carried out in the University of Waikato Language Institute, New

Zealand, but fieldwork was conducted in both contexts: the University of Waikato Language Institute, New Zealand, and Baotou Normal University, China. The data collection schedule includes two phases. Details of these two phases will be given in the next two subsections.

#### Pilot study (one week)

Sep 6, 2004 --- Sep 10: One-week in University of Waikato of Language Institute, New Zealand (see detail below)

#### Fieldwork (eight weeks)

Oct 4 --- Oct 22: Three-week data collection in New Zealand

Oct 23 --- Oct 31: One-week preparation for the fieldwork trip to China

Nov 1 --- Nov 19: Three-week data collection in China

Nov 20 --- Nov 22: The trip back to New Zealand

Nov 23 --- Nov 29: One week data collection in New Zealand

### **4.4.1 Pilot study**

Piloting is an important part of any study and is ‘strongly advisable’ (Banister et al., 1995, p. 23) . It allows a researcher to test the rigor of the methods to be used, as well as to establish whether the proposed techniques provide the information that the researcher intends. Piloting was adopted in the present research with a randomly selected class under circumstances as close as possible to the actual research scenario before the research commenced.

The one-week pilot in September, 2004, commencing on Monday, September 6 and ending on Friday, September 10, was successful with the assistance of the teacher and his eight international Chinese student participants in the University of Waikato Language Institute, who were not subsequently involved in the fieldwork of the present study. Pilot study videotaping was conducted in the present research to accustom the Chinese student and teacher participants to the researcher and the data collection equipment, such as a video camera and an audio recorder. In terms of interviewing, the piloting of the interview schedule, interview technique and interview questions was essential to ensure effective data collection for this research. The

interview schedule was tested for comprehensibility, relevance, and lack of ambiguity. The proposed interview techniques, such as videotaping and audio taping, were also tested for effectiveness, appropriateness and practicality. All interview questions were tested to ensure they obtained sufficient data to correspond with the research questions in the present study. Within a week, two lessons were videotaped, and questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme and four stimulated recall interviews were conducted, two for the teacher and two for the Chinese students. The trial allowed the researcher to test and conduct all the techniques of data collection to be used in the larger study.

Based upon the pilot study, the following techniques were highlighted and/or refined: (1) The contents of Part A of the COLT Observation Scheme were refined as the Adopted COLT Observation Scheme (see Appendix XIII) to correspond with the research questions in the present study (discussed in Section 4.5.4); (2) the researcher needed to arrive at the fieldwork site (the classroom) half an hour ahead before the data collection started to fully prepare for the fieldwork; (3) it was also necessary for the researcher to double check all the equipment used in the fieldwork before data collection started; (4) an extended microphone was needed during group interviews. It was found in the pilot study that the quality of an audio recorder was good for individual interviews but not so good for group interviews.

#### **4.4.2 The fieldwork in the present research**

During the fieldwork in the present research, there were three phases for each context over a data collection program.

*Phase I* investigated the original learning attitudes, motivations, expectations, personal details and the general perspectives of teacher and students on English language teaching approaches for two days at the commencement of the research program.

*Phase II* started immediately after the implementation of Phase I and lasted for two weeks. In each context, three random lessons over the two-week period, were observed, videotaped, and transcribed, and were followed by stimulated recall sessions in which both students and their teacher watched the videotapes of their lessons and commented on them (see 4.5.2). This phase focused on the perspectives of teachers and their students on the classroom English language teaching and classroom practice in their own context. The variables the researcher was interested in and examined included: instructional approaches, the use of textbooks, student modalities, language pedagogies, and classroom tasks.

*Phase III* evaluated the perspectives from teachers and their Chinese students at the completion of this research program with respect to English language teaching approaches and different classroom practice in the other context. That is to say, in the last week in each context, participants were shown videotapes from the other context. Group and individual interviews were used during this phase.

## **4.5 Contexts and participants**

Significant features of the institutes, classes, students and their teachers who participated in this study are now described.

### **4.5.1 The participating institutes and classes**

The participating institutes in this study were in two different contexts: one in New Zealand, the University of Waikato Language Institute (UWLI), and one in China, the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Baotou Teachers' University (FFLBTU). The choice of the case study institutes was made on the basis of ease of access for the researcher. Three classes in each context were randomly selected for the present study. The key characteristics of these classes are summarized below in Table 5.

**Table 5: Participating classes in the two contexts**

Context	Institute	Class		Teaching medium	Language Context	Learning English as	Involved Events
China	FFLBTU (tertiary)	English major	CN Class 1 (Key class)	English	Chinese	EFL	All events
			CN Class 2	English	Chinese	EFL	Questionnaire only
			CN Class 3	English	Chinese	EFL	Questionnaire only
New Zealand	UWLI Language Institute	English training	NZ Class 1 (Key class)	English	English	ESL	All events
			NZ Class 2	English	English	ESL	Questionnaire only
			NZ Class 3	English	English	ESL	Questionnaire only

The participant school in the Chinese EFL context, a common university, established more than 40 years ago, is located in an inland city in the beautiful prairie of China. The Faculty of Foreign Languages, like many departments of English/foreign languages in Chinese universities, was mainly geared to prepare middle school English teachers. The faculty offered three-year diploma courses, four-year bachelor's degree courses and five-year bachelor's degree courses. There were 600 full-time students and 500 adult students each year. The number of staff was 56, of whom one third had studied in English-speaking countries as visiting scholars and students. Each year about five English teachers from native English-speaking countries joined in the teaching work, mainly to teach students oral English. The faculty had two departments, the Department of English (investigated in this study), offering courses for English majors, and the Department of College English, the main work of which was to teach college English for non-English majors in the university.



There are three compulsory undergraduate courses for English majors in their first and second year in the Department of English in all universities of China: the Listening course (LC), the Speaking course (SC) and the Intensive Reading course (IRC). The Listening course and the Speaking course had two periods each, once a week, while the Intensive Reading course (IRC), the main course investigated in this study, had six periods, three times a week. LC was a course specially for developing listening ability, SC particularly for training oral English ability, and IRC for covering all-round language communicative skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Generally, LC and IRC in the Chinese universities are taught by the Chinese English teachers, SC is taught by English native-speaking teachers if possible. It was the same in Faculty of Foreign Languages in Baotou Normal University (FFLBNU).

The teaching medium in all the participating classes, both in New Zealand and in China, was English. The participant classes in China were at a tertiary school level, majoring in English, and the students were being trained to be high school English teachers in the future. The students in New Zealand were learning English language for their future study in New Zealand tertiary universities. One class in each context (NZ1 & CN1) was randomly selected as a key class and was involved in all events of data collection techniques in the fieldwork (questionnaire, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, stimulated recall interviews and group and individual interviews). The rest of the classes (CN2 & CN3, NZ2 & NZ3) participated only in the questionnaire component of the research.

An obvious difference between the two contexts was the matter of class size. This affected organizational decisions made by the teachers, which turned out to be important for the respective cultures of learning. In the classroom in China, the 28 students sat in pairs at desks arranged in rows facing the teacher. The students moved from one room to another for different subjects. On arrival for their lessons in New Zealand, the 12 Form 5 (see Appendix XIV) students (7 Chinese, 2 Japanese and 3 Korea) could normally choose where they sat, and usually did so according to gender and friendship preferences. English lessons took place in the students' regular 'home base' classroom in the Chinese institute. In the New Zealand setting, the teacher always rearranged the furniture in the classroom, regrouping desks that were normally set out in rows into four blocks of four. However, in the English lessons in China,

students were required to sit as directed and group membership remained unchanged throughout the study.

#### 4.5.2 The participating teachers

The relevant teaching qualifications and experiences of the six teacher participants in the present study are summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Participating teachers' relevant qualifications and experience**

School	Teacher	Gender (M/F)	Teaching Experience	Experience with Chinese students	EFL/ESL-related qualifications	Status
China	CNT 1 (Key T)	F	8 yrs	regular class (8 yrs) (tertiary)	BA in EFL	lecturer
	CNT 2	F	7 yrs	regular class (7 yrs) (tertiary)	BA in EFL	lecturer
	CNT 3	F	22 yrs	regular class (22 yrs) (tertiary)	BA in EFL	A/Prof
NZ	NZT 1 (Key T)	F	20 yrs	regular class (10 yrs) (Language Institute)	MA in ESL	teacher
	NZT 2	M	25 yrs	regular class (5 yrs) (Language Institute)	MA in ESL	teacher
	NZT 3	M	26 yrs	regular class (5 yrs) (Language Institute)	MA in ESL	teacher

The term *CNT* indicates a participant teacher in the China context, while the term *NZT* indicates a participant teacher in the New Zealand ESL context. The teacher participants in China in this present study all had a B.A. and their teaching experience (with Chinese students) ranged from 7 to 22 years, while the teacher participants in New Zealand all had a M.A. and had taught for between 22 to 26 years but had teaching experience with Chinese students for about 5 to 10 years. The Chinese participating teachers' EFL/ESL-related qualifications (B.A.) were lower than those of

the New Zealand teachers (M.A.), while their academic titles (Lecturer / Associate Professor) in the university were higher than those of the New Zealand teachers. Two (CNT 2 and CNT 1) of the six participating teachers were in their seventh or eighth year teaching, so could be classified as relatively inexperienced, while a further two participant teachers (NZZ 1 and CNT 3) could be regarded as relatively experienced, having taught for between 20 and 22 years. Two other teachers (NZZ 2 and NZZ 3) could be regarded as more experienced having taught for 25 or 26 years but they had only five years of experience in teaching English to Chinese students. Three teachers (CNT 1, CNT 2 and NZZ 1) had experience teaching Chinese students for between seven to ten years. One teacher (CNT 3) could be regarded as extremely experienced in EFL, having taught Chinese students for 22 years.

It is interesting to note that, by coincidence; all the class teachers in China who participated in the current study were women (see Table 4 above). Such patterns may be fairly typical of the wider population in which females dominate the tertiary school level of the teaching profession. This pattern was similar to the gender of Chinese student participants (male: female, 8 : 96) (see Table 7 below). In contrast, two males and one female teacher in NZ participated in this study. All the English teacher participants in China were non-native English speakers (NNES), while two of three teacher participants in NZ were native English speakers (NES) and one was NNES.

#### **4.5.3 The participating students**

All the participating students in the two contexts, China and New Zealand in the present research were Chinese students because the aim of the present study was to highlight what are the enabling conditions for Chinese students' language learning in both EFL and ESL classrooms. It should be pointed out that they shared some important similarities at the beginning of this research: (1) they all had graduated from high schools in mainland China; (2) they had learned English for about six years in high schools in China, (3) they were all full-time language students in a university or in an institute in China; (4) they all broadly shared the same linguistic, cultural and educational background, despite their having come from different parts of China; (5) they shared the same mother tongue, Mandarin, but some of them could speak some

other dialects, such as Baotounese, Sichuangnese and Cantonese; (6) they had similar proficiency in English intermediate level in their participating institutes at the start of the present study and the length of time for the Chinese students in both contexts to be completely engaged in a full-time English language learning program after graduation from high schools was nearly the same (see Table 6). Actually, after they graduated from high schools and started their language programs in China or in New Zealand, the English proficiency of the Chinese student participants in China who had passed the National Tertiary Entrance Examination for English-major students was, in the opinion of the researcher, much better than the Chinese ESL students in New Zealand. However, after about 8-month study in New Zealand, the Chinese ESL students had made considerable progress, especially in the areas of speaking and listening with the ESL language environment and, again in the opinion of the researcher, had caught up with their peers in China. Their general biographical information is presented below.

**Table 7: The biographical information of the Chinese student participants in the two contexts at the beginning of the study**

<b>Name of school</b>	<b>FFLBNU</b>		<b>UWLI</b>	
Number of classes	3		3	
Number of students	104		16	
Gender	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	8	96	9	7
Nationality	<i>Chinese</i>		<i>Chinese</i>	
Age	<i>18-25</i>		<i>18-25</i>	
Prior education	<i>High school</i>		<i>High school</i>	
Prior education location	<i>China</i>		<i>China</i>	
Status	<i>Language student</i>		<i>Language student</i>	
Full/part-time study	<i>Full-time</i>		<i>Full-time</i>	
English level	<i>Intermediate</i>		<i>Intermediate</i>	
Time in the participating institutes	<i>About 10 months</i>		<i>About 8 months</i>	
Years of learning English	<i>6-8 years</i>		<i>6-8 years</i>	

The data in Table 7 show that there were no significant background differences between the student participants in these two contexts. That is to say that in both contexts, Chinese students shared common, observable characteristics at the beginning of the study. The other variables (such as intelligence or aptitude) which might have an effect and might exist in equal quantities in these two contexts (Nunan, 1994, p. 26) are not focuses in this present thesis. The table does, however, show that there was a discrepancy in size between the Chinese student participant group in China and the student participant group in New Zealand. One of the reasons for this discrepancy is that the Chinese class size was much larger than the New Zealand one because the latter is usual in China, given its large population. There were more than 28 Chinese students in each of the three Chinese participating classes but only 10 to 12 in each of the three New Zealand participating classes. In addition, nearly all of students in the Chinese classes voluntarily participated in the present research (only one missed the fieldwork due to being absent from school). There were, however, about 7 Chinese students in each of the three New Zealand participating classes, the others were Japanese and Korean – thus, the mixed nature of the classes also reduced the New Zealand Chinese student sample. In addition, some Chinese students in these three classes were not involved in the present research because they were engaged in preparing for IELTS test. Furthermore, the present research is concerned primarily with English classroom practice in the two contexts. That is to say, more emphasis or attention in the present study was paid to the number of the classes (3 each) as well as the number of the teacher participants (3 each) in both contexts rather than the actual number of the student participants.

Only those students from whom the researcher received fully informed consent participated in the case studies that appear in the findings. Nearly one hundred percent of the students (104:105) of the three classes in China and 84.2 percent students (16:19) of the three classes in New Zealand were involved voluntarily in the present study. All of them (120 student participants in total), 104 in the Chinese EFL context and 16 in the New Zealand ESL context, were involved in questionnaires. Only the teachers in the key classes in both contexts and their Chinese students (28 in China, 7 in New Zealand) were involved in individual or group stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) and interviews. There were five Chinese students participating in SRIs and interviews

every time in both contexts and each group was only involved in one videotaped lesson. There were six student groups in the Chinese EFL context, three for SRIs and three for interviews. Therefore, two of twenty-eight students were interviewed twice. Due to the small number of the Chinese student participants (7 in total) in the New Zealand key class, some of them were interviewed twice or three times during the group SRIs and twice or three times during the group interviews. Each student participant was coded or recoded every time as NZS1 to NZS 15 in the New Zealand ESL context and as CNS1 to CNS15 in the Chinese EFL context. CNL1 and NZL1 were coded as Lesson One in the Chinese EFL context and Lesson One in the New Zealand ESL context (see Table 8).

**Table 8: Structures of student group SRIs and group interviews in both contexts**

Contexts	Methods	Groups	Codes	Videotaped Lessons
The Chinese context (28 students) <sup>10</sup>	SRIs	Group 1	CNS1--- CNS5	CNL1
		Group 2	CNS6--- CNS10	CNL2
		Group 3	CNS11--- CNS15	CNL3
	Interviews	Group 4	CNS1--- CNS5	NZL1
		Group 5	CNS6--- CNS10	NZL2
		Group 6	CNS11--- CNS15	NZL3
The Chinese context (7 students) <sup>11</sup>	SRIs	Group 1	NZS1--- NZS5	NZL1
		Group 2	NZS6--- NZS10	NZL2
		Group 3	NZS11--- NZS15	NZL3
	Interviews	Group 4	NZS1--- NZS5	CNL1
		Group 5	NZS6--- NZS10	CNL2
		Group 6	NZS11--- NZS15	CNL3

#### 4.6 Data analysis

The analysis of case study evidence is “one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies” (Yin, 2003, p. 109). The analytic approach in this

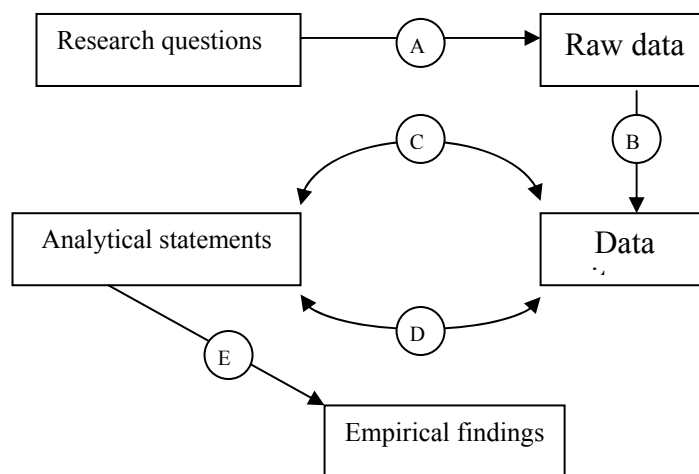
<sup>10</sup> Two of them were interviewed twice during the whole fieldwork in the present study.

<sup>11</sup> All of them were interviewed four or five times during the whole fieldwork in the study.

present research, therefore, was developed along with “rigorous thinking”, and “the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations” (Yin, 2003, p. 110). The general strategy of analysis in the present research was by *relying on theoretical propositions*, where findings produced from data, reflect “a set of research questions, reviews of literature, and new hypotheses or propositions” (Yin, 2003, p. 112).

Research questions in the present study led to raw data. Raw data were recorded as data items, each with a reference labelled (see Figure 7). Then, creative and reflective thinking about the data items led to draft analytical statements which were tested against the data items, and amended or discarded as necessary. Process C and D together (see Figure 7) were an iterative process for the purpose of obtaining the most from the data. The final analytical statements were interpreted as empirical findings.

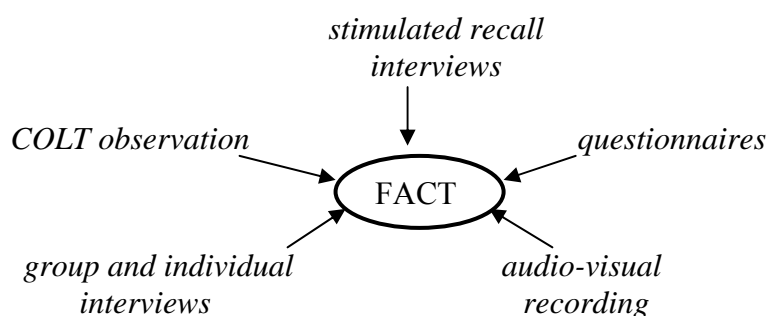
**Figure 7: From research questions to empirical findings (Bassey, 1999, p. 85)**




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All sources of evidence in the present research were “reviewed and analyzed together, so that the case study’s findings were based on the convergence of information from different sources, not quantitative or qualitative data alone” (Yin, 2003, p. 93).

**Figure 8: Convergence of multiple sources of evidence in the present study**



In the present research, both qualitative and quantitative comparative analysis methods were thus employed in analysing the data collected from the research fieldwork. Questionnaires were mostly in closed-form, which were used primarily for gathering the biographical information of participants and their general perspectives on English language teaching and learning. Quantitative analysis was applied in analysing the data from questionnaires as well as the data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme.

Qualitative analysis methods were utilized in analysing the data obtained from stimulated recall interviews as well as group and individual interviews. A range of ‘critical incidents’ were selected from the lesson corpus to illustrate key elements of the two contexts’ cultures and contrasting English language teaching approaches and classroom practice.

#### **4.7 Ethical considerations for this research**

Ethical considerations include “paying attention to the way in which the research is presented to potential participants, the likely impact of taking part in research (both for individuals and pre-existing groups), the effect of sampling strategies, engaging with the researcher (and other participants) and dissemination sessions” (Barbour, 2008, p. 66). The literature shows that the awareness of ethical issues and concerns has grown more in the last decades in qualitative research (Christian, 2005; Flick, 2007; Hopf, 2004; Wellington, 2000). It is considered that ethics play an important part, especially



in educational research (Wellington, 2000). Wellington points out that an ethic refers to “a moral principle” or a code of “guiding conduct” which “actually governs” how people act or behave (2000, p. 54).

In undertaking this research program, the rights of the participants to privacy and confidentiality were respected. Informed consent was provided in writing to the participants at the beginning of the present study (see Appedix V & VI). All the participants in this study were “informed about the aims, purposes and likely publication of findings” (Wellington, 2000, p. 56) involved in this research. The participants were advised that participation was entirely voluntary and they had the right to withdraw from this research and any information provided by them at any time. The participants also knew that they did not have to answer all the questions. The present research followed the principles outlined below in the two contexts:

- To be well aware of not disturbing the normal teaching activities.
- To gain informed consent from all participants.
- To respect the participants’ privacy and ownership of the information given during the research program.
- To acknowledge the contribution made by other people in conducting this research.
- To guardantee and maintain the confidentiality of the participants by only discussing relevant materials from the information received with supervisors of the researcher (Flick, 2007).
- To report the findings of the study objectively and frankly.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has described the research design, research contexts and participants, data collection procedures and techniques and analytic strategy. It has also identified how qualitative and quantitative approaches were used for the purposes of data analysis in this present research. The next two chapters, Chapter Five and Chapter Six, provide

the findings obtained from the data analysis in the present research. Because of the volume of qualitative and quantitative data, the reporting of findings will be spread over two separate chapters, with the Chinese EFL context first in Chapter Five, then the New Zealand ESL context in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS IN THE CHINESE EFL CONTEXT

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question One, what is tertiary English language classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context. It describes Chinese EFL by analysing the processes of English language teaching and learning in classrooms experienced by Chinese students in China and their teachers. The complex language classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context will be investigated by triangulating the four sources of data which will be presented in the following order: (1) questionnaires, (2) the adapted Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme, (3) stimulated recall interviews, and (4) interviews. Both stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) and interviews with teacher participants were conducted as individual interviews; for student participants they were group ones. Both teacher and student participants in these two contexts were interviewed about the Chinese EFL context in their mother tongues (Chinese or English) so as to avoid ambiguity (see Section 4.5.3 & 4.5.5).

It is anticipated that the findings in this chapter will capture the complexities of classroom events of the tertiary Intensive Reading Course (IRC), a comprehensive language skill course and a main English course for all Chinese students majoring in English in Chinese universities. This chapter presents information gathered from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, stimulated recall interviews and interviews, in terms of the six research questions listed below.

- 1a. To what extent was teaching centred on the teacher or the student and to what extent was group work, pair work or individual work conducted in the Chinese EFL context and how did the EFL and ESL teachers and their

Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts view these ways of working?

- 1b. To what extent was Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning or Focus-on-Form approach used in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students in the two contexts view them?
- 1c. How were textbooks used in the Chinese EFL context and what were EFL and ESL teachers' and students' opinions on the use of textbooks in the Chinese EFL context?
- 1d. To what extent were the four student modalities covered in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts view them?
- 1e. How was error correction done in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts view error correction in classroom teaching in the Chinese EFL context?
- 1f. What were classroom tasks used in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how were they perceived by EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in the two contexts?

## **5.2 Instructional approaches**

This section addresses Research Question 1a, to what extent was teaching centred on the teacher or the student, to what extent was group work, pair work or individual work conducted in the Chinese EFL context, and how did the EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts view these ways of working? In this section, instructional approaches, as mentioned in Section 2.3.1, describe distinctions between teacher-centred and student-centred, group-work and pair-work interactions and individual work in tertiary language classrooms in the Chinese EFL context. The data below are derived from four data sources, first questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, then SRIs and interviews.

### 5.2.1 Data from questionnaires

The findings from questionnaires completed by the Chinese EFL students and their teachers in the Chinese EFL context indicate that instructional approaches in the Chinese EFL context are teacher-centred. The participants were asked to indicate whether the type of English instruction/activity (including lecturing, eliciting, modelling, pair work and group work) “always”, “frequently”, “occasionally”, “rarely” or “never” occurred in a classroom of their IRC (see Appendix VII & XI). With respect to “lecturing”, it was found that more than half of Chinese EFL student participants (59/104, 56.7%) in the Chinese EFL context indicated “always” and “frequently”, which revealed that their Chinese EFL teachers always or frequently lectured in an English classroom, 33 Chinese EFL students (31.7%) indicated “occasionally” and 10 (9.6%) students had “rarely” and 2 (1.9%) “never”. One of the Chinese EFL teacher participants responded that she used lecturing “frequently” and the other two indicated that they used lecturing “occasionally”. Data from the questionnaires showed that nearly half of the Chinese EFL student participants (44.2%, 46/104) agreed that the role of a teacher in the English language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, exercises and examples which should be organized and illuminated by the teacher, while 26.9% (28/104) Chinese EFL student participants disagreed with this notion and 28.8% (30/104) were uncertain. Two of the Chinese EFL teacher participants agreed and one disagreed. The questionnaire data also showed that 80.8% of Chinese EFL student participants (84/104) maintained that pair work or group work was frequently conducted in the Chinese EFL tertiary classroom. All of their Chinese EFL teacher participants concurred. The remaining 19.2% student participants (20/104) thought that they had pair work or group work occasionally (see Table 9 below).

**Table 9: The findings from questionnaires on instructional approach in a Chinese EFL classroom**

Instructional approaches	Degrees	Students	Percent	Teachers	Percent
		(104)	(100%)	(3)	(100%)
Lecturing	always	5	4.8%	0	0%
	frequently	54	51.9%	1	33.3%
	occasionally	33	31.7%	2	66.7%
	rarely	10	9.6%	0	0%
	never	2	1.9%	0	0%
The teacher role is to impart knowledge through explanation, exercises and examples	agreed	46	44.2%	2	66.7%
	uncertain	30	28.8%	0	0%
	disagreed	28	26.9%	1	0%
Pair work or group work	frequently	84	80.8%	3	100%
	occasionally	20	19.2%	0	100%

### 5.2.2 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

The findings from the questionnaires were supported by the data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Appendix XIII). In this scheme, the category of *instructional approaches* in teaching methodology in classroom activities is divided into sub-categories of teacher-centred, student-centred, group work, pair work and individual work. Teacher-centred refers to the teacher interacting with the whole class and/or with individual students within the central activity; student-centred is defined as when a student is or students are leading one central activity. The results from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme coding from the three videotaped lessons in the Chinese EFL context reveal that of these 5 categories, the teacher-centred instructional

approach lasted 90 minutes of a total 120 minutes or 75 percent of the three videotaped lessons (see Table 10 below).

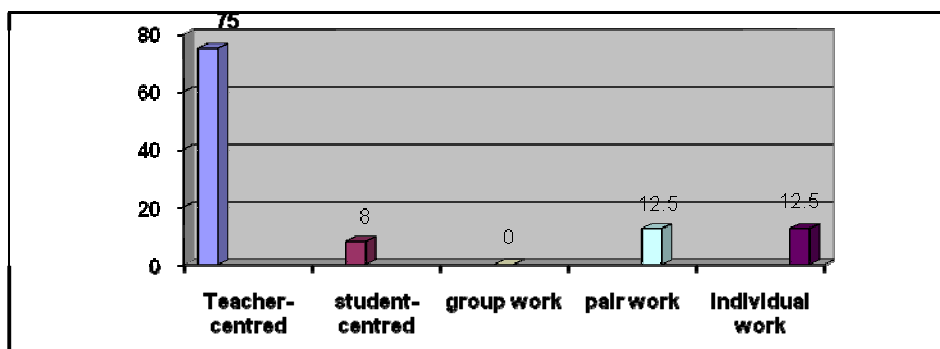
**Table 10: Instructional approaches of three videotaped lessons (120 minutes) in the Chinese EFL context**

<b>Instructional approaches</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teacher-centred	17	90 mins	75%
Student-centred	1	10 mins	8%
Group work	0	0 min	0%
Pair work	4	15 mins	12.5%
Individual work	6	15 mins	12.5%

Note: Time for all instructional approaches adds up to 130 minutes and the total percentage is 108% because some instructional approaches overlapped in the Chinese EFL context.

That is to say, the teacher spent 75 percent of three classes interacting exclusively with the whole class or individual students. Student-centred activity lasted for 10 minutes in total, about 8 percent of the total 130 minutes. There was no group work during this research project in the Chinese EFL context. However, there was pair work, lasting 15 minutes in all, in about 12.5 percent of coded lessons. Individual work also lasted 15 minutes in total, around 12.5 percent of coded minutes. The total percentage of time spent by class on instructional approach features is shown in Figure 9 below.

**Figure 9: Instructional approach: Total percentage of time spent on instructional approach features by class**



### 5.2.3 Data from SRIs and interviews

The findings on instructional approaches from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme were mostly echoed in the data from SRIs and interviews. This section will present perceptions on instructional approaches from all participants, first from the Chinese EFL teacher participant and her EFL Chinese student participants in the Chinese EFL context, then from the New Zealand ESL teacher participant and her ESL Chinese student participants in the New Zealand ESL context. In this study, all the participants and data collection techniques are coded as followings.

CNT --- the Chinese EFL teacher participant

CNS --- Chinese EFL student participants

NZT --- the New Zealand ESL teacher participant

NZS --- New Zealand ESL student participants

SRI --- the stimulated recall interview

Int --- the interview

1 --- Videotaped Lesson 1

2 --- Videotaped Lesson 2



### 3 --- Videotaped Lesson 3

p --- page

For example, the code of [CNT, SRI2, p. 4] refers to a comment made by the Chinese EFL teacher participant during the stimulated recall interview on videotaped Lesson Two in the Chinese EFL context and see the comment at page 4 of transcripts. The coding of [NZS4, Int3, p. 1] means that the comment was made by the fourth Chinese ESL student participant in New Zealand during an interview on videotaped Lesson Three in the Chinese EFL context and see the comment at page 1 of transcripts.

The data from the SRI show that many Chinese EFL student participants tended to have a positive opinion of teacher-centred instruction and thought that teacher lecturing or teacher-centred instruction was a good way to explain a text in a language classroom in China.

I think it is good to have a lecture like this [teacher's lecturing and students' sitting and taking notes].

[CNS1, 2, 3, 5, 8, SRI]

They explained that because their texts were very complicated with a lot of abstract concepts, teacher-centred instruction could help them to have a full understanding of texts and could improve their English language level.

It is very difficult to explain this text which has a lot of abstract concepts, very complicated... And if we had to explain the text, I don't think we wouldn't able to do it by ourselves... I think in this way [teacher-centred lecture] we can understand [a text] better.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 4]

The teacher can explain some difficult language points which we cannot understand.

[CNS3, SRI1, p. 4]

We think the lecturing teaching style is better suited to text explanation.

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 5]

I think it is better for the teacher to explain a text. Different lessons have different styles. The first two parts of a lesson focus on speaking. Those are Part A and Part B which give us opportunities to practise our speaking English. As far as a text is concerned, our teacher would explain whatever we cannot understand ourselves. Our teacher normally would ignore the parts we already understood.

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 5]

However, there were also some negative comments from some EFL Chinese student participants on the issue of teacher-centred instruction,

I don't like the scenario that teachers alone speak all the time, while letting students hanging aside and taking notes. It's very boring.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 8]

From the first day we entered this university, our Intensive Reading Course has been taught in this way of lecturing, which is boring.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 4]

While watching the lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context during the process of interviews, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant commented many times that Chinese English language teaching is still teacher-centred.

...According to the videos I have watched, it means teaching approaching in China is still more teacher-centred than student-centred.

[NZT, Int1, p. 3, 7; Int2, p. 5]

The data drawn from the interviews from the Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context also reveal that English teaching in China was still teacher-centred. After watching lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context, one of the

New Zealand Chinese ESL student participants commented that the Chinese EFL students were still knowledge receivers with teacher-centred lecturing.

I think in China, the class is teacher-oriented and students don't participate in the session but receive knowledge very passively.

[NZS4, Int1, p. 7]

Another New Zealand Chinese student regarded the teacher-centred lecture as pressured.

The teacher was too serious... Studying in this situation is very pressured, isn't it? No one talks and everyone keeps his/her head down and takes notes. The teacher is the only one who talks.

[NZS1, Int1, p. 6]

This comment was supported by other Chinese student participants in the New Zealand ESL context.

The teacher kept talking all the time with easy words only. This does absolutely no help to build up students' vocabularies or enrich their knowledge about that topic.

[NZS6, Int2, p. 6]

The class ambience is too boring in China as only the teacher and the presenter got involved while other students are kind of being excluded.

[NZS5, Int2, p. 6]

Other students could be easily distracted from what the teacher or the presenter was talking about.

[NZS8, Int2, p. 6]

One of the Chinese ESL student participants pointed out that teacher-centred is the traditional Chinese language teaching method.

This is the traditional Chinese way of language teaching approach.

[Nzs5, Int1, p. 9]

As for pair work, there were a few positive opinions but some negative opinions heard from groups of Chinese student participants in the Chinese EFL context. They found pair work was not so helpful in their language learning. During the SRI with Group Three of the Chinese ESL student participants on the third videotaped lesson in China, one of them pointed out:

[Pair work is] not so good. This kind of dialogue made in pairs is just a copy from the textbook dialogue... Besides, as we start off with a new unit, we have no way to completely memorise the text, nor do we have the chance to prepare the dialogue beforehand, so there's no tacit agreement in such pair work.

[CNS12, SRI3, p. 5]

Some other student participants in the same interviewing group agreed with her and when they were asked by the researcher whether they like this kind of activity they answered together,

No, we don't like pair work.

[CNSG3, SRI3, p. 5]

During the SRI with the researcher, they further explained the reasons for why they disliked pair work. They indicated that pair work conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom was generally a kind of exercise, modelled on a dialogue from the textbook and there was not sufficient self-expression or self-development involved. Some students, then, would rather study by themselves than do pair-work.

No sufficient self-expression is involved in these dialogues. I'd rather study on my own. The dialogue does nothing else good.

[CNS12, SRI3, p. 5]

However, there were some Chinese EFL student participants who did not like pair work activities but thought it was necessary for them to have pair work in order to practise their oral English skills.

[Pair work is] not much helpful. We don't like class activities of this type. We don't feel that pair work is so useful. But it is necessary.

[CNSG3, SRI3, p. 5]

Pair work does nothing else good but improves our spoken English.

[CNS12, SRI3, p. 5]

The data above reveal that these Chinese EFL student participants regarded pair work as a necessary task for them, even though they disliked it. However, they still believed that they could obtain communicative ability through this uninteresting activity, which was one of few limited activities for them to practise English in the Chinese EFL classroom.

There was also an interview comment from the participants in the New Zealand ESL context on pair work conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom. When the New Zealand ESL teacher saw a Chinese EFL student sitting alone writing something without discussing with anyone during the pair work in the videotaped lesson, during the interview, she argued that

I would at least get someone to go to sit by her. If there was no other spare person, I'll put them three into a group. I'll solve it immediately.

[NZT, Int2, p. 4]

In summary, the data shown above indicate that the three videotaped lessons of IRC in the Chinese EFL context were mainly taught by way of a teacher-centred instructional

approach. This is consistent with the comment from the New Zealand ESL teacher participant during the interview. Most of the Chinese EFL student participants reported that they preferred a teacher-centred instructional approach rather than a student-centred one when learning a text because they could understand a text better and more comprehensively. However, a few of the Chinese EFL students and many of the Chinese ESL students felt quite bored when IRC were taught by way of lecturing. With respect to pair work, most participants commented it was a good activity but some argued that it was uninteresting but necessary for developing their communicative competence. The findings also show that during the interview the New Zealand ESL teacher expressed that she would try her best to let every student practice his/her English in her class. These findings will be discussed in relation to the literature in Chapter Seven.

### **5.3 Language pedagogy**

This section addresses Research Question 1b, to what extent was Focus-on-FormS (FonFS), Focus-on-Meaning (FonM) or the Focus-on-Form (FonF) approach used in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students in the two contexts view them. This research question is answered by using data from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews, whether and how a FonFS (focusing on linguistic knowledge) or FonM (focusing on meaningful communication) or FonF (focusing on linguistic features embedded in meaningful communication) approach was adopted in a Chinese EFL classroom. It also describes the comments of the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL participants on this aspect of English teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL classroom.

#### **5.3.1 Data from questionnaires**

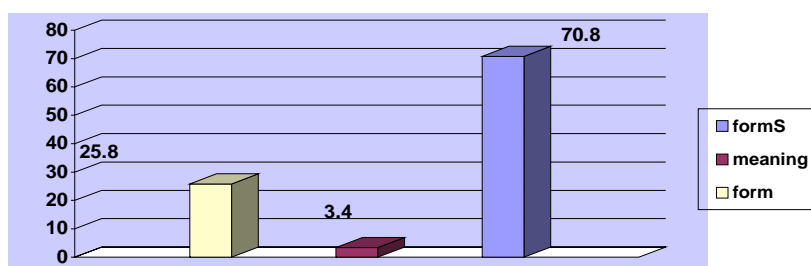
The findings drawn from questionnaires in this research show that the attention of many Chinese EFL student participants (49/104, 47%) and two out of their three EFL teacher participants was on grammar. The data show that they focused on FonFS and

believed that the rules of grammar were the most important factor in learning English language well.

### 5.3.2 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

The findings above from the questionnaires are echoed in the data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Appendix XIII) in the three videotaped lessons, which show that the teacher participant paid a great deal of attention to FonFS including forms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, the usage of words and error correction, all of which occurred in 70.8 percent of the coded time. However, only 3.4 percent of coded time was spent on activities which can be categorised as FonM, and 25.8 percent of time was spent on FonF (see Figure 10). It is obvious from these data that there is an orientation towards forms rather than towards language meaning in the English language classroom of the Chinese participating institute.

**Figure 10: Total percentage of time spent on a primary focus of language pedagogy on code-related features by class**



From Figure 10 above, it is obvious that the communicative approach, while identified as a general teaching objective by the Chinese Government (Section 5.2), was not being widely implemented in this participating class, and classes still focused on formS. The reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

### 5.3.3 Data from SRIs and interviews

During the SRI with the Chinese EFL teacher participant (CNT) on grammar, she pointed out that, in her opinion, forms of grammar such as the usage of words, word collocation, sentence structures and so on in lessons of the Intensive Reading Course (IRC), one of compulsory English lessons for all Chinese EFL students majoring in English in all Chinese universities, were the principal focus which should be imparted intensively and by way of FonFS.

When I explain a text, I would focus on grammar. Yes, mainly the usage of words, word collocation, the structure of sentences, e.g. an inversion sentence or a plural sentence etc... I would ask the students to analyze the structure first, so that I know whether they get it right or wrong. And then, I make the necessary revision...

[CNT, SRI1, p. 6]

In her opinion, the IRC was an important lesson and should be taught and learnt in an intensive FonFS, because grammar and vocabulary could be taught systematically by means of intensive FonFS language pedagogy which was, in her view, most helpful to students.

I think the Intensive Reading Course should be quite important. Because I think most intensive in grammar reviews and vocabulary, therefore it is the most helpful to the students.

[CNT, SRI3, p. 17]

The teacher reported that if necessary, when a text is difficult, a teacher in China will focus on formS, explaining the text grammatically and systematically sentence by sentence, sometimes even word by word. Here is an example from one of the three lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context. The video shows that the Chinese EFL teacher participant first read a sentence from the textbook:

They permit of such homely occupations as the gathering of watercress or the growing of osiers for basket weaving; and although the mill-wheels they once



turned are silent now and weed-clogged, men still lean over the weirs on summer evenings and watch the swallows cross the clear water under the bridges.

Then she started to explain it:

“They permit”, “permit” means allow; “of such homely occupations”, “occupations” refer to jobs or professions; “as the gathering of watercress”, “watercress” refers to a small plant with strong tasting green leaves that grows in water; “or the growing of osiers”, “osier” refers to a type of willow tree whose branches are used for making baskets; “for basket weaving”, “weave” means make something by twisting pieces of something together; “and although the mill-wheels”, “mill-wheel” refers to a large wheel that turned by water flowing past it to provide power to the machinery in a mill; “they once turned are silent now and weed-clogged”, “they once turned” means the mill-wheels once worked, “are silent” means they do not work, “they once turned” here is an attributive clause, modifying “the mill-wheels”; “weed-clogged” means blocked by weeds; “men still lean over the weirs on summer evenings”, “lean” means rest against something for support, “a weir” means water conservancy project, “on summer evenings”, please pay attention to the preposition “on” here, not “in” but “on”. We can say in the evening, but we cannot say in summer evenings, more examples, on spring mornings, on winter afternoons; “and watch the swallows cross the clear water under the bridges”, means watch the swallows flying cross the clear water under the bridges, “swallow” refers to a small bird with a tail that comes to northern countries in the summer.

After explaining the meanings of words, she analysed its sentence structure:

This is a compound and complex sentence. Here “and” after the semi colon connects two coordinating clauses, one is “they permit... basket weaving” and the other “although ... the bridges”. In the second coordinating clause, there is an adverbial clause leading by “although”. In this adverbial clause, there is an attributive clause “they once turned”, modifying “the mill-wheels”.

The above example of a Focus-on-FormS teaching methodology was also regarded by the Chinese EFL student participants during their SRIs as a good and efficient method to teach English during the Intensive Reading Course in the Chinese EFL context.

It [Grammar] helps us to learn language better.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 10]

This is an Intensive Reading Course. So we have to study it word by word. We cannot learn it well by ourselves.

[CNS5, SRI1, p. 4]

With respect to the reason for the IRC being taught in this FonFS way, one of the EFL student participants indicated during the SRI that it was because of the difficulty of academic texts, which contained a significant number of abstract concepts which they could not learn on their own.

The meanings of words in academic textbooks are very different from their basic meanings. So it is very difficult for us to understand them because texts have academic contents. So it is hard to understand... I think it is better for the teacher to explain a text word by word.

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 5]

Grammar has been widely regarded, particularly in EFL countries such as China, as a tool to help students to learn a language well. Many of the EFL Chinese students agreed with this view. One of the EFL student participants commented that they had to learn English grammar because grammar could help them to improve their English proficiency level by comparing the different structures of English and Chinese, otherwise they would speak not English but 'Chinglish' because their English would be in Chinese structures.

It [grammar] can improve our English proficiency level, because there is a big difference between Chinese and western language in grammar and sentence structure. Sometime Chinese expression is in this order, while that in English is in

the reversal way. If you don't learn English grammar, you may speak English in Chinese word order, it is Chinglish. We must learn English grammar.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 10]

One of the Chinese EFL student participants regarded learning English as learning a subject. Thus, he thought he should have a full understanding of a text in order to learn it well.

English here is studied as a subject. As a subject, we should understand every part of it. Grammar is very important in learning a language. Chinese grammar is the same and should be learned if we learn Chinese.

[CNS8, SRI2, p.11]

Another important reason for studying grammar mentioned by one EFL student participant is because they would be English teachers some day and they would need to teach their students grammar so as to help them to master English language well.

One of the reasons [to learn grammar] is because we will be English teachers someday. We will teach our future students as our teacher does in order to help them to learn English well.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 10]

Thus, this student believed that mastering English grammar should be one of the qualifications for being English teachers in China. It is interesting to see from the data that another Chinese student participants in the Chinese EFL context associated the reason for using language pedagogy with a Focus-on-FormS with the characteristics of the Chinese people. She stated,

In fact, we Chinese people are serious people; we would like to make everything clear. We learned grammar from junior and senior high school to a university, so grammar is very important. It is the basic of learning a language.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 10]

This same Chinese EFL student claimed that grammar was very important and essential for learning a language, but she also indicated that not grammar but listening and speaking were more dominant at the time the present research was conducted.

But now we learn less grammar, at this stage we pay more attention on practice like listening and speaking training.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 10]

The important position of grammar in the Chinese English language teaching and learning is clear to see. However, one of the Chinese EFL student participants expressed an opposite opinion on the importance of grammar during the stimulated recall interview. She thought that it was boring to learn grammar.

I think it is uninteresting to learn grammar. I think studying grammar can be a little bit boring sometimes.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 10]

This negative opinion of grammar was shared by another Chinese EFL student participant. During the SRI, she expressed the view that she did not want to learn grammar because she thought it was boring and useless, and it was also hard to remember grammar rules.

I don't think grammar is important to us. I don't want to learn grammar... If you learn grammar, it is very boring. It is useless for us to learn it. It is also hard for us to remember too.

[CNS9, SRI2, p. 11]

Instead, she commented that English could be learned well by means of more practice in communication (FonM). This could be seen as reflecting the influence of CLT theories in China, with this student sharing the same perspectives on language teaching and learning theories as in the West.

I think it is better to practise more, read more so that you would have sense of a language. When you do exercises yourself, you have this sense. According to this

sense, you can do exercises well. I think it is ok that you can speak out, and then read more, so you can feel it, you can feel grammar.

[CNS9, SRI2, p. 11]

Interestingly, a positive voice for grammar teaching was echoed by a teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context while watching the lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context. During the interview this New Zealand ESL teacher participant agreed that grammar knowledge was important and it was necessary to teach linguistic points, such as grammar and vocabulary, in order to attain the communicative competence in speaking English.

Grammar knowledge is very important... [Learning grammar is] great, because you need the grammar, you need vocabulary; you need all those things so you can speak English. So this kind of work is also very... very necessary, good basis on English...What... what I'm really saying is we build on word basis on grammar and vocabulary that Chinese EFL teachers have given to the students.

[NZT, Int1, p. 4]

After watching videotaped lessons in the Chinese EFL context, this New Zealand ESL key teacher participant pointed out that language pedagogy in the Chinese EFL tertiary English classroom was Focus on FormS.

I think it seems to me that the class [in the Chinese EFL context] just seems to focus more on language and some skills.

[NZT, Int2, p. 7]

Furthermore, during the interview, this New Zealand ESL teacher participant also expressed her worries about whether Chinese EFL students could maintain their attention on the lecture or not when language pedagogy in class was still Focus on FormS.

I'm wondering if students can keep their interest.

[NZT, Int1, p. 4]

The data from interviews showed that there were also varying comments from the Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context on language pedagogy in the Chinese EFL classroom.

In China, we paid more attention to grammar.

[NZS1, Int1, p. 4]

Some explanation [on grammar] is necessary.

[NZS9, Int3, p. 2]

Grammar is in the textbook, which teachers teach in vain because students can learn grammar by themselves from the books.

[NZS4, Int1, p. 9]

Overall, all the data from the three-videotaped lessons in this study reveal that language pedagogy in the Chinese EFL context is Focus on FormS (FonFS) rather than Focus on Meaning (FonM). The data show that most of the student and teacher participants in the Chinese EFL context as well as the New Zealand ESL teacher regarded grammar as important and necessary for language learners to learn English well. The videotaped sessions involved in this study indicate that the Chinese EFL teacher participant focused on imparting knowledge on forms, such as vocabulary, the use of words, the rules of grammar, sentence structure, sentence meanings and so on. However, this situation worried the New Zealand ESL teacher participant. During the interview she questioned whether Chinese EFL students could keep their attention on the lecture or not when the teacher focused on language knowledge at most time of a class. There were also some negative comments on Focus on FormS from some student participants from the both contexts, who regarded grammar as not so important and did not want to learn grammar because of its being boring and useless and also because the rules were difficult to remember.

## **5.4 Use of textbooks**

This section addresses Research Question 1c, how were textbooks used in the Chinese EFL context and what were EFL and ESL teachers' and students' opinions on the use of textbooks in the Chinese EFL context. The textbook used for the Intensive Reading Course (IRC) and its use will be described in terms of various perspectives from all the participants in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts from the data collected from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews. Unfortunately, there were no data from questionnaires which were relevant to this area.

The textbook for the IRC used in the tertiary classroom in the present study was "*Integrated Skills English*" (Zou, 2005), specially designed by the Ministry of Education and published by Higher Education Press in China. It is the textbook used nationally for English majors in all universities in China. The purpose of the textbook is to help students specialising in English to establish a solid foundation in the four language skills and to train their communicative ability in using English (Zou, 2005). Here is an example which shows us how the textbooks are structured. There are 15 units in a textbook for a semester (about 22 weeks long). The first part of each unit is *Listening and speaking activities*, which mainly focuses on conversation, developing students' listening, speaking, and communicative ability; the second part is *Reading comprehension and language activities*, focusing on a text, covering reading, grammar and vocabulary; and the last part is *Extended activities*, focusing on exercises, covering all English language skills (Zou, 2005) (see Table 3).

### **5.4.1 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme**

The use of this textbook by the Chinese teacher participant in the Chinese EFL context during the present research program is presented in the table below.

**Table 11: The videotaped lessons, teaching contents and its textbook use in the Chinese EFL context**

<b>Lessons investigated in the study</b>	<b>Teaching and learning contents</b>	<b>Use of Textbook</b>
Videotaped Lesson I	Text: vocabulary, grammar, reading	Yes
Videotaped Lesson II	Text: vocabulary, grammar, reading	Yes
Videotaped Lesson III	Extended activities: exercises covering all skills	Yes

As for the use of textbooks, both the table above and the data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme report that the EFL teacher participant in the Chinese EFL context appeared to adhere to the textbook for most of the time in her lessons investigated in the present study. She used the textbook in her English classes for 102 out of a total of 120 minutes, that is, up to 85 percent of the total corpus of coded lessons in the study.

#### **5.4.2 Data from SRIs and interviews**

With respect to the contents of the textbook, during the stimulated recall interview, the Chinese EFL key teacher participant commented that

When the texts were compiled, the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing were covered already... Sometimes, they are asked to communicate; or sometimes to read; sometimes to recite; sometimes to write a summary based on the text. [When teaching,] you got to cover all of those.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 2]

I follow almost the guide of each text. Sometimes you need to find some material yourself. For example, about the cultural background, or other related things. You need to mention those as well. To widen their knowledge scope and increase related vocabulary.



[CNT, SRI2, p.2]

The above views of this Chinese EFL teacher participant on the textbook echoes the purpose of the textbook of the IRC specially designed by the Chinese Government to help Chinese tertiary students to develop their four English language communicative skills. However, besides the textbook, the Chinese EFL teacher participant also needed to look for some reference materials herself on cultural background and other related resources for her EFL students so as to expand their English knowledge and vocabulary.

This Chinese EFL teacher's opinion on the IRC textbook was also echoed by her Chinese EFL students. During the SRI with the researcher, most of them regarded their textbooks as well-organized and well-designed, covering the four language skills; they were all satisfied with the IRC textbook.

Uh, I think this textbook is well organized and designed.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 6]

Yeah, they cover the major four learning areas, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

[CNSs, SRI3, p. 7]

The data also show that the Chinese EFL learners in this study seldom questioned authority of textbooks. For example, in response to the question "What do you think about your textbooks and is this teaching textbook interesting or practical?", one of the Chinese EFL student participants answered,

We have never thought this kind of questions. We used textbooks when we were young so that we have been used to them and never questioned whether they are good or not?

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 6]

However, there is also a negative voice heard in this study. During the stimulated recall interview one of the Chinese EFL student participants admitted honestly that sometimes she felt the text was quite boring, uninteresting and inappropriate.

I feel the text is so boring, so uninteresting, and so pointless sometimes. The example given in the textbook is not very appropriate.

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 6]

This finding was fully supported by the data from interviews with New Zealand ESL participants commenting on the Chinese EFL context. After watching the three lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant concluded during the interview that the Chinese EFL teacher was likely to teach with textbooks.

She [the Chinese EFL teacher participant] probably likes to follow up texts.

[NZT, Int2, p. 7]

In a similar vein, during the interview after viewing the lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context, some New Zealand ESL Chinese student participants also stated that:

It seems to me that the Chinese EFL teacher held her textbook from the beginning till the end.

[NZS5, Int1, p. 9]

So did her students. And they all turned their heads in their books.

[NZS1, Int1, p. 9]

The Chinese teaching style gives me an impression of over-reliance on textbook.

[NZS12, Int3, p. 4]

With respect to the use of textbooks, during the interview some Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context expressed a different opinion from the Chinese EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context.

This [teaching with textbooks] is so boring.

[NZS11, Int3, p. 4]

I think English can be learnt completely without textbooks. It is not necessary to learn English from a textbook.

[Nzs2, Int1, p. 6]

In regard to such a teaching method with textbooks, one of the New Zealand Chinese ESL students argued that

This is the traditional Chinese way of the language teaching approach.

[Nzs5, Int1, p. 9]

Overall, the data presented above show that the Chinese EFL teacher participant and nearly all of her student participants had no complaints about textbooks and they were all satisfied with their teaching textbooks for the reason that they believed that textbooks were well organized and designed and they covered the four skills of English language. It is also interesting to see that textbooks had authority among teachers and students in the Chinese EFL context. One of the Chinese student participants admitted frankly that she had never thought about this kind of questions, that is, whether a textbook was good or not. She explained that this was mainly because Chinese people used textbooks from when they were primary-school students so that they had been accustomed to them and never thought to question the authority of textbooks used in China. The data from this study also reveal that the Chinese participant teacher had a close adherence to textbooks and made the fullest use of textbooks by following the text sentence by sentence during the three videotaped lessons in this research. Besides the authorized textbook, the teacher participant also revealed that she needed to find some more reference materials herself on cultural background and other related resources for her students in order to broaden their English knowledge and increase related vocabulary. However, it seemed to the New Zealand ESL teacher participant and her ESL Chinese student participants that the EFL teaching style in the Chinese EFL context was over-reliant on textbooks. This approach was regarded by them as being boring and as the traditional Chinese language teaching approach. Further discussion on the use of textbooks in the Chinese EFL context will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

## 5.5 Student modality

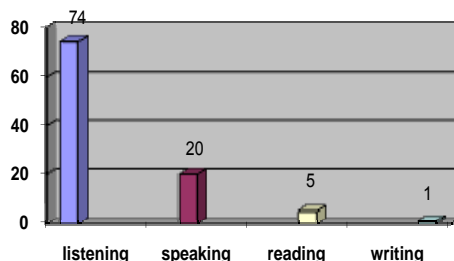
This section addresses the research question 1d, to what extent were the four student modalities covered in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in these two contexts view them. In language teaching, student modalities are “the mode or manner in which language is used” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 489), or the communicative skills of language learning, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (see Section 2.3.4). In this section, the findings from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews reveal how the coverage of these four modalities ranged and whether these modalities occurred in isolation or in combination in a Chinese tertiary IRC classroom. The IRC, as mentioned above, is an integrated skills course which should cover all four modalities of English language communication.

This findings drawn from questionnaires of this study in the Chinese participating institute revealed that both teacher and student participants in the Chinese EFL context believed that the Chinese EFL teachers who were in charge of the Intensive Reading Course (IRC) would often train their students’ language ability to use English for communication, and cover the four language abilities of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Typically, with respect to speaking, the questionnaire data showed that all three Chinese EFL teacher participants reported that they always provided their Chinese EFL students with opportunities to practise spoken English in class in order to improve their English communicative ability. Seventy-five percent of Chinese EFL student participants (78/104) agreed but twenty-two percent (23/104) thought sometimes and about 5 percent (4.8%, 5/104) reported that they were seldom provided with the opportunity to practise their spoken English in class.

However, this finding drawn from questionnaires in the present study does not match the data derived from the three videotaped lessons in the Chinese participating school. The findings from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme show that a receptive learning orientation was dominant within the *Student modality* domain, with listening coded for over 74 percent of the time dividing the three video-recorded lessons,

speaking for 20 percent, reading for 5 percent and writing for 1 percent of the total corpus of 120 minutes coded at the same time (see details in Figure 11 below).

**Figure 11: Total percentage of time spent on student modality by class**



The views from the questionnaires are similar to those from other qualitative data, particularly SRIs and interviews with the Chinese EFL teacher and her Chinese EFL student participants at the participating institute in the Chinese EFL context. They commented that the Intensive Reading Course should cover all aspects of language skills.

On Intensive Reading class here, you have to practise everything, speaking, listening, reading and writing... The way we do it here is that all of the four skills need to be covered in each class. All need to be covered.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 1]

...it is the Intensive Reading course which covers all aspects of language abilities.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 1]

When the researcher questioned whether their teacher in the Intensive Reading class gave them sufficient opportunities to speak in English, the majority of the EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context indicated that their teacher (CNT) gave them many opportunities to practise English in the class of the Intensive Reading Course.

Yes, there are many opportunities to talk in the Intensive Reading Course.

[CNSs, SRI3, p. 4]

Clearly, there are differences between the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme on the one hand, and questionnaires and interviews on the other hand, on student modality in the Chinese EFL context. This mismatch of data above will be discussed further in Chapter Seven in terms of the focus of the particular lessons being videotaped, and as a part of a wider consideration of the whole question of student modality.

## **5.6 Error correction**

This section addresses research question 1e, how was error correction done in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in these two contexts view error correction in classroom teaching in the Chinese EFL context. Thus, the effects of correction of learners' grammatical errors and their perspectives on error correction will be investigated in a tertiary classroom in the Chinese EFL context. The data on error correction can be categorized under four themes: importance, timing (immediately and delayed), manner (implicit and explicit) and whether the focus is on accuracy or fluency. These findings are also about the students' perceptions about why, how and when errors made by students during their oral speech should be corrected. Data from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs, and interviews will be presented in turn.

### **5.6.1 Importance of error correction**

With respect to the importance of error correction, the data from questionnaires reveal that the majority (77%) of the Chinese EFL student participants (80 out of 104) thought that it was very important for teachers to correct their grammar errors in their oral speech, as teachers did in their written work. This was also supported by two of the three Chinese EFL teacher participants. Fifty percent of the Chinese EFL student participants (52/104) thought that teachers should correct all grammatical errors made by them, otherwise it would result in imperfect teaching. This view was only agreed with by one of the three Chinese EFL teacher participants but was fully supported by

the data from SRI, which showed that both the Chinese EFL teacher and her Chinese EFL students commented that it was necessary to correct nearly all errors made by students, even little ones, so as to assist students in making conscious efforts to avoid errors in using the target language.

Yes, I point out their mistakes right from the start, no matter how the mistakes are, such as from their writing or others.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 5]

According to the Chinese EFL teacher's perception, the most important reason for error correction is that today English communicative ability is becoming more and more important in China so that if a person speaks English with many little errors, people will think less of him/her, and even little errors will not be acceptable in interviews, especially for English-majored students.

I think... because people now focus more on the development of practical skills such as spoken English, communications etc. If you speak English with many little mistakes like these, to people who are good at English, they will think less of you... Especially as English-majored students, these mistakes won't be acceptable in interviews. If you make mistakes in simple sentences whenever you speak English, the simplest errors such as plural and single forms, or the matching subjects with verbs, I would think it will have a negative influence in every aspect of your work and interviews.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 5]

Next time you should... This should be capitalized, so why didn't you? You are writing an article, a pretty formal piece. You should capitalize the letter when it is appropriate. The correct usage of punctuation. A sentence. What type of sentence is it? A compound sentence or a plural one? The sentences that they wrote generally... They seldom use plural sentences and they have problems with how to use them. But for compound sentences, they don't know how to structure them. A long string of sentences, they don't know how to compound them. They don't know how to use the word 'and'. Right? Well, therefore we should tell them at least for a sentence,

you should keep the structure in order. Like these. These minor mistakes, I often, as long as I notice them, I will correct for them.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 6]

Other reasons mentioned in SRIs include that errors would have a negative influence on people's work and interviews, that error correction can help students to remember their errors well and not make the same ones again, and that it would facilitate students to express their opinions as accurately as possible.

We may remember it well and never make the same mistake again.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 5]

Furthermore, one Chinese EFL student commented:

Our teacher would emphasize no matter [if] they are important language points or less important language points if she's got sufficient time in class.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 5]

However, the Chinese EFL teacher participant's emphasis on language points was regarded by another Chinese EFL student participant as "wordy" during the stimulated recall interview.

I may think she [the teacher] is very wordy.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 5]

But then she also added that it was right for her teacher to do so and she took it as a kind of evaluation of her knowledge:

Generally speaking, I would be very happy if I can understand the things emphasized by teachers. At least, I have [such a] feeling. It proves that I have already understood what the teacher emphasizes. That's to say I have mastered what I am supposed to master. Most of the knowledge emphasized by our teachers is right, generally speaking.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 5]



However, this study shows that there are no comments drawn from the ESL participants in the New Zealand ESL context.

### **5.6.2 Timing of error correction**

As for the timing of conducting error correction, there are no data from questionnaires in the study. During a SRI, the Chinese EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context who viewed the three videotaped lessons pointed out that even though they expected their teacher to correct nearly all mistakes in their speech, they preferred that their errors should be corrected appropriately.

Sometimes immediately, but sometimes after we finish our speech, like after reading a text.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 1]

If an error is in a short speech, of a few sentences, our teacher would correct it immediately. If the error is in a long speech, our teacher would correct it after the speech is finished.

[CNS2, SRI1, p. 1]

Many of the Chinese EFL students considered that sometimes they preferred teachers to conduct error correction after they had finished their speech.

We prefer to correct our errors after we finish our speech.

[CNS2, S4, S5, S12, S13]

The findings of SRIs reveal that the reason for this preference is because if the Chinese EFL teacher conducted error correction immediately, students might be discouraged and lose their confidence to carry on their speech or they might be too nervous to remember the rest of their speech.

If [error correction is conducted] immediately, we would be too nervous to remember the rest of our speech.

[CNS3, SRI1, p. 1]

If interrupted [by our teacher's error correction], we may forget.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 2]

If our teacher corrects our errors immediately, it would interrupt our thinking and we would not continue our speech.

[CNS13, SRI3, p. 5]

One Chinese EFL student expected her teacher to correct their major errors rather than their minor ones.

We expect [the teacher] not to interrupt us when we speak. Teachers can correct our big errors after we finish. Even native English speakers make tiny little mistakes, so I suppose it is not necessary for our teachers to correct our tiny errors, but big errors only.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 5]

One of the Chinese EFL students observed that some errors were made through carelessness, some through lack of knowledge.

In fact, many errors made were not because of our lack of that necessary knowledge, but due to our carelessness. If there is a fundamental mistake, being so basic, it is better for teachers to emphasize in order to give us deep impression.

[CNS8, SRI2, p. 5]

The study also shows that the Chinese EFL students' opinions about the appropriateness of error correction was fully understood and fully supported by their Chinese EFL teacher in the Chinese EFL context.

But if you listen carefully, there are quite a few mistakes. Sometimes I can't help correcting one or two mistakes for them. But most of the time, I wait until they all finished before I debrief their mistakes.

[CNT, SRI3, p. 2]

Sometimes, sometimes when I noticed that they've made mistakes, I would correct them on the spot. As in this instance, the sentence that he/she constructed was not too good, so I made some revision. Most of the time, I would... wait until they finish, and then make the correction. I try not to interrupt too much during their speech. Nearly every time I point out those obvious mistakes that they have made in grammar or about words afterwards.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 2]

This Chinese EFL teacher expressed her opinion on the reason for correcting errors after speech as follows:

Because if you interrupt them too much, they will be discouraged and lose confidence to carry on. They would not dare to speak English any more.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 2]

Then she indicated the reason for error correction.

The purpose of doing so is... once they have been told of the mistakes, they might pay attention to avoid them next time. Sometimes it is simply a matter of them not being certain with the grammar, or about word collocation, or the usage of a preposition. If... you demonstrate them the right way, next time when they come across the same thing, they will then pick up.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 2]

All the Chinese EFL student participants expressed their satisfaction with their Chinese EFL teacher because she did what they expected with regard to error correction.

I notice that our teacher has a very strong ability to distinguish errors made by being unknown or slip of tongue.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 5]

According to my memory, our teacher always emphasizes errors made.... She can distinguish clearly what kinds of errors we make and have a good way to deal with them. She is a very experienced teacher and is used to our ways of learning, we are used to her teaching approach as well.

[CNS8, SRI2, p. 5]

### **5.6.3 Manner of error correction**

As for the manner of conducting error correction, the data drawn from questionnaires show that the Chinese EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context expected their teacher to correct nearly all mistakes in their speech and also preferred that their errors should be corrected appropriately. That is, the Chinese EFL students expected that their teacher's error correction might not interrupt the flow of their speech.

In this study, some of the Chinese student participants received either implicit correction (recasts) or explicit correction in response to a number of erroneous utterances that contained a grammatical error. This is illustrated in the following error correction episodes between the Chinese EFL teacher participant (T) and a Chinese EFL student participant (S):

Episode 1 (Explicitly):

S: There are apple tree on the farm.

CNT: There are apple trees.

S: Am...There are also many flowers there...

After watching the videotaped lesson, the researcher (R) paused the video and asked the Chinese EFL teacher participant (CNT) --- the teacher who pointed out the error.

R: Here, “*there are apple tree*”. You corrected it to “*there are apple trees*”. Do you think the student took notice of this mistake that you’d just pointed out?

CNT: She should.

I: But she didn’t repeat or correct.

CNT: No, she didn’t repeat the correction, as she might then have understood. Because the story was about a farm, there should be more than one tree. Also it’s quite obvious that [an] article was needed when the noun was in a singular form. Therefore, she should then have realized this when I said ‘apple trees’.

I: So you think she did realize [the mistake]?

CNT: Yes. The way she responded showed that she had realized the mistake.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 2]

Episode 2 (implicitly):

S: There are a lot of river.

CNT: River?

S: A lot of river.

CNT: A lot of river? Ok, go on, please.

The Chinese EFL teacher intended to correct the student’s error implicitly, but the student reacted to the Chinese teacher’s comment by repeating the erroneous form. This shows that the Chinese EFL teacher had expected to receive correction from the outset, therefore, she was attentive to the feedback, and also her uptake clearly shows that her attention was drawn to the form after the feedback. The data from the SRI with the teacher also show this:

R: Another example here. ‘*A lot of river*’. This student was not clear [about] this.

CNT: I reminded her implicitly that ‘river’ was wrong here.

R: Did this situation ever happen, in class when you correct implicitly the students' oral mistakes in grammar, do they actually still not realize the mistakes they make?

CNT: Yes, it still happens. They, they still make mistakes in grammar and accidents when they speak, e.g. the matching of a subject and its verb, the tense of the verb, etc, probably because they are nervous, sometimes.

R: Even when you have pointed out the mistakes, they still didn't realize they made them?

CNT: Once the mistakes are pointed out to the students, most of them would realize.

R: You don't normally ask students to repeat the correct answers, do you?

CNT: Not really.... after I correct their mistakes, some students will repeat the correct answer, some won't. But I am pretty sure that they know what the correct answer is. Most students make mistake[s] because they are nervous about standing up to talk, not because they don't know grammatical rules... That's right. When they stood up to speak, they make mistakes either because they are not confident enough or because they are nervous.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 2]

I anticipated they'd make these mistakes. So I reminded them, probably a number of students. But some of the students were aware of mistakes made, some weren't. Or although they were aware of the mistakes, they still made them during the process of speech. That's how it is.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 6]

The Chinese EFL teacher's account shows that she expected that her explicit and implicit error correction would have been recognized by her student, even though they did not repeat her correction. The EFL teacher added that such errors were normally made by being nervous. This Chinese EFL teacher participant's remarks are similar to those of her Chinese EFL students in a stimulated recall interview with the researcher (R).

R: Look at here, when this student said "there are a lot of river", then immediately your teacher mentioned "river" twice. Did this student notice her mistake after her teacher pointed out twice?

CNS4: I think for the second time she did.

CNS1: It is a slip of the tongue. She might not be aware of her error but she could understand what the teacher said.

R: A slip of the tongue. Does this happen very often?

CNS4: Yes, it does.

CNS3: When our teacher just points out our errors, we realize we've made an error. But we seldom repeat the corrections made by our teacher.

CNS5: Yeah, we just continue our speech without repeating the corrections.

[CNS1, 3, 4, 5, SRI1, p. 2]

The findings in the Chinese EFL context show that there is no difference in response to feedback between implicit and explicit corrections. That is to say, both implicit and explicit corrections were not repeated by the Chinese EFL students after their EFL teacher pointed them out. However, both the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL student participants thought that the EFL students who made the errors realized their errors after being corrected by their teacher. The teacher thought an error was made due to being nervous but the Chinese students regarded it as a slip of the tongue. However, there are no data from Chinese ESL student participants in the study on the manner of error correction in the Chinese EFL context.

#### **5.6.4 Accuracy or fluency**

With respect to accuracy or fluency issues, this section is about whether meaning, forms, or form are focused upon when students do their oral presentation in the English classroom. The findings data reveal that the Chinese EFL student group in the Chinese EFL context as a whole was more concerned with formal accuracy than functional fluency, making conscious efforts to avoid errors in using the target language. From the questionnaire data with respect to the question of *language teaching focusing more on fluency than accuracy*, students had a much stronger negative reaction. Eighty-three of the 104 students (79.8%) objected to a focus on fluency, 16 (15%) were uncertain, and only 5 of the 104 students (4.8%) agreed with this statement. The reaction of all the Chinese EFL teacher participants on this issue was consistent with their students.

However, the qualitative data from interviews show that the Chinese EFL teacher participant focused on students' fluency as well as accuracy when her students answered her questions or did oral presentations.

[I focus on] both. They don't have to speak very fast, but their grammar has got to be reasonably accurate and the intonation must be adequately good.

[CNT, SRI1, p.1]

This requirement from the teacher was fully accepted by most of her students, the EFL Chinese students from the Chinese EFL context. During the SRI, nearly all of her students knew well that their teacher expected both accuracy and fluency from them when answering questions or doing an oral presentation:

We would like to speak more fluently as well as making no mistakes. There is no use to speak fluently with lots of mistakes.

[CNS1, SRI1, p.1]

However, one Chinese student had a different point of view on this issue and would expect her teacher to stress accuracy rather than fluency.

I think accuracy should be emphasized. There is no use to speak fluently with lots of mistakes. I think accuracy should be the first, then fluency.

[CNS6, SRI2, p.6]

Another Chinese student expressed that whether accuracy or fluency or both should be required largely depended on students' language levels.

It depends on an individual student. If a student's level is high, accuracy and fluency would be required. If a student's language level is low, accuracy would be focused [upon], so it really depends.....

[CNS7, SRI2, p.6]



Therefore, it appears from the data in this study that both students and their teachers in the Chinese EFL context believed that meaning (meaningful communication) should be emphasised during the students' oral presentation while forms (error correction) should be focused on as soon as the students finished their speech. The Chinese EFL teacher participant and most of her students expected that learning outcomes should focus not only on fluency but also on accuracy. However, this study shows that there are no comments from the New Zealand ESL teacher and Chinese ESL student participants on this topic.

In short, from the analysis above, it is interesting to note here that even though all the EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context would like their EFL teacher to correct nearly all their mistakes in their oral speech, they still preferred to have fluent communication in English which should not be interrupted by error correction conducted by their EFL teacher. In this way, communication made by students would carry on smoothly and fluently, and errors made by students would be corrected at the end of discourse. However, in order to achieve this, the teacher is required to remember all errors made by students during their speech, otherwise the teacher can only correct some or most of them. Not only Focus-on-FormS but also Focus-on-Meaning has been emphasized during the English conversation in the Chinese EFL classroom, which might therefore be described as Focus-on-Form instruction (see Section 2.3.2). The findings shown above reveal that Focus-on-Form instruction, to some extent, has been achieved at some stages of English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context. Comments on the importance, the manner, the timing of error correction and accuracy or fluency from the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL students are closely aligned in the Chinese EFL context.

## **5.7 Classroom tasks**

This section addresses Research Question 1f, what were classroom tasks used in the classroom of the Chinese EFL context and how were they perceived by EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in these two contexts. It discusses some general tendencies manifest in classroom tasks in the Intensive Reading

Course (IRC) of the Chinese EFL context and how the teaching objectives are articulated by means of appropriate and effective tasks in the Chinese EFL classroom. The data from the fieldwork indicate that the classroom tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL context are forms-focused. For example, the common tasks generally conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom are text-reading, text-retelling, text-reciting, note-taking, oral presentation, dialogue, exercises, dictation, pattern drills and so on. In the following description of the results, only note-taking and text-reading will be highlighted, as these are regarded as typically representative of language classroom activities in the Chinese EFL context. Take a task of text-reciting as an example. In the Chinese EFL classrooms, students are expected to remember every word and every sentence of a text mechanically. Both quantitative and qualitative data on this type of task (three examples shown below) from the SRI and interviews are presented here.

### **5.7.1 Note-taking**

The first classroom task in the Chinese EFL context which will be described here is a task of students' note-taking during a lesson in the EFL Chinese tertiary classroom. This will be discussed and analyzed in terms of the participants' perspectives. It is very common in China that students take notes while they listen to lectures on a range of subjects. It is the same for students majoring in English in China. Various opinions on this practice from all data sources are presented here.

The data from quantitative questionnaires showed that 58.7 percent of the Chinese EFL student participants (61/104) believed that note-taking was very important in their English language learning. All of the Chinese EFL teacher participants (3/3) in this study agreed. The key teacher participant revealed during the SRI that she was concerned about whether or not notes were taken by the students. To the Chinese EFL teacher participant, true learning was a kind of acquisition of new grammar rules, structural patterns, meta-language, vocabulary items, and collocations – linguistic knowledge which her EFL students should take down in their notebooks and which they would rehearse, review, and memorise to the point of accurate reproduction upon request or tests.

I [am concerned] more about whether or not the notes are taken. It doesn't matter whether... they take notes on notebooks or textbooks. As long as the key points are marked, the students... can review them later if they didn't understand those key points in class. I don't demand that each student has a notebook, and take note of everything I mentioned. I do the teaching mainly orally. Even if I give a sample sentence, I won't write it up on the blackboard.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 6]

Because no matter what the beginning is like, the first round they have collected those useful materials such as proverbs and interesting sentences and articles. When there was something worth taking down, they all did take notes very earnestly.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 16]

When they took notes, they were given hints as well. You should take notes of these ways, and then I will ask you on the ways that people can release stress. Normally at their round of teaching, the same, they would all take notes of important words and sentences. Besides, after the student mentioned the important words and sentences, after they finished their teaching, I would cover them one more time... Yet most of the time they were taking notes. They would write down in their textbooks or notebooks what they didn't know.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 17]

The findings reveal that the reason for taking notes as explained by the Chinese EFL teacher was shared by her EFL students in the Chinese EFL context.

We all take notes so as to review, remember language knowledge well for examinations.

[CNS9, SRI2, p. 9]

Similarly, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant and one of her Chinese ESL students who viewed the Chinese videotaped lessons reported in an interview that the

note-taking task was independent and helpful learning for university students studying English.

Cause their taking their notes, making their own notes, and that's independent learning, you know.

[NZT, Int1, p. 7]

Note-taking does a lot more help for university students majored in English.

[NZS7, Int2, p. 1]

From the videotaped lessons in the Chinese EFL classroom, the note-taking task was not only undertaken during the teacher's lecturing but also during a task of student's lecturing (see *Student lecture* 5.8.3) in the classroom. Generally speaking, the most important reported reason for this was that the class would be expected to answer questions asked by a student presenter after each presentation. Every student in the class had to write down some information or main points during a student's lecturing in case he or she was asked to answer questions, a kind of informal test.

Generally speaking, after each presentation, the class would answer questions asked by the presenter. Therefore, we need to write down some details or key points in case we would be asked to answer questions.

[CNS7, SRI2, p. 9]

In contrast, there were some different opinions on note-taking heard from the ESL Chinese student participants who viewed the Chinese videotaped lessons and had studied for more than half a year in the New Zealand ESL context. They indicated that note-taking was a traditional activity and the main purpose for Chinese students doing it was for passing exams because notes taken by students in China would be tested, as in other subjects, such as Physics, Chemistry, Chinese and Math in the Chinese examination-oriented educational system.

In China, we would take notes without stopping, because we would be tested the contents of notes taken in class. Sometimes the teacher finishes before you could catch the meanings.

Tradition, tradition. The notes of every subject would be tested, like Physics, Chemistry, Chinese and Math, every subject would test the notes we took. It is boring to learn a language in this way.

In summary, the findings on the note-taking task reveal that note-taking is a kind of classroom task which is expected and required by Chinese EFL teachers but which is also accepted and implemented automatically and diligently by Chinese EFL students, perhaps in order to answer questions and perhaps due to the examination-oriented educational system in the Chinese EFL context. The data show that all the EFL participants in the Chinese EFL context and the New Zealand ESL teacher and some of her ESL Chinese students had a positive attitude on the note-taking task and accepted its role in English language learning. However, some of the New Zealand ESL Chinese students commented that the note-taking task was a traditional Chinese approach which was helpful for other subjects but not appropriate for language learning.

### **5.7.2 Reading a text aloud**

The task of reading a text aloud is one of the commonest English activities in English classrooms in China. It is a typical Chinese-styled task of English language teaching and learning. In the Chinese EFL class, students were often asked to read aloud texts and dialogues in the textbooks. The task of reading a text aloud could be used for checking pronunciation and introducing new knowledge by reviewing old knowledge. There are no data on the task drawn from questionnaires and the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme but from SRIs and interviews in the present study. The following are comments from the SR interviews made by the Chinese EFL teacher participant.

I often ask my students to read a text aloud so as not only to check their English pronunciation and intonation but also review what we have learned in order to learn new knowledge.

[CNT, SRI1, p. 4]

Then after they've read the text once or twice, I'd ask others if they'd understood. If they didn't, that would probably mean a fair amount of their pronunciations were wrong... Then, if there are any problems with pronunciation, I'll pronounce together with the students. I'll ask them, if they could recognize, while someone was reading, if any words have been mispronounced. This is because when a student made a mistake in pronunciation, others couldn't be able to understand. Yes, they would know themselves. Then, when a wrong pronunciation was made, other students would point it out. When they'd sense the mistake, they would respond.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 8]

The Chinese EFL students who viewed their own videotaped lessons supported the teacher's objectives for this task. During the stimulated recall interview they pointed out that it was necessary and useful for them to read a text aloud once to review what they had learned, and to introduce the new knowledge they were going to learn.

[Reading a text aloud] It can help us to be familiar with the content of the whole text.

[CNS13, SRI3, p. 6]

Because we haven't finished the whole lesson, reading a text aloud could make us recall what we have learned.

[CNS3, SRI1, p. 3]

Yeah, the purpose [of reading a text aloud] is to review what we have learned and to introduce the new knowledge. If we simply started from where we stopped last time, we would have forgotten where we were.

[CNS1, SRI1, p. 3]

Clearly, we can see a close match between comments made by the EFL teacher and her Chinese EFL students on this classroom task. However, these remarks on reading a text aloud do not concur with the comments from the New Zealand ESL participants. By contrast, the ESL Chinese student participants in the New Zealand ESL context,

who also had an English education background in the Chinese EFL context and now were completely exposed to the Western educational system, did not seem to share the views of the participants in the Chinese EFL context on this task of reading a text aloud. Many of them were particularly suspicious of this activity and deemed it as a 'typical' Chinese teaching task. They expressed the view during an interview with the researcher that this task seemed childish and was not useful for adult university students but more suitable for primary school students.

They are reading a text aloud. That's Chinese teaching style. They look like primary school students.

[Nzs1, Int1, p. 3]

Reading a text again and again in class is absolutely pointless.

[Nzs13, Int3, p. 5]

We are university students, so we should not be treated like high-school students. It's inappropriate to base teaching surrounding the text when the targets are university students.

[Nzs15, Int3, p. 5]

In an interview, some ESL Chinese students even recommended the Chinese EFL English classroom introduce more interesting tasks such as role play.

I recommend the teachers could in fact introduce more creative ways of delivering their teaching. For instance, once in class we were assigned into pairs and practise role-play. This is far more interesting than reading textbook.

[Nzs13, Int3, p. 4]

You can read the text [in] your own time, and do role play in class. As the teacher reads like this, students are just as passive as robots. Passive listening does not give students a firm grounding of knowledge (because students do no processing information by themselves). When context changes, they are still as incapable to leverage the learnt stuff as if they had not done the passive listening.

[Nzs12, Int3, p. 7]

In summary, the task of reading a text aloud was regarded as a necessary and helpful task by Chinese EFL teachers and students but as a pointless, mechanical and boring one by some of the ESL New Zealand Chinese students. Instead of reading a text aloud, some of the ESL Chinese student participants recommended during interviews that more active tasks such as role play should be conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom.

### **5.7.3 Student lecture**

The task of the student lecture is “an individual performance in front of the class” (Hu, 2003b, p. 297) and a common task in the Chinese EFL classroom. The task of the student lecture is normally undertaken by every one of the EFL Chinese students majoring in English education, particularly before they go to practicum in high schools or primary schools. During this task, one of the Chinese EFL students gives a 15-minute lecture to the whole class on a topic, such as imparting language knowledge or organizing activities. The purpose of this activity is for students to practise how to be a teacher. It was observed in this study that the Chinese EFL teacher participant adopted this 15-minute task of the student lecture as one of her common English classroom activities to give her Chinese EFL students more opportunities to practise their oral English. In the Chinese EFL classroom, three students were required to practise this lecturing task each week and each student gave a student lecture twice a semester. Even though student lectures were given three times a week from the first day they entered the university, there were 28 students in this class and it took a long time for a student to take his/her turn.

There are no data on the task drawn from questionnaires and the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme but from SRIs and interviews in the present study. There are data drawn from SRIs and interviews in the present study on several reasons for using the student lecture as a classroom task, revealed by both the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL Chinese students during the SRI in this research. Firstly, the task of the student lectures helped to cultivate self-confidence.



I think the students nowadays need to practise more. Especially under today's circumstances, you should... make yourself more competitive in every aspect. The purpose is not only to practise their... firstly to stand in front of a class. For example, are they brave enough to stand there? Right? To cultivate their self-confidence. I think they are going to be the teachers in the future. If when you were standing there but were not able to have the class' attention, this is not good. Firstly it gives them such opportunities.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 8]

The point is that I would like them to have the courage to stand up and talk. Otherwise, certain students who don't like to talk will remain silent.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 12]

Most of the Chinese EFL students in this class involved in this present research intended to be English teachers of high schools in the future and would lecture in front of a class, and it was important and necessary to cultivate their self-confidence to be qualified teachers.

Secondly, student lectures gave students the ability to express ideas. The students in this class were offered such opportunities to develop their ability to express themselves spontaneously to the whole class as their teacher did. They could take this opportunity to display to their classmates what they had learnt from their teacher.

Ah, if an opportunity for them to apply what they have learnt, to learn from their teachers, how to grasp the key points and so on.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 8]

Thirdly, student lecture tasks gave students more opportunities for teaching practice. This task is a kind of teaching practice which was seen as giving students more experience and helping them in preparing to be a good teacher in the future.

It gives them the opportunities to practise teaching to be a good teacher.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 8]

In addition, student lectures gave students oral practice. The students could get more oral practice during their lecturing in the classroom. The findings in this study suggest that 15-minute lecturing in English in front of the class is seen as helping students improve their English proficiency by offering opportunities for checking pronunciation and grammar.

It gives them the opportunities to practise their oral English along the way. What you spoke. During this progress, I still need to correct their pronunciation and grammar.

[CNT, SRI2, p. 8]

Clearly, this task of the student lecture has many functions in the Chinese EFL classroom and all Chinese EFL students saw themselves as having benefited from it.

The Chinese EFL student (coded as CNS6) videotaped in this study was invited to be interviewed after the lesson where she gave a 15-minute lecture in her participating classroom. During the videotaped lesson, the Chinese EFL lecturing student mistakenly pointed to her stomach and said “my heart...”. The following are comments from the stimulated recall interview with the researcher (R) in this study.

R: (Asking the lecturing girl) where is your heart?

Ss: (Laughing).

CNS6: Maybe I was too nervous to put my hand on the right place.

[SRI2, p. 8]

There is no doubt that the 15-minute student lecture would make a student nervous and the video camera necessary for the present research might make her/him more so. Later, the lecturing student recalled that this was her third time lecturing in class in her life and she had been a little nervous just because of the video-camera. However, she also claimed that being a little bit nervous was a kind of pressure which could help her to do her lecturing better.

Yeah, this is my third time to do lecturing in class in my life. Because of video camera, actually I am always a little bit nervous when speaking in front of the class.

This time video camera made me more nervous. It is better for me to get used to it. In my opinion, being a little bit nervous may give us a little pressure so that we concentrate and do it better.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 9]

During the stimulated recall interview, she commented that the opportunity for the student lecture was very precious to her and it helped her improve her self-confidence as well as intonation. After her three opportunities to give a student lecture, she admitted that she got a sense of being a 'teacher' and the task made her appreciate what her teacher did and also helped her realize that it was quite difficult to be a qualified teacher.

This chance [of the student lecture] is very precious.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 10]

I find it really good. It does help improve our confidence as well as intonation. Besides, I do get a sense of 'teacher'. Taking a student's angle, I always complain the teacher did not do her class preparation well enough. However, as I got such a sense of teaching, I realized I'd been too harsh on her.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 8]

Finally, she added that she was satisfied with how she displayed her knowledge, her fluent English and appropriate intonation. In addition, she emphasized that during her lecturing, her interaction with her classmates was "quite natural and smooth", with smiling. She thought more practice made her more relaxed.

[When I gave a lecture], I looked unnatural. However, I think that I could express myself fluently.... the interaction between my classmates and me was very natural and smooth. We were all smiling. Yeah, rich feelings and good facial expressions. But a little bit stiff. I think I would be more relaxed after more practice.

[CNS6, SRI2, p. 8]

The Chinese EFL teacher participant also commented proudly that this lecturing student had done a good job.

I think she [the lecturing student] did pretty well this time. But she does pretty well every time anyway. She was quite confident with fluent oral English.

[CNT, SRI2, p.14]

The data show that all the other students in her class also had a positive attitude to the student lecture task and always tried to do it earnestly because the teacher always reminded them of the importance and necessity of this task to them and encouraged them to fulfil it independently as a qualified teacher. However, the Chinese EFL teacher also helped some students who were in need.

I also told them that once you stood at the platform, you were the teacher. Ah. I keep reminding them that they are teaching students. Therefore you should rely on yourself when you are doing things, many things. Sometimes when they were not sure about something, they would look at me for help. Because I was sitting in the class. I said you shouldn't look at me for help. I leave the class to you. I'm not in charge. Normally like this. If they were desperate, then I'll give them a hand. For those really desperate ones only. But most of the time they should rely on themselves.

[CNT, SRI2, p.16]

Actually they are teachers-to-be. My point is that once you stand on the dais, you are the teacher and you are teaching the students. That's it. That's my requirement of them. Don't feel nervous when you are standing on the dais, because you are the teacher. You should be confident. That's the way it should be. Right?

[CNT, SRI2, p.17]

To talk it out. The main ideas. If you can highlight some useful sentence patterns to the class. That'd be good enough. And that's the purpose.

[CNT, SRI2, p.10]

I think they [her students] quite like to do them, especially when they are told to do the preparation themselves. They normally prepare more than adequately. Sometimes they'd talk about slang, proverbs, articles, humours or many other topics.

They'd arrive early...before the class starts. And they would write the stuff up on the blackboard before they start their talk.

[CNT, SRI2, p.10]

The view from the New Zealand ESL teacher participant on the student lecture in the Chinese EFL context was also positive. She commented that this kind of method was really "great" and could "absolutely" help the students to learn a language well because Chinese students communicated to the whole class in English under pressure. She also noted that this task was quite different from the other common tasks she observed being conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom; students were not memorizing but thought up their own ideas during this task.

Great, it's great. She [the lecturing student] is giving the students something to do, to take notes. There is a reason for the activity. I think this kind of method can absolutely help the students to learn a language. Because they are put under pressure to stand in front of the classroom. So as long as they are not memorized and as long as they're, they're thinking up their own ideas. It's fine and quite different from the other tasks in the Chinese EFL classroom. This student lecture task is exactly good for the Chinese students' future [teaching] jobs.

[NZT, Int2, p. 3]

However, it is interesting to see that the New Zealand ESL teacher also pointed out that the teaching style of the lecturing student was teacher-centred, exactly as that modelled by her Chinese EFL teacher.

She's teaching in the same style as her teacher, pointing out the words.

The teacher models everything.

[NZT, Int2, p. 3]

Meanwhile, some of the Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context interviewed on the student lecture task in the Chinese EFL classroom were not as positive as their New Zealand ESL teacher. Their comments show that they did not think this kind of task was of any help to students, for example, it neither helped them

to build up vocabulary nor did it improve their speaking. Some of them regarded this task as boring.

[This task is] not so good. It's so boring! The sentences in their presentations were too simple as well. The presentations in the tape failed to mention about other important aspects like health, education and other areas.

[NZS5, Int2, p. 3]

My mind would be absent 80% of the time if I were in this class. I'd really feel drowsy and side-tracked if I were in that class. The contents of their presentations were too narrow and confined to the life style in appearance.

[NZS6, Int2, p. 7]

I don't think this kind of presentation is of any help to students. It neither helps to build up students' vocabularies, nor does it improve their speaking... The class layout was no good for teacher-and-student interaction. Rather, it should be more active to encourage everyone to participate.

[NZS8, Int2, p. 7]

In summary, the findings in this study reveal that the task of the student lecture frequently experienced by Chinese EFL students in the Chinese EFL context was meaningful communication in English. Both the Chinese EFL teacher and all of her EFL students commented that this student lecture could benefit students greatly, for example, cultivating student's self-confidence, developing oral English ability, and offering teaching experience for being a teacher in the future. In contrast, Chinese ESL student participants thought that the task of the student lecture conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom was not active but boring and did not give any help to students. However, the opinion from their teacher, the New Zealand ESL teacher was more positive. The New Zealand ESL teacher participant commented that the student lecture task was really a CLT one and was quite different from the other tasks she observed in the Chinese English classroom. However, interestingly, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant also pointed out that the manner of a student giving a lecture was still teacher-centred and Focus-on-FormS instruction. In other words, the way students themselves taught was via grammar-translation method. However, ironically,

the task they were given to use was asking them to use language in a CLT approach. This issue will be addressed further in Chapter Seven.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Overall, the findings from the four data resources, questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews, reveal that the Chinese EFL participating teacher spent 75 percent of three classes lecturing or interacting exclusively with the whole class or individual students during the fieldwork of this study (see Section 5.3) and the Chinese EFL participating teacher in this research, to some extent, was still a knowledge giver, dominating the whole classroom and displaying her knowledge for most of the time in the class. Therefore, the current study reveals that this Chinese EFL tertiary teacher tried her best to present knowledge to her EFL students and there was little evidence of CLT classroom activities such as playing games and role-play in the Chinese tertiary participating class. The results above (see Section 5.5) show that the teacher participant closely adhered to the prescribed textbook, analysing texts in the prescribed textbook, sentence by sentence, word by word sometimes, explaining and exemplifying language points in detail, paraphrasing sentences and so on.

The data shown above indicates that the teaching methodology in the Chinese EFL context was teacher-centred, textbook-oriented and forms-focused instruction and still followed the traditional GTM, focusing on language points such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and so on, which can be supported by the quantitative data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Section 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 & 5.6). One of the main reasons for this teaching method is because grammar knowledge is regarded by the Chinese EFL teacher participants and the Chinese EFL students as being very important to the English language teaching and learning in the EFL context and the majority of them thought that grammar could help students to develop English proficiency. However, the voices of many ESL Chinese students who had studied for more than half a year in the New Zealand ESL context were rather negative in terms of English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context.

However, while GTM dominates the EFL teaching in the Chinese EFL context examined here, the influence of CLT can also be seen as having influenced the ELT both theoretically and practically. For example, communicative ability has been the main focus not only in the teaching objectives and the teaching materials of IRC, but also in its avowed classroom practice. Both the Chinese EFL teacher participant and her EFL student participants commented that students had enough opportunities to practise oral English in class and they all agreed that the Chinese EFL teacher paid as much attention to the meaning of her students' speech rather than to their accuracy, therefore not interrupting them by error correction even though students expected their teacher to correct nearly all their errors either explicitly or implicitly. Nearly all the EFL Chinese students believed that they could learn a lot from the tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom.

All the tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom, such as note-taking, reading a text aloud and so on, had typical Chinese-style learning features including mechanical repetition, and were typical of the time-honoured Grammar-Translation method (GTM) which was generally appreciated by the Chinese EFL participants but disliked by the New Zealand ESL teacher and ESL Chinese student participants. It is noteworthy that one of the Chinese EFL classroom tasks analysed in this study, the student lecture, can be regarded potentially as a good example of an eclectic combination of the GTM and the CLT.

However, there are still some problems in the Chinese IRC context which may impede the development of students' communicative ability, such as a large amount of lecturing, no group work, uninteresting pair work, the classroom setting and class size (see further discussion in Chapter Seven).

It can be concluded from the findings from the Chinese EFL context in this study that even though Chinese EFL education still adheres largely to its own traditional method, with the policy of open reform, it is nonetheless beginning to incorporate more Western methodologies, such as CLT, though perhaps still on a modest scale.



The findings reported in this chapter describe the complexity of EFL tertiary classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context and reveal different perspectives from all of the teacher and student participants in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts in terms of six key aspects: instructional approach, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction and classroom tasks. All these aspects of Chinese tertiary classroom practice will be compared with the New Zealand ESL context in Chapter Seven. In the next chapter, the complexity of ESL tertiary classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context will be presented.

## **CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS IN THE NEW ZEALAND ESL CONTEXT**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses Research Question Two, what is tertiary English language classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context based on the findings obtained from the four data resources: questionnaires, the adapted Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme, stimulated recalled interviews (SRIs) and interviews. All the three New Zealand ESL teacher participants were involved in questionnaires in the present study, while only one of them, the key ESL teacher participant, observed and commented during the stimulated recall interview on her own classroom practice which was videotaped and coded by the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme in the present study (see Table 3). This study explores the complex ESL tertiary classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context in terms of the researcher's non-participating classroom observation and various perspectives from all the ESL and EFL participants in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. It investigates to what extent CLT (Focus-on-Meaning) and TBLT (Focus-on-Form) are implemented in an actual classroom situation in a New Zealand classroom, based on the case study conducted in one of the language institutes in New Zealand. This chapter shares the same structure as Chapter Five, presenting the findings obtained from the New Zealand ESL context in terms of the six Research Questions listed below so as to describe the complexity of actual tertiary ESL classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context.

- 2a. To what extent teaching was centred on the teacher or the student and to what extent was group work, pair work or individual work conducted in the New Zealand ESL classroom and how did the teachers and their Chinese student participants in the two contexts view these ways of working?

- 2b. To what extent was Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning or Focus-on-Form approach used in the New Zealand ESL classroom?
- 2c. How were textbooks used and what were teachers' and students' opinions on the use of textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context?
- 2d. To what extent were the four student modalities covered in the New Zealand ESL classroom?
- 2e. How was error correction done in the New Zealand ESL classroom and how did teachers and students view error correction in classroom teaching?
- 2f. What were classroom tasks used in the New Zealand ESL context and how were they perceived by teacher and student participants in the two contexts, China and New Zealand?

## **6.2 Instructional approaches**

This section addresses Research Question 2a, to what extent was teaching centred on the teacher or the student and to what extent was group work, pair work or individual work conducted in the New Zealand ESL context and how did the EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in these two contexts view these ways of working. Debates about instructional approaches, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, are primarily concerned with whether instruction was teacher-centred or student-centred, and whether group work, pair work or individual work was used in an ESL language classroom in the New Zealand ESL context. In this section, instructional approaches related to Research Question 2a are described based on the data from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews obtained in a tertiary English classroom in New Zealand.

### 6.2.1 Data from questionnaires

The findings from questionnaires in the New Zealand ESL context show that all of the Chinese international ESL student participants (16) thought that it was very or quite important that teachers had “a way of teaching that explained things slowly and carefully”. But their three English teachers did not regard this as being important as students did. In response to questions on “lecturing”; “pair work or group work (students work on assigned task materials in pairs or in groups)”; and “impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing and examples”, the data showed that more than half of the Chinese ESL student participants (9/16, 56.25%) believed that their ESL teachers often lectured in the class, 31.25 percent of Chinese ESL students (5/16) thought they lectured occasionally, while two of Chinese ESL students (12.5%) thought rarely. The reaction of all the New Zealand ESL teacher participants was nearly consistent with these last two Chinese international ESL students: one ESL teacher thought that lectures were occasional but two considered that they rarely or never lectured.

Seventy percent of all the Chinese ESL students (12/16) agreed that the role of a teacher in the English language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, exercises, and examples which should be organized and illuminated by the teacher. However, 12.5% (2/16) students’ attitudes to this question were uncertain, and 12.5% (2/16) disagreed. However, the three New Zealand ESL teachers’ reactions on this issue varied: one strongly agreed, one was uncertain and one disagreed. The data from questionnaires also showed that all New Zealand ESL teacher participants (3/3) and 87.5% (14/16) Chinese ESL student participants believed that group work was often conducted in their classrooms and thought “group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for cooperative relationships to emerge and in promoting interaction among students”. Only two Chinese students thought group work was occasional in their classroom.

**Table 12: The findings from questionnaires on instructional approaches in the New Zealand ESL classroom**

Instructional approaches	Degrees	Students	Percent	Teachers	Percent
		(16)	(100%)	(3)	(100%)
Lecturing	always	2	12.5%	0	0%
	frequently	7	43.75%	0	0%
	occasionally	5	31.25%	1	33.3%
	rarely	2	12.5%	1	33.3%
	never	0	0%	1	33.3%
The teacher role is to impart knowledge through explanation, exercises and examples	agreed	12	75%	1	33.3%
	uncertain	2	12.5%	1	33.3%
	disagreed	2	12.5%	1	33.3%
Group work or pair work	frequently	14	87.5%	3	100%
	occasionally	2	12.5%	0	0%

Obviously, there was a considerable discrepancy between the New Zealand ESL teacher and her Chinese ESL student participants' opinions on lecturing. Most of the Chinese ESL international students thought their ESL teacher often lectured in the language class; however, the New Zealand ESL teacher participants did not think so. This finding will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

### **6.2.2 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme**

The findings drawn from most Chinese ESL student participants' comments on their ESL teacher's lecturing above from questionnaires were fully supported by the data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Appendix XIII). The data from the Adapted COLT coding from the three videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL

context revealed that in teaching methodology in New Zealand ESL classroom activities, a teacher-centred instructional approach lasted 101 minutes of a total 180 minutes, up to 56 percent of the duration of the three videotaped lessons under investigation. That is to say, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant spent 56 percent of the three classes (101/180) imparting knowledge by explaining, eliciting and interacting exclusively with the whole class or individual students in the ESL classroom. Student-centred activity lasted for 79 minutes in total, accounting for 44 percent of the total coded time of 180 minutes. About 23 percent of coded time was spent on group work, 8.9 percent of class time was spent on pair work, and 11.2 percent of time was spent on individual work during this research project in the New Zealand ESL context.

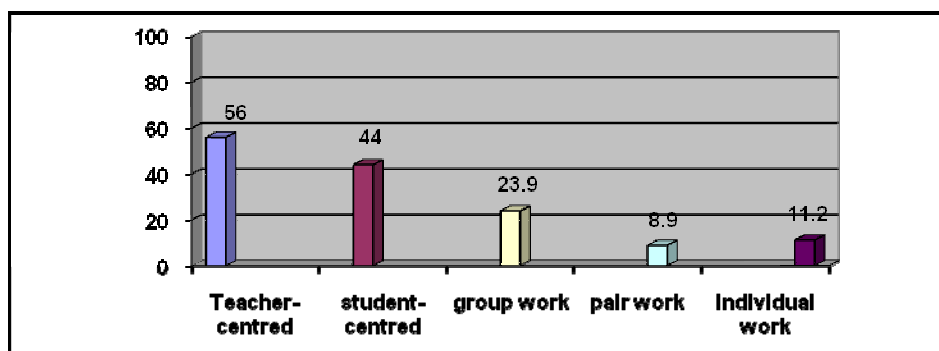
**Table 13: Instructional approaches of the three videotaped lessons (180 minutes) in the New Zealand ESL context**

<b>Instructional approaches</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teacher-centred	18	101 mins	56%
Student-centred	12	79 mins	44%
Group work	7	43 min	23.9%
Pair work	3	16 mins	8.9%
Individual work	4	20 mins	11.2%

Note: Time for all instructional approaches adds up to 259 minutes and the total percentage is 144% because some instructional approaches overlapped in the New Zealand ESL context.

The total percentage of time spent by the class on instructional approach features is shown below.

**Figure 12: Total percentage of time spent on instructional approach features by class in the New Zealand ESL context**



The data above from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme showed that the instructional approach in the New Zealand ESL context was more teacher-centred (56%) than student-centred (44%) with some group work (23.9%), pair work (8.9%) and individual work (11.2%).

### **6.2.3 Data from SRIs and interviews**

The result above drawn from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme of actual classroom observations in the New Zealand ESL context, however, was in contrast to the purpose of the New Zealand ESL teaching program administered by the institute. During an interview, the New Zealand key ESL teacher participant commented that,

...our purpose is student-centred. When our manager observed us teaching □ I think □ we have four boxes. One is strengths and weaknesses, one is good points, one is things to improve, the other one like... is student-centred, teacher... teacher-centred, like that [laugh]. They're clearly looking in to make sure that students are taking responsibility independently for their own work in the classroom. Students are doing a lot of work in the classroom.

[NZT, Int1, p. 7]

The New Zealand ESL teacher participant indicated that a student-centred approach was the aim of English language teaching in her language institute and that teachers would be inspected by the manager of the institute so as to ensure that students took responsibility for working independently in the ESL language classroom. However, during the stimulated recall interview the New Zealand ESL teacher participant commented that

...Normally I might get the students to give feedback, but often the others could not understand. So I read them. But some people might say it is very teacher controlled. But in a way, the first part needs to be teacher controlled.

[NZT, SRI2, p. 10]

Thus, the ESL teacher participant admitted her class sometimes was teacher-centred which was confirmed by the finding from the Adapted COLT analysis discussed above. This comment from the ESL teacher on teacher-centred approaches will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

With respect to the issue of group work, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant mentioned several times during interviews that much group work was conducted in her classroom.

We have more group work. Yesterday we had very good discussion. They did a group discussion and they got one big circle, I didn't do so much at all, and they did everything. They gave feedback, they questioned and answered, but it was excellent. So, when I came I fitted them into the activity.

[NZT, Int3, p. 4]

The New Zealand ESL teacher participant thought that group work was excellent and was normally done independently by Chinese ESL international students in her classroom, thus providing her students with more opportunities to practise their communicative competence in the New Zealand ESL context. This teacher's opinion on the effect of group work was fully supported by some Chinese ESL student participants in the class.



Group discussion is very good. We discuss a topic from many angles which are usually broader and deeper than those things in appearance. For instance, we will discuss through economic, environmental, educational, and health factors if we were assigned the topic of ‘compare and contrast the Chinese and English Countryside’.

[NZS6, Int2, p. 5]

Some Chinese ESL students found that group work was a very good activity and could be used to discuss a subject from different angles, such as from economics, environment, education, health and so on, which could broaden and deepen their learning knowledge. However, one of the Chinese ESL students had a negative view of group work:

I think it is a waste of time in class here, sometimes, especially group discussions.

[NZS1, Int1, p. 1]

According to his opinion, a lot of time was wasted in the New Zealand ESL context, especially doing group work. However, another Chinese ESL student gave a different perspective on group work:

Group discussion itself isn't a waste lot of time it is limited to 15 minutes. But sometimes it goes on for about 45 minutes. It is too long.

[NZS2, Int1, p. 1]

According to this Chinese ESL student's view, group work in the New Zealand ESL context sometimes could be useful if it was not too long, for instance, lasting for a long time, about 45 minutes. She commented that group work itself was not a waste of time if it could be controlled within 15 minutes.

There was an interesting phenomenon during group work, mentioned by one Chinese ESL student participant:

Using group work to explain something, I think sometimes, if there are more Chinese students in a group, we would do it in Chinese. But with Japanese and Korean students we would speak English. So I think it is fine. If there are three

Chinese students and one, one Japanese or Korean student, we would normally talk in Chinese, which may isolate the Japanese or Korean students.

[NZS3, Int1, p. 1]

The comment revealed that during group work Chinese ESL students would tend to discuss in Chinese, and sometimes even discussed in Chinese when the group included a Japanese or Korean student, which led to these Japanese or Korean students feeling isolated. The reasons for this phenomenon for Chinese ESL students discussing in Chinese during group work in an English classroom in the New Zealand ESL context will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

There was also commentary on group work conducted in the New Zealand classroom by students from the Chinese EFL context. During the interview, one of these Chinese EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context commented:

I think it [group work] is quite poor, it's best to have a group of 2 people, when you can express yourself fully. Sometimes they would not agree to each other. When students discuss some questions, some of their ideas would not be accepted by the others. I think group work is not always effective.

[CNS5, Int2, p. 5]

This Chinese EFL student participant thought that group work was not always effective because it did not offer students as many opportunities to express themselves as pair work did, and in a group there was a chance that some of your ideas would not be accepted by others. This view will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In summary, the data showed that instructional approaches in the classroom in the New Zealand ESL context were rather more teacher-centred than student-centred even though the purpose of the ESL teaching in this context, as described by the New Zealand ESL teacher participant, was ostensibly student-centred. As for group work, both the New Zealand ESL teacher and most of her Chinese ESL students believed that group work was frequently used in the New Zealand ESL context and regarded it as an effective way for students to take responsibility to learn English independently.

However, some Chinese ESL student participants thought that group work was a waste of time and one suggested that it would be better if group work could be limited to 15 minutes in class in the New Zealand ESL context. The data also revealed that there was a phenomenon where the Chinese ESL students tended to discuss using their first language with other Chinese students during group work in class. The findings in this section on instructional approaches will be further discussed in the next chapter, Chapter Seven.

### **6.3 Language pedagogy**

This section addresses Research Question 2b, to what extent was Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning or Focus-on-Form approach used in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context and how did EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students in these two contexts view them. This question will be addressed by using the data below, drawn from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews on the three lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, which revealed whether the lecturing in the New Zealand participating classroom was formS-focused, meaning-focused or form-focused. The various opinions from teacher and student participants from the two contexts on language pedagogy in the New Zealand ESL context are described as well.

#### **6.3.1 Data from questionnaires**

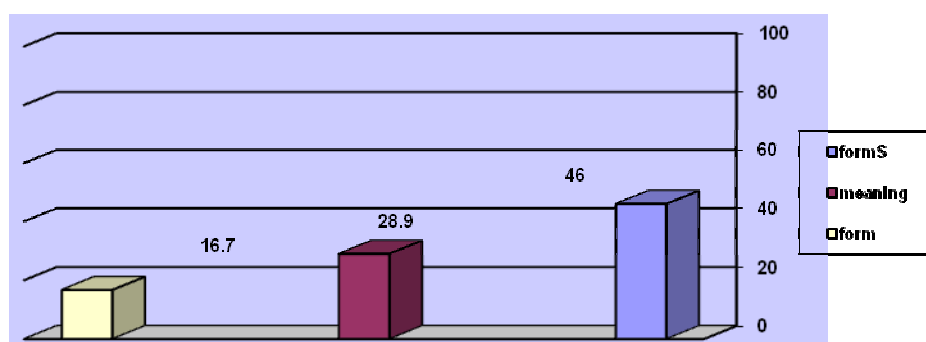
The data from the questionnaires in the New Zealand ESL context revealed that a majority of the Chinese ESL student participants (75%, 12/16) and one of their ESL teacher participants (1/3) in the New Zealand ESL context still believed that the rules of grammar were the most important factor in learning a language; 25% of students (4/16) strongly agreed with this concept and 50% agreed. However, 12.5% (2/16) students' and one of the three teachers' attitudes on it were uncertain and only two Chinese ESL students (12.5%) and one ESL teacher disagreed. Most of the Chinese ESL student participants (62.5%, 10/16) believed that grammatical correctness was the

most important criterion by which language performance should be judged and the rest (6/16, 37.5%) were uncertain. However, in respect of this question, it was interesting to discover that one of their three ESL teachers was uncertain about the role of grammar, and the other two (2/3, 66.7%) disagreed with each other on its merits.

### 6.3.2 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

These findings from the questionnaires were echoed in the data drawn from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Appendix XIII) in the present study. The data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme in these three videotaped lessons showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant spent nearly half of the coded time (83/180, 46%) on *focus on formS* (FonFS), forms of grammar, such as 5wh questions and intonation. 28.9 percent of coded time was spent on *focus on meaning* (FonM), and only 16.7 percent of time on classroom tasks could be categorised as *focus on form* (FonF) (see Figure 13). Interestingly, these data revealed that in the ESL tertiary English language classroom of the New Zealand participating institute formS (linguistic knowledge) were more focused on by the New Zealand ESL teacher than meaning and form.

**Figure 13: Total percentage of time spent on a primary focus of language pedagogy on code-related features by class in the New Zealand ESL context**



From Figure 13 above, it is interesting to note that it was not the communicative approach, Focus on Meaning --- which is generally identified as representative of Western language methodology (Section 2.4.2) --- but rather Focus on FormS that was more prominent in the New Zealand ESL classroom under investigation in the present study. However, if we regard Focus on Form as a part of Focus on Meaning, actually, the figure above reveals that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant spent 45.6% coded time on Focus on Meaning and Focus on Form and 46% coded time on Focus on FormS, which suggests that grammar was regarded as being equally important in the New Zealand participating institute.

### **6.3.3 Data from SRIs and interviews**

The findings above were fully supported by views of the ESL teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context. During an interview, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant stated:

Grammar knowledge is very important.

[NZT, Int1, p. 8]

I wouldn't explain much of the grammar unless we are focusing on a particular grammar point... Then I probably go to grammar, then teach the grammar, then find the grammar used in the book. We normally explain grammar related to the same topic and try to refocus on that item of grammar.

[NZT, Int1, p. 2]

That is to say, grammar or Focus on FormS was also regarded by the New Zealand ESL teacher as being important to help students to learn a language well in an ESL classroom. Grammar would be focused on by this ESL teacher only if it was necessary or related to a particular topic which was being taught in class. She added during an interview that,

I think we don't do a lot grammar and vocabulary teaching as well as Chinese teachers do. We need to learn from them and a lot western teachers completely

forget to teach grammar because we cannot ... either cannot bother we don't know how exactly all we feel nervous about it. And so... you know, hem... I really interest on balance... Just maybe from my experience living in the foreign countries.

[NZT, Int1, p. 9]

This comment suggests that Western ESL teachers do not do as much grammar teaching as Chinese teachers usually do and a lot of them even forget to teach grammar, perhaps because they feel nervous about it. The ESL teacher participant pointed out here that Western ESL teachers should learn from Chinese EFL teachers to pay attention to grammar and to teach grammar. One of her Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context also agreed with her during an interview.

Some explanation [on grammar] is necessary. A past participle can come in many different forms according to its context. For instance, it can sometimes come about as an adjective, whereas it becomes a past participle to indicate the nature of the verb and the tense of the situation.

[NZS12, Int3, p. 2]

This Chinese ESL student believed that some explanation on grammar was necessary in an English language classroom due to the complicated structure of the English language, for example, a past participle can be used as a part of a verb or as an adjective.

The findings above showed that grammar was perceived by both the ESL teacher and her Chinese ESL students as “necessary” and “important” and was also focused on (46% of the coded time) by the ESL teacher during her real classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context (see Figure 13). However, there was again a different perspective heard from the Chinese EFL context. After watching the lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, the Chinese EFL teacher participant pointed out,

It seems to me she [the New Zealand ESL teacher participant] didn't [place] emphasis on grammar. Not at all... I haven't found that she taught grammar

systematically. She just focused on the meaning of sentences. As for grammar, ... no, I don't think she did. She just focused on expression.

[CNT, Int2, p. 4]

According to the Chinese EFL teacher's opinion, those English lectures videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context were not Focus-on-FormS but Focus-on-Meaning. That is to say, the Chinese EFL teacher regarded the English language teaching in the New Zealand ESL context as meaning-focused rather than grammar-focused because she did not teach grammar systematically. Obviously, there was a considerable discrepancy between the New Zealand ESL teacher and the Chinese EFL teacher in their use of language pedagogy, which will be discussed further in Chapter Seven. How the ESL teacher did teach intonation in the New Zealand ESL context, and how teacher and student participants in both the ESL and EFL contexts perceived this are presented here.

The third lesson videotaped in the New Zealand participating institute was about teaching the ESL students intonation. At the beginning of this videotaped lesson, the ESL teacher participant asked her ESL students to read a somewhat "boring" sentence with different intonation to express different feelings, for example, "The plane took off yesterday". Through this sentence, the New Zealand ESL teacher illuminated how the emotions of being happy, sad, excited or shocked were supposed to be expressed. Then the ESL teacher assigned each group a piece of paper, which had a different sentence on it, and asked students in each group to say the sentence with different emotions. During the lesson, each student got to practise within that group first, and then every group would be called out to present in front of the class. It was required by the ESL teacher participant that every group member had to say the same sentence to convey different emotions, namely sad, excited, happy or shocked and the rest of the class would have to guess what feelings they conveyed. The ESL teacher mentioned in class that if the student audience's guess did not agree with the emotion that the presenter meant to convey, the presenter did a bad job in his/her intonation practice.

However, during the SRI, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant mentioned that the intonation lesson she taught was not included in the textbook (see Section 6.4).

Not intonation, what is scheduled by the book is the vocabulary and reading only.

[Nzt, Sri3, p. 1]

In response to the researcher's question "Why did you choose intonation as the subject of your lesson?" the ESL teacher participant replied:

Because, intonation is extremely, extremely important in spoken English... The students I have noticed in the class, they tend to use their own style of intonation... When they are in groups, they, they are still going to their funning language. In the next week I will be reminding them now to try to use English properly. And because also when they do their IELTS, you know, if they're not used to speak English properly with English intonation, then it is going to be disadvantaging their IELTS exam. So in a way, I've tried intonation, just because I, I have been aware this class particular, it is quite bad for, not using intonation properly.

[Nzt, Sri3, p. 1]

According to the ESL teacher's opinion, intonation is extremely important in oral English and the IELTS exam of her ESL students. Then she gave more reasons for choosing intonation as the teaching content during the stimulated recall interview:

Because ... you, you can't get the message across in English without correct intonation. And I know from having lived in Asia that English is quite not important in some... it is perhaps. And English they are often afraid to use intonation, because it is bad enough getting words out or bad enough finding the vocabulary. And but they are often shy. If someone is going to understand my grammar or vocabulary, and then their intonation is even worse because... So, you know, so, so usually when I'm, I'm doing intonation practice it is got to find an activity where they can play with it, a little bit, and, and the noise kind of environment, so they are not embarrassed to shy as much.

[Nzt, Sri3, p. 2]

During the stimulated recall interview, in response to the question asked by the researcher, "Do you think intonation is important in the language learning?" all the



Chinese ESL students had a positive answer. Some even emphasised that intonation was very important. One student expressed the view that intonation could reflect speakers' feelings.

Your intonation may tell people whether you are happy or sad.

[NZS12, SRI3, p. 1]

Another Chinese ESL student commented that good intonation may increase the IELTS score which echoed her ESL teacher's comments above.

I think good intonation may help you to increase your IELTS score (laughing). This is the most important of learning intonation. When you speak with good intonation, the examiner may be very happy so that s/he would give you one more mark. An upgrade from 5 to 6 will enable you to meet the entrance admission of a New Zealand university.

[NZS11, SRI3, p. 1]

Her views were also fully supported by the EFL teacher participant in the Chinese EFL context. After watching the lesson videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context she stated during an interview,

I think intonation is very important. I think intonation is very important to one's ability to speak real English or to express one's feelings such as the teacher who spoke this word with such rich feelings. However, an average Chinese student cannot say a word with rich feelings as the native-speaker teacher did, but could only pronounce the word directly and plainly. When the Chinese students speak English, they normally have no intonation, and sound as awkward as westerners speaking Chinese. So I think intonation is very important. When you open your mouth to speak English, but without the right intonation and pronunciation, people think you do not speak beautiful English. This is the first impression you give people. It sounds awkward when you have a bad intonation and pronunciation, whether you speak English fluently or not.

[CNT, Int3, p. 1]

To put it simply, the Chinese EFL teacher believed that intonation was the first impression you gave people and was very important to a Chinese student who wanted to speak good English or to express his/her feelings appropriately in English. This Chinese EFL teacher's view on intonation was also accepted by her Chinese EFL students. In response to the researcher's question "Is it important for us to learn intonation when you study a language?", all Chinese EFL student participants responded that it was. One of the Chinese EFL student participants said that she would like to speak English with fluency and better feelings during an interview. Another Chinese ESL student participant expressed her opinion on the reason for the importance of intonation as follows:

Because we learn an international language, English, so we should try our best to pursue good and standard intonation. Otherwise, we would speak English to English native speakers with Chinese accent. So I think intonation is very important.

[CNS11, Int3, p. 1]

The comments of this EFL student reveal that the Chinese EFL students thought intonation was very important and would enable them to speak a good and standard international language as English native speakers do and they did not want to speak English with a Chinese accent. Other EFL Chinese students also agreed during an interview that:

[The standard intonation allows us] easy to communicate with native speakers. If we speak with the same intonation instead of with variation, it would be a bit uneasy for listeners to understand.

[CNS12, Int3, p. 1]

When interviewing, it is a big advantage if we can speak beautiful English.

[CNS13, Int3, p. 1]

[It is] easy for us to find a job [in New Zealand with a good intonation].

[CNS15, Int3, p. 1]

These EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context commented that they could benefit a lot from good standard intonation, suggesting that this made it easy to communicate with native English speakers, easy to find a job in an English speaking country and that it was a great advantage to speak good English during interviews. Their Chinese EFL teacher agreed with them and added one more benefit of good intonation.

If you speak with very beautiful intonation, you should have such kind of feelings, like confidence. In fact, our students, after listening to the lecture and knowing how to do it, however, sometimes, are still embarrassed to behave and speak exactly like westerners, native English speakers.

[CNT, Int3, p. 2]

According to the Chinese EFL teacher participant's view, confidence was another benefit students could have from 'beautiful' intonation. However, this Chinese EFL teacher found that it was also quite difficult or embarrassing for Chinese students to behave and speak as L1 English people do. All the data above showed that the Chinese EFL teacher and all the Chinese ESL and EFL student participants in these two contexts shared with the New Zealand ESL teacher participant the importance of teaching intonation. The reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

#### **6.4 Use of textbooks**

This section addresses Research Question 2c, how were textbooks used in the New Zealand ESL context and what were EFL and ESL teachers' and students' opinions on the use of textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context. There are no data drawn from questionnaires on this aspect in the present study, therefore, this question will be described by using the data drawn from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews on the three lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context.

The textbook for the Intensive Reading Course (IRC) used in the New Zealand language institute ESL classroom in the present study was *Quest* (Hartmann, 1999),

which addresses the need to prepare students for the demands of college-level academic coursework. *Quest* contains a variety of academic subject areas including biology, business, U.S. history, psychology, art history, cultural anthropology, American literature, and economics. According to the author, it “helps students get up to speed in terms of both academic content and language skills” and “prepares ESL students for the daunting amount and level of reading, writing, listening, and speaking required for college success” (Hartmann, 1999, p. v).

The use of this textbook by the ESL teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context during the present research program is presented in the table below.

**Table 14: The videotaped lessons, teaching contents and its textbook use in the New Zealand ESL context**

Lessons	Teaching contents	Use of Textbook
Videotaped Lesson I	Writing skills: essay structure, brainstorming	No
Videotaped Lesson II	Writing skills: flexibility, 5wh questions for an essay	No
Videotaped Lesson III	Intonation: knowledge & practice: role play of the text (rewritten as a play, see the detail in Section 6.7)	Yes (but rewritten)

#### 6.4.1 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

The data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (used in Table 14) also showed that the ESL teacher participant did not appear to adhere to the textbook during the videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL context. That is to say, this New Zealand ESL teacher participant taught ESL without ever referring to the content of the textbook and without ever holding the textbook in her hands during the three lessons (180 minutes) randomly investigated in the present study.

From Table 14 above, it can be seen that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere to the textbook during the three videotaped lessons in the present research. That is to say, the New Zealand ESL teacher did not systematically teach the contents of the textbook one by one in class. The Table shows that the teaching content in this New Zealand ESL investigated classroom, writing skills and intonation of Videotaped Lesson I and II, were not based in the textbook. In Videotaped Lesson III, however, the data revealed that after explaining the importance of intonation, the teacher adapted the text of Chapter Two of the textbook, *How to buy a house*, to practise intonation rather than explaining it word by word. She first rewrote the text as a play and then asked her students to practise it as a role play with appropriate intonation. The latitude of the New Zealand ESL teacher participant in terms of how the textbook might be used will be described later in this section.

#### **6.4.2 Data from SRIs and interviews**

This finding was fully supported by the data drawn from the stimulated recall interview in the present study. With respect to the use of textbooks, the data showed that the ESL teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context stated that,

We have same textbooks for the three Level Five classes... I, I feel is that the textbook, it is my personal opinion, is a barrier between me and the students. So if, if I use the textbook, I often put it to the side beside, not always... Being such a headache but put it to the side, on that side table. And then I'm talking to them directly. We're not going through the textbook. I cover the knowledge.

[NZE, SRI3, p. 2]

The ESL teacher mentioned that she actually had a textbook (*Quest*) but she often put it aside rather than holding it in her hands and she preferred to use the textbook by way of covering the knowledge of the textbook instead of adhering to it slavishly, because she regarded a textbook as a barrier between her and her students. Later, she added that,

... but I normally cover it in a way that, because, as you can see there the students know quite a bit in that book already, so especially our students, they already know a lot. We work through textbooks we'll often pick things, when you would make a course, the textbook is often but grammar based, you know, or vocabulary based..., and we usually create courses that are skills based so in fact we cannot use the textbook exactly. So the textbook is used for the grammar and so on, we can refer to it. We can present it and then we transfer it immediately to a skills exercise. So with the higher levels anyway. With the lower levels, no, we won't do like that. Because they cannot do a lot transference as much. They, they do to a small extent, not as much. They, they have to get the language in there first.

[NZE, SRI3, p. 2]

Obviously, the New Zealand ESL teacher thought that students with different levels should be taught by different or various means. According to her opinions, it was good to teach students with lower English levels by sticking to the textbook but better to teach students with higher English levels without the textbook. She did the latter by covering the knowledge of the textbook, such as picking or referring to it or presenting it or transferring it immediately to a skills exercise. Because she viewed textbooks is normally edited as grammar-based or vocabulary-based, she usually created or adapted her lessons as skill-based for her students with higher levels. That is why during the Videotaped Lesson III she rewrote the grammar-based or vocabulary-based text as a skill-based role play in order to provide her ESL students' opportunities to practise their intonation which she thought very important. Then, during the SRI, she also explained the flexibility she had to use the textbook in New Zealand.

As a teacher, we are given creation or freedom to decide how we're going to get our students to prepare for their essay. Each teacher would teach slightly differently because... perhaps we discuss this, teachers too, we feel that each teacher has his/her own, perhaps... let me see..., some are better teaching grammar, some are better on vocabulary and so on. So... as the students go through, they got everything like I teach everything. My particular love is teaching writing. Perhaps my students would get more writing exercises than the other Level Five classes. The other Level Five classes may get a little bit more vocabulary if they are in someone else class...

I don't know how the other teachers, but I think for, for us teachers we are very aware the need for us to have own create our lessons as well within the systems.

[NZT, SRI3, p. 2]

As for the latitude in relation to how to use textbooks, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant commented during the SRI that a teacher within the New Zealand education system was given more freedom and flexibility to decide how to use a textbook and how and what to teach their students, and different teachers might focus on different aspects of language knowledge or language skills with the same textbook. This New Zealand ESL teacher participant said that she taught everything but loved teaching writing more than teaching other language skills.

The ESL teacher participant also mentioned the limitations of using a textbook.

Hmm..., if you have a textbook, then you don't need to create your own course out your head all the time. The textbook normally have some kind of progression on tenses, or grammar, or something like that, or progression on one way... Like, maybe like today we learnt paraphrasing and then maybe summary and so on, so you get the different skills practised. So it is easy to use the textbook so that the students have something to refer to, and at the back of the book there are lists of the irregular verbs and the vocabulary and so on, they can do that. But we don't seem to even though we have one, but we don't seem to focus on it completely. It just gives us the theme and the base.

[NZT, SRI3, p. 3]

The limitation of a textbook, according to this New Zealand ESL teacher's view, is that it might block teachers' creativity to develop their own teaching methods. She also pointed out that a textbook should be used efficiently and creatively as the theme or as the basis for a lesson. The New Zealand ESL teacher participant's view on the use of textbooks was also echoed by her Chinese ESL student participants in this research. They revealed that they had textbooks but their New Zealand ESL teacher seldom used it.

Yes, we have textbooks, but they [teachers] seldom explain a text sentence by sentence.

[NZS3, Int1, p. 3]

Don't you find that 90% we spent in class here in New Zealand School was irrelevant to the text. You can study the text at your own time instead of doing it at your precious class time.

[NZS10, Int3, p. 4]

Some teachers play around different teaching methods with a central focus on the textbook, but they seldom read the textbook.

[NZS12, Int3, p. 5]

However, teachers here also give us some explanation, yeah, some explanation.

[NZS4, Int1, p. 3]

The teachers here [in New Zealand] explain definitely not in such details [as the teacher in the Chinese EFL context did].

[NZS3, Int1, p. 3]

In summary, the findings above from different data collection techniques (questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, the SRIs and interviews) revealed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook but used it creatively as a reference or as a theme or as a basis so as to enable her to complement her teaching plans within the New Zealand education system and help her students to develop communicative competence during their study in New Zealand.

## **6.5 Student modalities**

This section addresses Research Question 2d, to what extent were the four student modalities covered in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context and how did EFL



and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts view them? In this section, student modalities, as mentioned in Section 2.3.4, refer to the four language communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The data below, which were derived from four data sources, but mainly from questionnaires and the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, showed how the coverage of these four modalities ranged and whether these modalities appeared in isolation or in combination in an ESL New Zealand tertiary classroom.

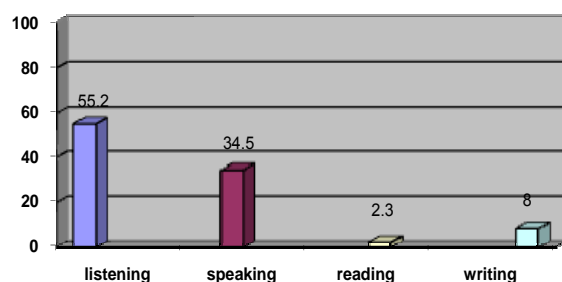
### **6.5.1 Data from questionnaires**

The data drawn from questionnaires of this study in the New Zealand participating institute revealed that the New Zealand ESL teachers and their Chinese ESL students believed that the four language abilities of speaking, listening, reading and writing were often covered in the ESL classroom so as to train students' language ability to use English for communication. As for speaking, all the New Zealand ESL teacher participants (3/3) stated that they always provided their students with opportunities to practise their spoken English in class in order to improve their English communicative ability. 13 out of 16 of their Chinese ESL student participants (81.25%) agreed with this view and two (12.5%) of them indicated that this opportunity was provided sometimes but only one Chinese ESL student (6.25%) thought it was seldom provided.

### **6.5.2 Data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme**

This finding above drawn from questionnaires partly matched the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme data from the three videotaped lessons in the New Zealand participating institute. There showed that within the *Student modality* domain listening was coded for 55.2 percent, speaking for 34.5 percent of the coded time, reading for 2.3 percent, and writing for 8 percent of the total corpus of 180 minutes coded at the same time (see details in Figure 14 below).

**Figure 14: Total percentage of time (180 minutes) spent on student modality by class**



### 6.5.3 Data from SRIs and interviews

The data obtained from the stimulated recall interview showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant believed that she taught her ESL students everything [NZT, SRI3, p. 2]. In response to the question asked by the researcher after watching the lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, “Do you think the Chinese ESL students had enough opportunities to practise in this class”, some Chinese EFL students gave a positive answer.

I think so.

[CNS3, Int1, p. 3]

Yes, they did...

[CNS4, Int1, p. 3]

Unfortunately, there were no comments from the Chinese EFL teacher participant and the New Zealand Chinese ESL student participants on student modality in the New Zealand ESL context. The findings revealed that student modality focused first on listening (55.2%), speaking (34.5%), then writing (8%) and reading (2.3%). This illuminated that the English language teaching and learning in the New Zealand ESL context was more teacher-centred (listening 55.2%) than student-centred but also with much practice on speaking (34.5%). This aspect of teaching in the New Zealand ESL context will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

## **6.6 Error correction**

This section addresses Research Question 2e, how error correction was conducted in the classroom and how teachers and students viewed error correction in their classroom teaching? The ways of correcting learners' grammatical errors on language acquisition and the Chinese ESL students' and their ESL teacher's perspectives on error correction are investigated in a tertiary classroom in the New Zealand ESL context. As in Chapter 5, the findings which derive from questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews on error correction can be categorized into four themes: importance, timing (immediately and delayed), manner (implicit and explicit) and whether the error correction focuses on accuracy or fluency. This section also describes the participants' perspectives on the importance of these aspects of error correction of the Chinese ESL students' speech.

### **6.6.1 Importance of error correction**

With respect to the importance of error correction, the data from questionnaires showed that all of the Chinese ESL student participants believed that it was important for their teachers to be able to correct their grammar errors and their three New Zealand ESL teacher participants agreed with them. Among those Chinese ESL students, the majority (14 out of 16, 87.5%) indicated that it was very important for their teachers to correct their grammar errors in their oral speech. In addition, most of the Chinese ESL student participants thought that their teachers should correct all grammatical errors made by them, otherwise it would result in imperfect teaching. However, this opinion was not supported by their New Zealand ESL teacher participants. Two disagreed that they should correct all grammatical errors made by their ESL students, and one strongly disagreed.

The questionnaire result from the New Zealand ESL teacher participants on error correction was fully echoed by the data from the SRI with the key ESL teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context. She commented that,

Yes, I try to but I don't always. It depends like, if, if they're making mistakes on what I am teaching I have to point them out. If a minor error is out, I might let it go because we just focus on a particular skill...

[Nzt, SRI2, p. 9]

The data showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not correct all the errors made by her ESL students. She normally ignored small errors but corrected major mistakes or mistakes her ESL students made relating to her teaching content. This ESL teacher's comment on how she dealt with error correction was confirmed by one of her Chinese ESL students.

My teacher would not correct my grammar errors, but the teacher in the IELTS class would do so.

[Nzs10, SRI3, p. 7]

That is to say, his teacher (the New Zealand ESL teacher participant) would not correct his grammar errors but the other teachers who were in charge of the IELTS class would do. Another Chinese student agreed with him with the comment that a different teacher might focus on different aspects of correction.

Some teachers may pay attention to our details, others may pay attention to the structure of our essays, and some may focus on both. Different teachers focus on different areas.

[Nzs8, SRI2, p. 5]

However, the data in the present study revealed that the actual expectations from the Chinese ESL students of their ESL teacher on the issue of error correction were completely different. In response to the researcher's question during the SRI, "Do you expect, generally speaking, your teacher to correct all the errors you make during your speech or in your writing?" all of the Chinese ESL students said they did.

Of course. This is the best.

[Nzss, SRI2, p. 5]

Yeah, we do, no matter how big or small an error is, because we are foreigners.

[NZS8, SRI2, p. 5]

All Chinese ESL student participants during the SRI expressed that it was best for their ESL teachers to correct all errors made by them during their speech because they expected to speak beautiful English as English native speakers do. This difference in opinions will be discussed in Chapter Seven. In addition, one Chinese ESL student participant recalled her unsatisfactory learning experience with error correction in New Zealand during the SRI in the present study.

Before one of my previous teachers highlighted my errors but never corrected them. She told me now I was wrong, such as wrong words or grammar mistakes, wrong preposition etc., but she didn't give me the correct answers. So I didn't know how to correct them because I made the mistakes myself. Had I known the correct answer, I wouldn't have made the mistakes. When she didn't correct, I'd be rather painful.

[NZS6, SRI2, p. 5]

This Chinese ESL student complained that her disappointing learning experience related to error correction with one of her former ESL teachers in New Zealand, who only picked up on her errors, but without telling her the right answers, which was more important to the Chinese ESL students. During the SRI she expressed that she was frustrated at that time because she did not know how to correct errors made by her if her teachers did not give her the correct answer. This finding on ways of error correction conducted in the New Zealand ESL context will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

### **6.6.2 Timing of error correction**

With respect to timing of error correction, the data from the SRI revealed that nearly all of the Chinese ESL student participants commented that they expected their teachers to correct their errors soon after they finished their speech. In response to the researcher's question, "What would you like your teacher to do with your errors,

correcting it immediately or after you finish your speech?” all the Chinese ESL student participants said,

After speech.

[NZSs, SRI1, p. 6]

Obviously, all Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context preferred to finish their oral speech without interruption by their teacher’s error correction. Reasons for this timing of error correction will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

### **6.6.3 Manner of error correction**

There were two approaches when conducting error correction in this study, explicit and implicit, mentioned in Chapter Five (Section 5.6.3). Some examples of these types of error correction in the New Zealand ESL context are presented as follows.

When the researcher asked the Chinese ESL student participants whether they preferred their errors corrected explicitly or implicitly, one of the ESL student participants pointed out that he preferred his errors to be corrected implicitly.

I prefer the implicit way.

[NZS15, Int3, p. 10]

Then, he explained further his reason for preferring the implicit way of conducting error correction. He commented during an interview that,

I would appreciate if she [his teacher] allowed me to identify the mistake by myself. Therefore, I will understand this grammar more deeply, and won’t make the same mistake again.

[NZS15, Int3, p. 10]

He said that the implicit way would give him an opportunity to diagnose his errors himself which would give him a deep impression of his errors so that he might not make the same errors again. However, another Chinese ESL student in the New Zealand ESL context held a different preference on types of error correction.

I prefer they [teachers] give me the correction explicitly. It's ok for me for just rectifying my mistakes. There's no need for repeating my mistakes. I will bear in mind the correct one, so please don't let the mistake confuse me twice.

[NZS12, Int3, p. 10]

She commented that she expected her oral mistakes to be corrected in an explicit manner because she preferred to have the correct one in her mind rather than be bothered by repeating mistakes. Interestingly, the data also indicated that there was one Chinese ESL student who had no preference between explicit and implicit error correction. He stated during an interview that,

I'm indifferent between these two options [explicit and implicit].

[NZS13, Int3, p. 10]

In summary, the data above showed that different Chinese ESL students might prefer different ways of error correction during their speech and different approaches might benefit them as well. For example, some believed that the implicit way of error correction would provide them opportunities to diagnose and rectify their own errors themselves, but some saw the explicit manner of error correction as always providing them with correct usages so that they would be able to retain them in their minds and not make the same mistakes again. These findings suggest that different approaches to error correction in the New Zealand ESL context might benefit Chinese students' English learning and this will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

#### **6.6.4 Focus on accuracy or fluency**

The data from questionnaires on accuracy and fluency showed that one teacher agreed and two disagreed that “the language teaching should focus more on fluency than accuracy”.

The Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context were no more concerned with formal accuracy than functional fluency, just as the Chinese EFL students in the Chinese EFL context were, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven. On the question of language teaching focusing more on fluency than accuracy, the data from questionnaires showed that the Chinese ESL student participants had a much stronger negative reaction. Half of the student participants (8/16, 50%) disagreed with the idea that language teaching should focus more on fluency than accuracy, and a further 25% were uncertain. However, it is interesting to note that among the three teacher participants in the New Zealand ESL context, there was only one teacher who agreed that fluency was more important than accuracy and the other two were in agreement with the group of negative students.

In response to the question, “Does your teacher pay more attention to your accuracy or fluency or both when you speak?”, one of the Chinese ESL students answered both [NZS11, SRI3, p. 6], and the rest of them agreed by outward consent (nodding their heads).

In summary, the data in this section showed that both the ESL teacher participant and her Chinese ESL student participants commented that it was very important for teachers to be able to correct errors made by their students during their speech. The data also indicated that most of the Chinese ESL student participants in this study expected their ESL teachers to make efforts to correct all errors made by them, even a tiny one, otherwise it would lead to imperfect teaching and learning. However, this opinion was disagreed with by all New Zealand ESL teacher participants. As for the timing of error correction, all the Chinese ESL students preferred their errors to be corrected after they finished speaking. However, the data revealed that different Chinese ESL students had different opinions on the manner of error correction. Some expected an implicit approach; some preferred an explicit approach and some had no



view either way. All of the Chinese ESL student participants indicated that during the group stimulated recall interview in this study their teacher focused on both accuracy and fluency. These findings on error correction will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

## **6.7 Classroom tasks**

This section addresses Research Question 2f, what were classroom tasks used in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context and how were they perceived by EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in the two contexts? Thus, views on appropriateness and the effectiveness of classroom tasks will be investigated in the New Zealand ESL context. The data drawn from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, SRIs and interviews on classroom tasks in the New Zealand ESL context will be summarised by focusing on the following four classroom tasks: standing on one leg, describing an imaginary picture of Fiji, drawing a palm tree, and role play of intonation, which were selected randomly from the three videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL context. This section also objectively describes the participants' perspectives on appropriateness and effectiveness of all these classroom tasks and whether they were viewed as meeting Chinese students' learning needs with respect to their linguistic competence and their preferred classroom tasks. The data obtained from the SRI and interviews from the Chinese participants, such as the Chinese EFL teacher and the Chinese EFL and ESL students in these two contexts were in Chinese and have been translated into English.

In order to develop students' communicative abilities in English, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant (NZT) in this study tried to design and conduct many classroom tasks for her ESL students. Four of those classroom tasks conducted in the New Zealand ESL context will be presented or described below.

### **6.7.1 Task of standing on one leg**

This section reveals a task conducted in the New Zealand classroom context, the task of standing on one leg. The purpose of this task was to help students remember what a balanced essay looked like. According to the opinion of the key teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context, who designed the four tasks, novel-designed tasks can make students remember knowledge easily. In order to let her ESL students understand the idea of balance and how to write a balanced essay, the key ESL teacher participant asked a Chinese ESL student to come to the front of the classroom and to stand on one leg. When she watched this task of “standing on one leg” on the videotape during the stimulated recall interview, she recalled that,

If you say something like “make sure that all of your paragraphs are equal length”, they will go yeah, yeah, yeah, because they’ve heard it one hundred times. But if you bring someone up the front, make them stand on one leg, it could be crazy, but then they might remember... But actually when he stood on one leg, he was so beautifully balanced. Absolutely amazing ... So I think he... they saw the idea of balance.

[NZT, SRI1, pp. 3-4]

The ESL teacher participant commented that the purpose of designing this task was to help students to understand what a balanced essay was. She indicated that while it might seem crazy to conduct this task in the classroom, it worked in ensuring that her ESL students had a better understanding of the idea of balance than normal lecturing could achieve. Such a view was supported completely by her Chinese ESL student participants who experienced this lesson as well.

This activity is very novel.

[NZS7, SRI2, p. 1]

This would be more vivid so that it would be easier, be easier to remember... So later we can write better and balanced essays whenever we think of the task of “standing on one leg”.

[NZS2, SRI1, p. 2]

During the stimulated recall interview, many ESL students commented that this task of “standing on one leg” was novel and vivid and made it easier for them to understand the idea of a balanced essay. They said, therefore, that they could write essays better and balanced whenever they thought of this task of “standing on one leg”. This supports the idea that a well-designed task would make it easier for students to remember new knowledge.

These opinions on the task of standing on one leg from the New Zealand ESL teacher and her Chinese ESL student participants above were also fully echoed by the Chinese teacher participant and her EFL students in the Chinese EFL context. When they watched the lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, they said that,

It is very good example. Her teaching approach was very good, I think... and very lively.

[CNT, Int1, p. 1]

This activity is very vivid.

[CNS7, Int2, p. 1]

This method is very novel and gives students a deep impression. The students in this class, I feel, did get excited about it.

[CNS6, Int2, p. 1]

Both the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL student participants in the Chinese EFL context thought that such methods were lively and novel, and could make a deep impression on students. They believed these sorts of teaching approaches were very good and would stimulate the ESL students who experienced them. Thus the perspectives on the task above from both the ESL teacher and her Chinese ESL students who experienced the lesson together aligned. Therefore, it can be concluded

that the purpose for the New Zealand ESL teacher participant in designing these tasks was achieved. That is to say, to a large extent, there was an alignment between the stated teacher's objective and students' perceptions of the classroom task. It can be concluded that the teacher and student participants in both ESL and EFL contexts had a positive view on this task of standing on one leg.

### **6.7.2 Describing an imaginary picture of Fiji**

This section discusses the task of "describing an imaginary picture of Fiji". The main purpose of this task was to try to develop students' imagination. One of the videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL context showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant tried her best to develop her students' imagination by means of authentic communicative tasks. During the SRI, she said that she herself was a visual person and liked to use metaphors in class.

I think for me again because I'm a visual person myself and I like to use metaphors or tasks because I think the students can relate visually to them.

[NZT, SRI1, p. 3]

The New Zealand ESL teacher participant believed that metaphor based or visual tasks had a function in scaffolding her ESL students to think and to relate visually to their prior knowledge. A good example adopted by this ESL teacher in the New Zealand ESL context was a teacher-conducted task called "describing an imaginary picture of Fiji" videotaped in the present study. During this task, the teacher pretended to hold a picture of Fiji, but in fact she held nothing in her hands. Then she asked her students to describe this imaginary picture of Fiji. None of her students had been to Fiji. Therefore, the students tried to describe Fiji, not on the basis of actual knowledge, but from their imagination, relying on their prior knowledge of Pacific islands as well as their limited vocabulary in the target language. During the SRI, the ESL teacher recalled that she was satisfied with this task because "it worked well" [NZT, SRI1, p. 2]. There was support from her Chinese ESL student participants who experienced this lesson. In response to the researcher's question "Which is better, with a picture of Fiji or without a picture of Fiji?", for instance, one Chinese ESL student commented that,

Of course, it is better without a picture in her hands, it can make us think. If she'd held a real picture of Fiji, we didn't need to think about it.

[NZS1, SRI1, p. 3]

This Chinese ESL student believed that it would be better to describe Fiji without a picture than with a picture in her teacher's hands because it could make them think or imagine without a picture, otherwise a picture of Fiji would limit their thinking or their imagination. An EFL teacher participant from the Chinese EFL context also supported such a view. She commented that,

...It is kind of using one's imagination... Though there is no picture of Fiji, maybe they could develop your ability of using its vocabulary. With a picture, they could not achieve it. The average people would describe things in a picture and no more. Without a picture, they could use their knowledge and imagination to describe typical plants and buildings on an island.

[CNT, Int1, p. 3]

The Chinese EFL teacher believed that this task of describing an imaginary picture of Fiji could develop students' ability to use their knowledge and their imagination. All the Chinese EFL student participants from the Chinese EFL context, who watched the New Zealand videotaped lesson, also agreed that,

Without a picture is better than with a picture.

[CNSs, Int1, p. 2]

One of them expressed some reasons for it.

I think ... that a real picture would limit the students' imagination. Now the teacher [in New Zealand] broke this limitation and allowed the students to give full rein to their imagination.

[CNS2, Int1, p. 2]

Thus, this activity was perceived positively by the Chinese ESL and EFL tertiary students in the Chinese and New Zealand context as a well-designed task which could develop students' knowledge and imagination. This was largely aligned with the ESL teacher participant's stated purpose and will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

### **6.7.3. Role play (intonation)**

The task of role play on intonation is discussed in this section. The purpose of this task was for students to practice their intonation, which was very important in their spoken English. The data in the present study revealed that Chinese ESL student participants in New Zealand held a positive view of the task of role play, which they thought was interesting and enjoyable. During the stimulated recall interview the New Zealand ESL teacher participant recalled a role play activity she had created,

I wrote the play from the book... that was just my own particular desire for them to practise their intonation... because, intonation is extremely, extremely important in spoken English.

[NZT, SRI3, p. 1]

The ESL teacher mentioned that intonation was not included in the textbook but was her own particular aim for her ESL students to learn about information because she believed that intonation was very important to her ESL students (see Section 6.3). Then she adapted a role play task from a text of the textbook, *Quest* (see Section 6.4). The ESL teacher hoped that this task would help her ESL students to practise their intonation. From the videotaped lesson, it was clear that every student in this participating class was assigned a role in the play and was asked to play the role in front of the classroom with appropriate intonation and rich feeling. While watching this role play task from the videotaped lesson, many Chinese ESL students who experienced this lesson expressed a positive view on this task.

I think the role-play was more interesting

[NZS13, SRI3, p. 2]

At that time, I just played in a real situation as an actor does. I did it with rich feelings, and the character of an actor is supposed to have.

[Nzs12, Sri3, p. 9]

The Chinese ESL students regarded the role play of intonation as an interesting and enjoyable task. The data also indicated that the EFL teacher participant in the Chinese EFL context commented positively on the role play task when she watched the lesson videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context.

I think it is a good exercise. Because the Chinese students are not native speakers, it is a good exercise for them to practise their intonation. Most of the Chinese students are too shy to behave as native speakers do. It is beneficial to them to practise more in the classroom and to get used to it. In class, the teacher is as active as the students. Generally speaking, the knowledge learned from interaction leave deeper impressions to learners.

[CNT, Int3, p. 3]

I think their intonation would not be improved a lot but should be improved to some extent. In the least, the students now know how to use different intonations to express different emotions so that listeners can understand your meanings through your intonations. We cannot express our anger with a calm voice. I just think their teaching approach was very good and effective.

[CNT, Int3, p. 4]

The Chinese EFL teacher commented that this role play was a very good task which could improve the intonation of Chinese students, non-English-native speakers, and at the least, could provide a deep impression by making them know how to use different intonations to express different emotions. These Chinese EFL teacher views on the role play on intonation were fully echoed by her Chinese EFL students who also viewed the videotaped lessons from the New Zealand ESL context. All of them considered the task of role play on intonation was a good one.

A good task. Students could practise and master to express their different feelings under changing situations through different intonation.

[CNS12, Int3, p. 2]

The design in this way may provide students more opportunities to practise their intonation, and was also pretty creative.

[CNS13, Int3, p. 2]

During an interview, the Chinese EFL students indicated that the thought that this role play was good and creative, could provide students with more opportunities to practise their intonation and could enable them to express their feelings with different intonations. It is interesting to note that one Chinese ESL student participant in the New Zealand ESL context mentioned that role play, especially with a focus on intonation, was quite difficult for them but they did it for the purpose of pleasing their New Zealand ESL teacher.

I think it is quite difficult to do role-play, especially on intonation. However, we did it purposively to please our teacher.

[NZS14, SRI3, p. 3]

The important view of pleasing teachers was fully shared by another Chinese ESL student.

Yes, to please our teacher. If our teacher is happy, we would be happy. If our teacher gives us higher mark, we would be even happier. If our teacher lets us pass Level 7 [the top level of English in the language school], we would say “congratulations”.

[NZS11, SRI3, p. 3]

The Chinese ESL student mentioned that she tried to please her ESL teacher for herself interest by doing the role play because she thought that a happy teacher would give her a higher score or even let her pass Level 7 tests (the top level of English in her language institute), which meant that she could study in a New Zealand university (See Appendix XIV). Another Chinese student showed her high respect for the



authority of her teacher. She indicated that no matter what her teacher taught it must be good for them.

... Anything the teacher does must be good for us.

[NZS13, SRI3, p. 3]

In sum, this task was generally viewed positively by all ESL and EFL teacher and student participants in these two contexts. There was also evidence from some Chinese ESL students' comments regarding their respect for the authority of their ESL teacher in the New Zealand ESL context.

#### **6.7.4 Drawing a palm tree**

This section explores the task of “drawing a palm tree” conducted in the ESL New Zealand context. The purpose of this task was to encourage students to focus on the lesson. The data from the SRIs and interviews showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant believed that an activity might have the function of sufficiently scaffolding students during new knowledge acquisition as well as when making students focus on lesson content. In relation to this, during a stimulated recall interview, she recalled that

I need to try as hard as I can to encourage urgently the students to engage in class in order to... so I gave a few activities to try to force them to do that...

[NZE, SRI1, p. 2]

Therefore, this New Zealand ESL teacher tried to focus her students on her lesson's content by undertaking the task of “drawing a palm tree”. A videotaped lesson showed that the ESL students were asked to draw a palm tree on a piece of paper given by her. This drawing activity lasted up to 10 minutes of the videotaped lesson (60 minutes in total). When she watched the videotaped task of “drawing a palm tree” designed by her, she commented that,

If they draw, then they're bringing back into the lesson... and they're more prepared to do the next bit.

[NZT, SRI1, p. 7]

The teacher's stated expectation of the task of "drawing a palm tree" then was to try to focus her students' attention on her lecture and to scaffold her students' learning for the next new knowledge acquisition for this session. However, most of the Chinese ESL students who experienced this lesson did not appreciate their teacher's intention. That is to say, they did not respond to this kind of drawing task in the way in which their New Zealand ESL teacher expected. For example, when viewing the videotaped class, at the beginning of the class, as did other Chinese ESL students, one of the Chinese ESL students mentioned that she did not know her New Zealand ESL teacher's purpose in having her draw a palm tree.

At the very beginning, I had no idea about the reason for drawing a palm tree.

[NZS2, SRI1, p. 3]

Another Chinese ESL student participant echoed during the stimulated recall that,

I focused on the activity but I didn't focus on what the teacher said.

[NZS1, SRI1, p. 7]

This ESL student recalled that this drawing activity did not help her to focus on the lesson as her ESL teacher expected. During the SRI, she recalled that she concentrated on this drawing task completely so that she could not hear what her ESL teacher taught in class. Their views above were supported by another Chinese ESL student participant who also experienced this lesson in the New Zealand ESL context. When she watched the videotaped lesson, she said that,

I spent more than 10 minutes admiring my own drawing and when I paid attention to the session again, I realize I'd missed the teaching points... In fact, we were all so focused on drawing pictures that we forgot what she said because it was such an interesting activity. This task may distract students sometimes [from the lesson].

[NZS3, SRI1, p. 7]

She recalled that this interesting activity was so attractive that it took her from the lesson rather than bringing her back into the lesson as her New Zealand ESL teacher expected.

These comments above show that the New Zealand ESL teacher thought she was doing one thing but her Chinese ESL students responded to the task in a different way. Although the teacher aimed to bring students back into the lesson, this kind of task actually took students' minds away from the lesson.

The data from the SRIs and interviews in the present study also indicated that some participants believed that this task of drawing a palm tree was designed inappropriately. Most of the participants indicated that this task seemed inappropriate to adult ESL classrooms because they seemed to suit children but not adult students. For example, the EFL teacher participant from the Chinese EFL context who viewed videotapes of the New Zealand ESL context pointed out that the task “might not be really necessary” and it was “not so helpful” for adult students at an intermediate level of proficiency. She felt that such tasks were not appropriate for adult students. She mentioned that she had the feeling “that the teacher seemed to be teaching children but not adult students” [CNT, Int1, p. 1]. She added that,

According to my opinion, this is too easy for some of the students in this class who graduated from universities in China or in Russia, I think so. This kind of knowledge has been taught to them in the university. And they have been taught from many years from primary schools to secondary schools.

[CNT, Int1, p. 2]

It is interesting to see that this view was also supported by some of the Chinese ESL student participants who experienced this lesson. They also regarded this task as not appropriate to them, as adult students. Amongst them was NZS1 who commented as below,

It is not so effective to teach us in this way... because we are mature... It is not so useful to us, but it would be very useful to teach primary students.

[NZS1, SRI1, p. 4]

Another Chinese ESL student participant from the New Zealand ESL context also thought that this kind of classroom task was “a bit childish” [NZS3, SRI1, p. 4]. Furthermore, another student participant agreed by saying that,

It is a little bit childish to people of our age group... I think, to people in our age, or a person with a basic education background, we don't need to be engaged in learning in the way primary school pupils do.

[NZS4, SRI1, p. 5]

From the participants' comments above, it is clear that some New Zealand ESL student participants and the Chinese EFL teacher participant felt that the New Zealand ESL teacher seemed to be teaching children but not adult students because this task seemed appropriate for children but not for adult students. In fact, the data also showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher had been a primary teacher before.

... And I was a primary school teacher, you see, I started, I am primary trained.

[NZT, SRI2, p. 7]

In summary, the results of this study revealed that the Chinese students in the ESL New Zealand setting held positive views on some English language classroom activities used in the New Zealand language school, such as standing on one leg, describing an imaginary picture of Fiji and the role play of intonation. They preferred interesting and novel activities which could provide them with a deep impression and make new knowledge easier for them to remember. Some tasks enabled students to develop their imagination. From the perspective of language development, some tasks conducted in the New Zealand ESL context provided the students with opportunities to use the English language for true communicative purposes. The qualitative data showed that all participants from both contexts believed that well-designed tasks in the classroom could develop students' communicative ability.

However, the participants also commented that some classroom activities, e.g., the task of drawing a palm tree, were not highly relevant in relation to their level of

maturity, age inappropriateness, which might be because the ESL teacher had been a primary teacher before. The qualitative data also revealed that the views of New Zealand ESL student participants on certain classroom tasks did not coincide with their teacher's objectives for them, by suggesting that these tasks had little effect. As a result, the New Zealand ESL teacher's objective on certain tasks would not have been achieved during the process of real practice of English language teaching and learning.

This study shows that many comments above made by the Chinese ESL tertiary students reflect the teacher-centred and explicit teaching approach they had been used to in China, which led them to be distracted from the class in New Zealand by some classroom activities (e.g. drawing a palm tree), all of which indicate apparent differences between New Zealand and Chinese teaching approaches that will be discussed in the next chapter. These comments may be indicative of the differences between CLT which is implicit and student-centred and GMT which is explicit and teacher-centred. However, there were no comments from the participants in the Chinese EFL context on this task. The findings also showed that the Chinese ESL students showed high respect for the authority of their ESL teacher and tried to please their teacher by unquestioning submission to their teacher's teaching plans, which will also be discussed in Chapter Seven.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

According to the findings, tertiary English language classroom practice in the New Zealand ESL context could generally be regarded as CLT, e.g. student-centred, meaning-focused, form-focused, competence-orientated, which is summed up briefly as follows in terms of six key issues: instructional approach, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modality, error correction and classroom tasks. The findings above from the present study revealed that the instructional approach in the New Zealand participating classroom could be generally viewed as a student-centred communicative teaching approach. However, to some extent, it was somewhat more teacher-centred than expected. Both the New Zealand ESL teacher and most of her Chinese ESL student participants commented that group work had played an important

role in developing ESL students' language ability. However, some Chinese ESL students believed that some group work conducted in the New Zealand ESL context was not appropriate to their learning ability. As for language pedagogy (see Section 6.3), the findings in this study indicated that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant was aware of the importance of teaching grammar, and the lecturing in the New Zealand ESL context tended to be Focus-on-Form, that is students' attention is drawn to linguistic knowledge as it arises incidentally in the context of communication (Long & Crookes, 1991; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). From the researcher's non-participating classroom observation and various perspectives from all participants in these two contexts, this study also showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook. Instead, she used it creatively and flexibly as a reference or as a theme according to her teaching plans in order to develop her students' language communicative competence (see Section 6.4). The data on student modality in the New Zealand ESL context showed that listening practice occurrence more than speaking, writing and reading (see Section 6.5), and three lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context seemed to be a little bit more teacher-dominated than expected.

There is considerable overlap between the views of students and teachers in these two contexts about error correction conducted in the classroom in the New Zealand ESL context. The data indicate that all the participants in the New Zealand ESL context commented that grammar was very important and it was important for teachers to be able to correct errors made by their students (see section 6.6). Most of the Chinese ESL students in the present study even expected that all their errors be corrected by their teachers; otherwise it would impact negatively on learning. All the New Zealand ESL teachers and their Chinese ESL student participants preferred error correction that was undertaken after speech so as to ensure a student presenter could implement his/her speech without interruption. As for the manner of error correction, the study revealed that different Chinese ESL students had different preferences; some expected an implicit way, some an explicit way and some were indifferent. The data in this study also indicated that the New Zealand ESL teacher paid attention to both the accuracy and fluency of her students' speech in the classroom.

With respect to classroom tasks, the findings showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant considered that she was a visual person and liked to make an effort to develop her students' communicative competence by means of various classroom tasks for authentic communication (see Section 6.7). Taken as a whole, the findings in the present study showed that all the participants in the Chinese EFL context and Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context had both positive and negative perspectives on the ESL New Zealand teacher's classroom tasks, and there was a considerable overlap between the two groups. They all believed that well-designed tasks can enable the development of a student's language communicative competence and they admitted that most classroom tasks conducted in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context were interesting, vivid, and novel. They were also considered helpful to students' language learning and could make knowledge easier to remember, give students a deep impression and offer full rein to their imaginations. However, the responses also revealed that one classroom task conducted in the New Zealand ESL context was viewed as age-inappropriate and a waste of time and even distracted students from lessons. It is also interesting to see from the data that the Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context also respected and submitted to their teachers by not questioning their teachers' teaching plans and teaching methodology.

All these issues of classroom practice in the both contexts, China and New Zealand, will be analysed, compared and discussed in terms of the wider picture of theorizing and generalizing the Research Questions of this study in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the following four research questions:

1. What similarities and differences were there between tertiary English language classroom practice in the classroom of the two contexts: China and New Zealand?
2. In respect of EFL in China, what teaching approaches were used?
  - 2a. To what extent was GTM being used in the Chinese EFL context?
  - 2b. To what extent was CLT being used in the Chinese EFL context?
  - 2c. To what extent was TBLT being used in the Chinese EFL context?
3. In respect of ESL in New Zealand, what teaching approaches were used?
  - 3a. To what extent was CLT being used in the New Zealand ESL context?
  - 3b. To what extent was TBLT being used in the New Zealand ESL context?
4. What were the effects of language contexts on classroom teaching practice in these EFL and ESL contexts?

In this chapter, the above questions concerning English classroom practice in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts are addressed in relation to the data presented in Chapter 5 and 6. It is based on the findings of the present study obtained from these two contexts via the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme and through questionnaires, SRIs and interviews with both ESL and EFL teachers and their Chinese ESL and EFL students who experienced or viewed these classroom practice in these two contexts. This chapter explores tertiary classroom practice in these two contexts and its theoretical and pedagogical implications. The chapter situates the English language teaching and learning experienced or viewed by teachers and students in these two



contexts in light of the theoretical discussion by focusing on the question: what does the data in the present study tell us in relation to the theoretical framework developed in this thesis? Firstly, an overview of similarities and differences between English language teaching and learning in these two contexts will be presented. Secondly, an analysis of the use of GTM, CLT and TBLT in the two contexts will be presented. And thirdly, a discussion of the importance of a context in language teaching will be addressed. Lastly, knowledge of the similarities and differences of classroom practice in both Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts, and ways in which these findings will help EFL/ESL teachers, will be examined.

## **7.2 The similarities and differences in tertiary English classroom practice in the two contexts**

In this section, a summary of the results of the present study is given firstly. Then, in relation to Research Question 1, five broad dimensions relating to tertiary classroom practice are explored in terms of the similarities and differences in tertiary English classroom practice in the two contexts: instructional approaches in the two contexts, language pedagogies in the two contexts, use of textbooks in the two contexts, student modalities and classroom tasks in the two contexts.

### **7.2.1 ELT in the two contexts**

The classroom practice in the two contexts is summarized in Table 15 below. The data in this table were generated from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme used in the present study.

**Table 15: Summary of the main classroom practice in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts**

Classroom Practice		China	New Zealand
Instructional Approaches	Teacher-centred	75%	56%
	Student-centred	8%	44%
	Group work	0%	23.9%
	Pair work	12.5%	8.9%
	Individual work	12.5%	11.2%
Language Pedagogies	FonFS	70.8%	46%
	FonM	3.4%	28.9%
	FonF	25.8%	16.7%
Use of textbooks		85%	5% (rewritten)
Student modalities	Listening	74%	55.2%
	Speaking	20%	34.5%
	Reading	5%	2.3%
	Writing	1%	8%
Some Classroom tasks (investigated)		Taking-notes	Standing on one leg
		Reading a text aloud	Role play
		Student lecturing	Describing an imaginary picture
			Drawing a palm tree

Table 15 above provides us with the summary of the main classroom practice in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. Generally speaking, the classroom practice in the Chinese EFL context can still be regarded as GTM, that is, it is teacher-centred, textbook-focused and formS-focused, following the traditional GTM, with a large

amount of lecturing on linguistic knowledge like grammar, vocabulary, sentence structures, translation practice and so on. It was found in this study that classroom tasks used in the Chinese EFL context were still typically Chinese-style traditional ones with mechanical repetition, such as, reading a text aloud, dictation, taking-notes and so on. There was no group work in the Chinese EFL context.

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) was introduced to the Chinese English education field in the 1980s. Since then, the English syllabus, the teaching objectives and the teaching materials have been re-edited by the Ministry of Education in China a couple of times in order to enhance students' communicative competence (Hu, 2002b). However, the research suggests that English language teaching, to some extent, is still teacher-centred and forms-focused in China. This may be the case in Asia more generally (Hu, 2005a; Nunan, 2003; Pham, 2005; Phan, 2004; Sakui, 2004). It appears that China has not embraced CLT in the way that many researchers expected, when they advocated that 'CLT is the best for China' (Liao, 2004). There are many reasons for this (as discussed in Section 3.4.4), such as the deep influence of the traditional Chinese culture of education (Cortazzi, 1999; Hu, 2002b), the long-history domination of the traditional GTM in ELT in China (Hu, 2003b), the special EFL context, the constraints of CLT and CLT itself (Liao, 2002).

The results of this study show that the significant influence of GTM can still be seen in a classroom of the Intensive Reading Course (IRC) in China. As a centrally-controlled educational system, not only the teaching objectives and the teaching materials but also the teaching methodology in China have been specified by the government (Liao, 2004). The data from this research show that there is still a wide gap between policy on CLT and the classroom realities of the specific context examined. This finding concurs with many researchers' findings (Hu, 2005a; Liao, 2004; Nunan, 2003; Phan, 2004). For example, English language teaching in the Chinese EFL context examined in this study was still teacher-centred in the classroom, even though CLT is required by the government and has influenced every level and aspect of English language teaching and learning in China. It is evident that Chinese ELT is still being greatly influenced by the Chinese traditional culture of education (see Sections 3.2, 7.2.5).

The present study shows that tertiary English language teaching and learning in the New Zealand ESL context can be generally deemed as CLT as a whole, that is it is student-centred, meaning-focused and competence-orientated. The ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook, and group work was often used in the New Zealand ESL context so as to develop students' communicative competence. Some vivid and interesting classroom tasks were conducted in the ESL classroom, such as, standing on one leg, describing an imaginary picture and role play. However, it is interesting to see in this study (see Table 15) that the classroom practice in the ESL context was more teacher-centred than student-centred in terms of instructional approaches, which will be discussed further in the following section.

### **7.2.2 Instructional approaches in the two contexts**

This section will compare some issues in relation to classroom practice in the two contexts in the present study associated with teacher-centred and student-centred instructions, and group work and pair work in the specific contexts examined in this study.

The data in this study indicate that the participating Chinese EFL key teacher spent 75 percent of three classes lecturing or interacting exclusively with the whole class or individual students during the fieldwork of this study (see Section 5.3). All Chinese participating EFL teachers in this research, to some extent, are still knowledge-givers, dominating the whole classroom and displaying their knowledge for most of the time in class. As in Hu's study (2002b) and in keeping with the cultural context which was discussed earlier, it is likely that Chinese tertiary EFL teachers in this study tried their best to present knowledge to students as much as possible because they would like to be regarded by the public and students as qualified teachers.

Teaching methods "can influence students directly through focused, teacher-directed instruction or influence them indirectly by actively involving them in their own learning" (Moore, 2005, p. 141). One of the main features to distinguish whether the English language teaching methodology adopted is GTM or CLT is the instructional approach used (teacher-centred and student-centred). GTM is more teacher-centred,

“more traditional or didactic, with students acquiring knowledge by listening to the teacher, by reading a textbook, or both” (Moore, 2005, p. 141); and CLT is student-centred, encouraging learners “to participate actively in their own learning experiences” (Moore, 2005, p. 141). Interestingly, the data reported above (see Table 15) indicated that the instructional approach in both of the EFL and ESL contexts was more teacher-centred; with teacher talk usually taking up most of the class time.

It is not surprising that the Chinese EFL context focuses on teacher-centred instruction because GTM is still generally dominant in the English language classroom in China (Hu, 2003b; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002), reflecting the traditional Chinese approach to foreign language teaching (Hu, 2002b; Yu, 1984). It is, however, generally believed that ESL contexts use student-centred more than teacher-centred instruction. This current study showed that there was a higher proportion of student-centred instruction in the ESL setting in New Zealand than in the EFL setting in China. However, teacher-centred instruction was still dominant (56%) in the New Zealand ESL setting (see Table 15).

Language instruction in the ESL context that is predominantly teacher-centred instruction is not hitherto addressed in the literature. However, the current study shows English being taught with a teacher-centred rather than student-centred instructional approach in the New Zealand ESL context in which CLT has been the norm, albeit with the obvious caveat that this is only one classroom context. The data drawn from this study also provided different opinions from the ESL and EFL teachers and Chinese ESL and EFL student participants in terms of the instructional approach in the New Zealand ESL context.

As mentioned in Section 6.2, the data from questionnaires showed that there was a discrepancy between the Chinese ESL students and their New Zealand ESL teacher opinions on lecturing in the New Zealand ESL context, that is, more than half of the Chinese ESL students deemed that their ESL teachers often lectured in the class, while all the three New Zealand ESL teacher participants held a negative view on this issue and thought they lectured rarely or occasionally. The result obtained from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme supported the opinions of the Chinese ESL students; however, it was quite different from the views of their New Zealand ESL teachers

drawn from questionnaires. The possible reason for this discrepancy is because, according to these New Zealand ESL teachers' knowledge and experiences, lecturing, one of the typical features of GTM which dominates in an EFL context was in marked contrast to the purpose of the CLT teaching program in the New Zealand ESL context. These New Zealand ESL teachers were educated, trained, and required to use the CLT approach with student-centred instruction in their ESL teaching practice.

During the stimulated recall interview in this study, the New Zealand key ESL teacher participant mentioned that the ESL program in her language institute in New Zealand was designed as student-centred instruction. Her ESL classroom practice would regularly be inspected by her institute manager to make sure it was student-centred. She explained that the purpose of doing so was to investigate whether international ESL students could take responsibility for doing much of their work independently in the ESL language classroom in the language institute. The findings of this research, however, did not match with the purpose of the New Zealand ESL teaching program administered by the participating institute.

In the stimulated recall interview in this study, the New Zealand ESL key teacher participant admitted that her class was sometimes teacher-centred, which was consistent with the findings from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme above in this present research (see Table 15). She pointed out during the SRI that her colleagues would also regard her teaching method as teacher-centred when they observed her actual lessons in the New Zealand ESL context. The findings from the SRI showed that her colleagues who shared the same ESL teaching knowledge and background also thought that her class was more teacher-centred than student-centred. She commented that she would normally use a student-centred approach and let her students give feedback and practise themselves. This ESL teacher participant explained that the reason why her class was on occasion teacher-centred rather than student-centred was that some students failed to follow what she taught. As a result, she had to stop and read to them, and explained to them. She also pointed out that it was necessary for classroom practice to be teacher-controlled or teacher-centred at certain times, to allow for an explanation of vocabulary or grammar of language knowledge when her students had difficulties in understanding her. It is clear that this

New Zealand ESL teacher had a strong awareness of the ESL students' language level and comprehension ability in her ESL class.

However, her views on her teacher-centred lessons in the New Zealand ESL context were not shared by the participants in this study who shared the Chinese EFL background: the Chinese EFL teacher and Chinese EFL and ESL student participants. According to their standard of the teacher-centred approach, or compared with the teacher-oriented or teacher-centred ELT in China, both the Chinese EFL teacher participant and Chinese EFL and ESL student participants felt that ELT in the New Zealand ESL context, to some extent, was still on the whole more student-oriented or student-centred.

The findings in this study indicated that after watching the lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, most of the Chinese EFL student participants reported that they preferred a teacher-centred instructional approach rather than student-centred one when learning a text. They thought the teacher-centred approach could help them to understand a text better and more comprehensively. Only five of 104 Chinese EFL students and two of 16 Chinese ESL students felt bored when English was taught by way of lecturing.

According to Moore's view (2005), the two approaches of teacher-centred and student-centred are both "equally effective in bringing about learning". It is the lesson objectives that "may determine what type of approach is more appropriate" (Burden & Byrd, 2003, p. 213). The New Zealand ESL teacher participant commented on this with an English proverb, "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water" during the stimulated recall interview in this study. She mentioned that when some Chinese ESL students came to New Zealand they might think that they had studied enough grammar and vocabulary in their home country and they did not want to learn them any more. However, this ESL teacher participant did not agree with this opinion. During the stimulated recall interview in this study she pointed out that grammar and vocabulary were both very important and necessary and played a significant role in language education, which should be acknowledged by both ESL teachers and ESL students. She admitted that she was well aware of the function of language knowledge in developing students' communicative competence in the process of language teaching

and learning, which was consistent with the findings from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Table 15) of her lessons examined in this study. She also emphasized that international ESL students needed to learn grammar and vocabulary if they really wanted to speak good English.

The account above suggested that both student-centred and teacher-centred instructional approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages in English language teaching and learning contexts. More responses on how to take good advantages of these two instructional approaches were heard from the New Zealand ESL context.

One of the Chinese ESL student participants indicated that some explanation of grammar was necessary, which was better suited to teacher-centred instruction, while student-centred instruction was appropriate for students to undertake communicative practice. Then he took an English past participle as an example. He said that there was not a past participle in the Chinese language and an English past participle could come in many different functions according to its context. For instance, it could be used as an adjective, but could also indicate the nature of a verb and help to build different tenses in English sentences, such as present perfect tense, past perfect tense, future present perfect tense, present perfect continuing tense and so on. He pointed out that such complicated grammar could be taught well and clearly by a Chinese EFL teacher with the teacher-centred instruction in a class. That is to say, in this instance, teacher-centred instruction was good teaching instruction and should be adopted for grammar teaching because some explanation on grammar in the English classroom was necessary due to the complexity of English language and the differences between English and Chinese.

Having had English learning experiences in both EFL and ESL contexts, China and New Zealand, all Chinese ESL student participants considered that Chinese EFL teachers might be more adaptable in grammar teaching because they were educated and trained in this way and they could build up students' vocabularies and help students to understand English grammar better than New Zealand ESL teachers. They thought that speaking should rather be taken up by Western ESL teachers who were good at teaching oral English with the student-centred instruction.



As for group work, this was frequently used in the New Zealand ESL context. Both the New Zealand ESL teacher and most of her Chinese ESL students believed that group work was an effective way for students to take responsibility for learning English independently. However, some other Chinese ESL student participants thought that group work was a waste of time and one suggested that it would be better if group work could be limited to 15 minutes in class in the New Zealand ESL context.

Table 15 above showed that there was no group work in the EFL classroom in the Chinese EFL context. There are some constraints to its implementation. One of the constraints on group work is the classroom setting. In the stimulated recall interview, the Chinese EFL key teacher participant pointed out that all desks and chairs in the Chinese language classroom were fixed as in other subjects' classrooms, row by row facing the teacher and the front blackboard, which made Chinese teachers' teaching approaches difficult to change. She commented that this kind of classroom setting in China also limited Chinese teachers' ability to organize group activities in the way the New Zealand ESL teacher did.

Some Chinese ESL students gave further comments on the classroom setting in China. They thought that the purpose of arranging the classroom in this way was to confirm or to strengthen the teacher's authority in the class by creating a distance between teachers and students. This kind of classroom arrangement represents a traditional and formal Chinese classroom setting, which confirms the teacher's role and students' role by means of making '*the power-distance*' between a teacher and students in such a classroom setting, and reinforces the authority of a teacher in the classroom as reflected in the traditional Chinese traditional culture of education. This is idealized as "a hierarchical but harmonious relation" like that of son to father (Hu, 2002b, p. 98), in line with the famous saying that goes, "*being a teacher for only one day entitles one to lifelong respect from the students that befits his father*" (yi ri wei shi zhong sheng wei fu, □□□□□□□□). Students are required to respect their teacher and take on the responsibility of obeying the teacher by sitting quietly in the classroom as knowledge-receivers while teachers act as knowledge-givers (see Section 3.3.1).

In this study, three quarters of Chinese ESL and EFL student participants talked about their attitudes to the authority of teachers. Teachers in Chinese society are considered authorities and superior. Students are taught to respect, obey, listen, and follow their teachers' instruction and not to challenge them (Salili, 1996). One of the Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context expressed his attitude to the teacher's authority and wanted to please the teacher by trying to do something which was beyond his ability. For example, during the SRI, he commented that he found it quite difficult to do role play, especially intonation, but he tried to do it purposively to please his New Zealand ESL teacher. Another Chinese ESL student participant responded that she would be happy if her teacher was happy about her study and she would be even happier if her teacher gave her higher mark or let her pass the Level 7 of the Language Institute (see Appendix XIV). These remarks suggest reasons why Chinese students tended to show more respect to their teachers.

Actually, the role of a teacher and that of a student is very clear-cut in China. It is impossible to rearrange the classroom setting for conducting group work in class. There are four reasons for having the classroom setting this way. Firstly, schools or universities in China normally consider English courses as courses in which knowledge is imparted as in other subjects, such as maths, chemistry and so on. Secondly, schools or universities fail to recognize the special requirements of the classroom setting for English courses when they design the classroom setting. Thirdly, a majority of Chinese English teachers are accustomed to the formal classroom setting which also matches the traditional teaching methodology of GTM. Another possible constraint is the size of the English class. The language class size in the Chinese EFL context is normally bigger than any language classes in the New Zealand ESL context, usually with 30 to 60 students in a class. It is difficult or, impossible to organize or conduct group work in such a big class. That is why the percentage of time spent on group work as an instructional approach is zero in the Chinese EFL context of this study (Table 15).

With respect to pair work conducted in the Chinese EFL context, most Chinese EFL student participants commented that it was a good activity but some argued that it was uninteresting but necessary for developing their communicative competence. The reason for this is because pair work conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom is

generally a kind of exercise, modelled on a dialogue from the textbook, and there is not sufficient self-expression or self-development involved. Some students, then, would rather study by themselves than do pair-work. However, this current research also found that there were some Chinese EFL student participants who did not like pair work activities and considered it as being not much help, but they thought it was necessary for them to have pair work in order to practise English.

In fact, this response might be viewed as the result of the Chinese traditional culture of education. From the perspective of Chinese traditional culture, when Chinese children are very young (maybe 2 or 3 years old), they are normally taught to acquire knowledge which should be learned instead of what they are interested in, owing to high expectations from parents and high competition in the Chinese job market. There is a famous saying in China, “wang zi cheng long, wang nv cheng feng” (□□□□□□ □□) which means that all Chinese parents expect and dream that some day their daughters will be a phoenix (the queen of all birds in the Chinese culture) and that some day their sons would be a dragon (the king of all animals in the Chinese culture). Consequently, nearly all Chinese children work very hard in schools or universities, especially at subjects which they are not interested in, in order to achieve academically and thus to be useful people to the society, “to glorify their ancestry” (guang zong yao zu, □□□□), and to bring pride to their family (Hu, 2002b; Lee, 1996; Salili, 1996). The reason that these Chinese EFL student participants regarded pair work as a necessary task for them, even though they disliked it, might simply have been because they believed that they could obtain communicative ability through this uninteresting activity of pair work, which was one of few limited activities for them to practise English in the Chinese EFL classroom.

### **7.2.3 Language pedagogies in the two contexts**

This study indicates that language pedagogy was one of the major differences in classroom practice between the two contexts, China and New Zealand. The data generated from the three Chinese videotaped lessons through the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme in this study (see Table 15) showed that grammar was very important in the Chinese EFL context and nearly 71% of class time was spent on

forms or linguistic knowledge. That is to say, language pedagogy in the Chinese EFL context was Focus on FormS (FonFS) rather than Focus on Meaning (FonM). The videotaped sessions involved in this study indicated that the Chinese EFL teacher participant focused on imparting knowledge on forms or grammar or vocabulary, such as use of words, tenses, passive or active, sentence structures, sentence meanings and so on. This result is consistent with the remark from the New Zealand ESL teacher participant after watching the videotaped lessons in the Chinese EFL context. She pointed out during an interview that the Chinese English lessons examined in this study focused more on linguistic elements. One of main reasons for FonFS in the Chinese EFL context was that, as a centrally controlled country, the teaching objectives and the teaching materials of the Intensive Reading Course investigated in this study were specially designed by the Chinese Ministry of Education to focus not only on the four communicative skills but also on linguistic competence.

Many researchers (Celce-Murcia et al., 1998; Ellis, 2002, 2003; Fotos, 2005) suggest that communicative ability in the target language can be promoted by both grammar explanation and communicative activities, allowing for practice of grammar structures and vocabulary. Grammar knowledge is regarded as being very important to English language teaching and learning, especially in EFL contexts, and it can help students to develop English proficiency “when they receive a greater portion of their instruction directly from the teacher” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p.135). Notably, the teaching objectives and the teaching materials in China were designed to suit the special Chinese EFL context in terms of theoretical and practical perspectives on language teaching and learning. This was also fully understood and accepted by the Chinese EFL teacher and her Chinese EFL students involved in this study.

One of the Chinese EFL student participants pointed out during the stimulated recall interview that grammar could improve their English proficiency level. She explained that it was because of the large difference between Chinese and English in grammar and sentence structure. She added that Chinese students might speak English in the Chinese order, which was Chinglish if they did not learn English grammar. Another Chinese EFL student even expressed the view that he expected his teacher to explain every word and every language point in a text.

The findings of the present study revealed, however, that 12 out of 16 Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context were disappointed to find very few such explanations of language knowledge in the New Zealand ESL classroom, which was based mainly on a CLT approach. Some of them even thought that they had learned ‘very little’ or ‘almost nothing’ from the New Zealand ESL classroom (see the details in Chapter 6).

An analysis of the data in this study showed that the three New Zealand ESL teachers, while teaching in a communicative language teaching approach context, were aware of the importance of grammar for the development of ESL students’ communicative competence and paid attention to formS (grammar) (Ellis et al., 2002) in a similar way to Chinese EFL teachers. In SRI, the New Zealand ESL key teacher participant commented that grammar teaching was important and necessary because their ESL students needed to know English grammar and vocabulary so that they could speak good English. A positive voice on grammar teaching also came from the other ESL teacher participant in the New Zealand ESL context. He believed that grammar teaching was essential in developing ESL students’ communicative competence and pointed out that it was important for them, ESL teachers, to teach international ESL students’ linguistic elements, such as grammar and vocabulary so as to assist them to get their communicative competence of speaking English to a proficient level. This is consistent with the literature that communicative competence should include linguistic competence as well (Brown, 2001; Littlewood, 2004; Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

However, after watching the lessons videotaped in the New Zealand ESL context, the Chinese EFL teacher participant pointed out that those English lessons did not focus on formS but rather focused on meaning. She pointed this out because the New Zealand ESL teacher did not teach grammar systematically. In her opinion, teaching grammar systematically was needed to if it was to be regarded as focusing on formS. Obviously, there was a considerable discrepancy between the New Zealand ESL teacher and the Chinese EFL teacher on language pedagogy in this respect.

This study showed that the Chinese EFL teacher and most of the Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in these two contexts shared an appreciation of the

importance and necessity of teaching aspects of language use, such as intonation, as was done by the New Zealand ESL key teacher participant. As stated earlier, most of Chinese EFL and ESL student participants wanted to learn grammar because they thought grammar played an important role in their language learning process. However, it is interesting to note that not everyone held the same opinion. There were also a few negative comments on Focus on FormS from some Chinese student participants from both contexts, who had obviously been influenced by Western education. They regarded grammar as not so important and did not want to learn grammar because of its being “boring” and “useless” and also because the rules were difficult to remember.

It was suggested by the Chinese EFL key teacher participant during an interview that it might be better to teach students linguistic points occurring incidentally during their practice of oral English, otherwise it would be very boring and not easy for students to remember many grammar rules in one lesson. This suggestion from the Chinese EFL teacher is in line with theories of TBLT and Focus-on-Form: grammar should be learned during the process of language practice (Ellis et al., 1999; Ellis et al., 2002; Long, 1991; Long & Crookes, 1991; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). According to Long (1991), this is the only way to draw students’ attention to linguistic forms in the process of communicative language use and thus to improve the development of their English language.

The data from audio-video recording and SRIs and interviews in this study indicated that both Focus-on-FormS and Focus-on-Meaning were emphasized during English conversation in the Chinese EFL and the New Zealand ESL classrooms, though the latter supposedly uses Focus-on-Form instruction (see Section 2.3.2). The findings also reveal that Focus-on-Form instruction, to varying extents, occurs in English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context as well as in the New Zealand EFL context.

#### **7.2.4 Use of textbooks in the two contexts**

This study reports that one major difference between these two contexts was the use of textbooks. The findings in this study from different data collection techniques (questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, the SRIs and interviews) revealed that, as with Hu's study, the Chinese EFL participating teacher had a "close adherence to the prescribed textbooks" (Hu, 2003b, p. 297) and like Coombs's study, "always made the fullest possible use of the textbook" as "an invaluable teaching aid" (Coombs, 1995, p. 34), by following the text sentence by sentence. In contrast, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook but used it creatively as a reference or as a theme or as a basis so as to enable her to complement her teaching plans within the New Zealand education system (see Table 15).

The results of this study show that the Chinese EFL teacher participant and nearly all of her student EFL participants had no complaints about textbooks specially designed by the Chinese government and they were all satisfied with their teaching textbooks for various reasons. Firstly, they believed that the English textbooks were well organized and designed and they covered the four language skills. Secondly, textbooks in China had authority among teachers and students in the Chinese EFL context, and were one of two major sources (teachers and textbooks) of English input to Chinese EFL students. Thirdly, textbooks were the only resource that Chinese EFL students could use to learn English by means of previewing and reviewing after class because there is no language context in China for Chinese EFL students to practise their English. This result is similar to the findings of Kettemann, discussed earlier, that an English textbook in China is very important and "satisfied the language learning needs of the Chinese learners" (1997, p. 192). From my 25-years of experience of English teaching and learning in China, I believe that it is helpful to have a textbook for teachers to teach with or for students to learn with. However, there still remains an authenticity issue with respect to textbooks, although this has been improved a lot as the government is becoming aware of it. Textbooks are "crucial to the quality of ELT in the Chinese EFL context" (p. 38) and can be regarded as "the foundation stone on which the teaching of a subject is based" (Coombs, 1995, p. 36). Finally, textbooks have played an important role in the Chinese English language teaching with the text-oriented examination educational system (Hu, 2003b; Liao, 2004).

With respect to the authority of textbooks in China, interestingly, one of the Chinese EFL student participants further emphasized that she had never thought about this kind of questions as to whether a textbook was good or not. This response reflected the Chinese culture of education in which textbooks are widely used in all the subjects from primary schools to universities. Chinese people have been accustomed to them and never think to question the authority of textbooks used in China. This view is typical of many Chinese EFL students and their EFL teachers, who always regarded the national textbooks as authoritative ones. The high value associated with textbooks by both the Chinese EFL teacher and Chinese EFL students could also be derived from the Chinese epistemological view, that is:

knowledge is believed to reside in the teacher-expert and authority-textbook. Teachers use textbooks as a source to prepare lessons, organize classroom activities, systematically transmit the knowledge, and assess students' learning outcomes. For students, textbooks are an inseparable part of their learning. The teacher's main task is to transfer knowledge mainly from textbooks to students, while acting as a moral and intellectual model.

(Li, 2002, p. 11)

A course program would be thought to be poorly organized if it started without a textbook. Besides using the authorized textbook, the Chinese EFL teacher also said that she needed to find some reference materials herself on the cultural background of the target language and other related items for her EFL students in order to broaden their knowledge and increase their related vocabulary.

However, some negative voices on the use of textbooks in the Chinese EFL context were heard from the New Zealand ESL context. Both the New Zealand ESL teacher participant and her ESL Chinese student participants argued that the Chinese English EFL teaching style in the Chinese EFL context was over-reliant on textbooks, which were regarded by them as being boring and as the traditional Chinese way of language teaching.

As for use of textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context, during an interview one Chinese ESL student participant commented that the content of 90% of the teaching



time he spent in class in the New Zealand language school was not related to the text. This remark is consistent with the findings of this study that textbooks were seldom used in the New Zealand ESL context (see Table 15). It is also consistent with Li's (2004) research with Chinese ESL students in New Zealand, which showed that "textbooks were used in some classes but most classes did not use any textbooks". However, it was found that Chinese ESL students in the present study had different views on the use of textbooks from Li's research results. According to Li's survey (2004), "most Asian students felt frustrated because their teachers rejected using any decent textbooks which, in their view, might enhance their learning" and many Chinese ESL students "liked to have a reputable textbook which they could preview and review at home" (p. 9). The Chinese ESL student participants in Li's study argued that "to them learning was impossible without a textbook" (Li, 2004, p. 9).

However, it was interesting to find in the present study that there was a positive opinion on the use of textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context, which was quite different from that expressed in Li's study (2004). During an interview, one of the Chinese ESL student participants said that he preferred the way of using textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context because he thought that he would like to study textbooks after or before class at home, a Chinese traditional way of learning (see Section 3.3.2), and would like to learn more knowledge beyond textbooks from their ESL teachers during his precious class time. One reason for this is that textbooks in the New Zealand ESL context were not as important as ones in the Chinese EFL context and would not be tested on by teachers or schools or the country. What the Chinese ESL students were examined on in the International English Language Test System (IELTS) was their comprehensive competence in four English language skills, through which they could enter universities in New Zealand. That is why the Chinese ESL students preferred to learn as much as they could from teachers in class and from textbooks after class.

#### **7.2.5 Student modalities in the two contexts**

This section discusses how student modalities, the four communicative skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing were covered in both EFL and ESL contexts in the present study.

Table 15 above showed that student modalities in the Chinese EFL context were more teacher-centred than in the New Zealand ESL context. The findings revealed that the Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context were given more opportunities to practise English in the class than the Chinese EFL students in the Chinese EFL context. This study indicated that the EFL learning in the Chinese EFL context was receptive learning, with listening for 74 percent, speaking for 20 percent, reading for 5 percent and writing for 1 percent of the coded time of the three videotaped lessons in the Chinese EFL context. The data from this study showed that the ESL learning was more productive than in the Chinese EFL context, with listening for 55.2 percent, speaking for 34.5 percent, reading for 2.3 percent and writing for 8 percent in the New Zealand ESL context.

However, there were some differences among the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, questionnaires, SRIs and interview findings on student modality in the Chinese EFL context. The qualitative data from questionnaires and SRIs and interviews revealed that the majority of the Chinese EFL student participants believed that their Chinese EFL teachers gave them many opportunities to practise English in the English language classroom. There were some reasons for this mismatch of data on student modality in the Chinese EFL context. One of main reasons might be due to the small sample of this research, for example, randomly selecting three lessons to be examined in each context, but taking them as a part of a wider picture for theorizing and generalizing on the whole question of student modality. This is one of the limitations of this study which will be discussed in Section 7.5 below. The other reason might be that all the videotaped lessons examined in the Chinese EFL context were incidentally focusing on teacher-centred instruction and Focus-on-FormS. The quantitative data drawn from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Table 15) focused on the three lessons videotaped in the Chinese EFL context, while the qualitative data generated from questionnaires, SRIs and interviews expressed the

opinions held by the Chinese EFL students on the general English language teaching and learning in their Chinese EFL classroom.

This study showed that the finding from three data collection techniques, questionnaires, SRIs and interviews, partly matched the finding from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme data from the three videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL participating institute (see Table 15). This result revealed that the ESL teaching in the New Zealand ESL context was surprisingly more teacher-centred (Focus-on-FormS) (see Section 7.2.2) but also focused more on speaking (Focus-on-Meaning). In the stimulated recall interview, all the Chinese ESL students reported that their ESL teachers gave them sufficient opportunities to speak in English in the New Zealand ESL classroom.

#### **7.2.6 Classroom tasks in the two contexts**

This section will compare some classroom tasks examined in the two contexts, highlighting the tasks of standing on one leg, describing an imaginary picture of Fiji, role play of intonation and drawing a palm tree, which were selected randomly from the videotaped lessons in the New Zealand ESL context, and focusing on the tasks of taking-notes, reading a text aloud and student lectures in the Chinese EFL context (Table 15). The tasks were chosen from the Chinese classroom because they were regarded by the researcher as typically representative of language classroom activities in the Chinese EFL context. All the classroom tasks discussed here were chosen based on the researcher's teaching and learning experiences in ESL and EFL classrooms. It is acknowledged that another researcher might not choose the same tasks.

As has been mentioned preciously, this study shows that classroom tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL context were generally mechanical repetition and typical of the time-honoured grammar-translation method (Hu, 2002b; Yu, 1984), for example, reading a text aloud, reciting and translating, which may be appropriate for the EFL context, like the Chinese EFL context, but would not be appropriate for an ESL context, such as the New Zealand ESL context. There was little evidence of CLT classroom activities,

such as playing games and role-play, in the Chinese tertiary participating classes. Liao (2002) suggests that this is because Chinese English teachers would be criticized as lazy and unqualified if they did not present their knowledge in class or if they played games with students or asked students to play roles in class. It is worth noting that the Chinese ESL student participants who shared the same Chinese English education background with the Chinese EFL students now had significantly different opinions on tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL context after they studied English, albeit for a short time, in a western English-speaking country, New Zealand. One of this present study's purposes is to enable the different opinions on classroom tasks to be voiced from different participant groups in the different contexts.

It was evident that the task of note-taking in the Chinese EFL setting was extremely common. Chinese students are trained for the ability to take notes in class when they are in primary schools. According to the traditional Chinese culture of learning, “*a shorter pencil is better than good memory*” (zai hao de ji yi bu ru yi ge lan bi tou, 一寸长一寸强). That is to say taking lots of notes even with a short pencil can last much longer than a good memory. It is very common in China for students to take notes while they listen to lectures in the classroom of all kinds of subjects. It is the same for students majoring in English in China. Various opinions on the task of note-taking from all data sources are presented here.

The data revealed that all EFL teachers and most of their Chinese EFL student participants believed that note-taking was very important in their English language learning. One of the Chinese EFL teachers mentioned, during the stimulated recall interview, that she was concerned more about whether her EFL students took notes of everything she mentioned in her lessons or not, but not about where they took notes on, for example, on notebooks or on textbooks. She explained that her EFL students could review what she had taught later from their notes taken in class.

Note-taking is helpful to Chinese EFL students in preparing for tests in the Chinese educational system. The current study's findings concurred with Hu's findings (2003b) that all Chinese EFL students were very attentive to what the teacher said in class, and always took notes of the teacher's explanations of vocabulary and grammar points which would be examined by the teacher or a school or the Chinese government. It is

clear that the note-taking task is a product of the Chinese examination system. In fact, most of the tests are specially designed to check whether students have mastered the language knowledge a teacher lectures on or not. In order to pass examinations, all Chinese EFL students have to be trained to take notes in class for different kinds of subjects when they are young. English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context, however, is actually knowledge and skill-based (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2005a) at different stages. The task of note-taking is also a product of teacher-centred instruction. Therefore, the use of the note-taking task will decrease when the English lesson shifts from lecturing to classroom activities or from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach.

The data from the study was in agreement with the literature that the task of reading a text aloud is a typical Chinese-styled task for English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context. Similar to Hu's study (2003b) of regional differences in ELT in China, in the participating class examined in this study, the Chinese EFL students were often asked to read aloud texts and dialogues in their textbooks in the Chinese EFL classroom. One of the most important reasons for this task of reading a text aloud in the classroom, as mentioned in the literature (see Section 3.2.6), is the Chinese traditional educational philosophy, which can be traced back to the Confucius' exhortation, "*by reviewing the old, one learns the new*" (wen gu zhi xin, 温故知新). This means that students may obtain, through constant reading of a text aloud, a fuller understanding of what they have already learned. It becomes newly acquired knowledge to them (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). Actually, repetition is also viewed as an important element for successful learning, because it is believed from the Chinese saying, "*read one hundred times, and the meaning will emerge*" (shu du bai bian qi yi zi xian, 书读百遍其义自现). Therefore, students can obtain full comprehension of texts that they do not understand by reading repeatedly. Other reasons for conducting this task mentioned by the Chinese EFL teacher participant included that students could refresh their memory and could recall the previous lessons and that this would be the basis for introducing new knowledge.

Comments from the Chinese EFL students who viewed the videotaped lessons echoed their Chinese EFL teacher's objectives for the task of reading a text aloud. They pointed out that it was necessary and useful for them to read a text aloud once to

review what they had learned and to introduce the new knowledge they were going to learn. Clearly, we can see a close match between comments that the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL students made on this classroom task. That is to say, the teacher's stated objective and her students' perceptions on this classroom task were closely aligned.

By contrast, the Chinese ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context who also had an English education background in the Chinese EFL context but were now exposed to Western educational system did not seem to share the same view of the task of reading a text aloud as the Chinese EFL participants in the Chinese EFL context. Their responses to this task appeared to be more negative than positive. One of the Chinese ESL students deemed it as a kind of task that was typical of a traditional Chinese teaching style. They expressed that this task seemed childish and useless, and that it was never used in the New Zealand tertiary ESL classrooms. It is clear from this that Western educational perspectives had influenced the Chinese ESL students' views even though they had only been exposed to it for less than a year, and some less than half a year.

While the tasks of taking notes and reading a text aloud are traditional Chinese classroom tasks, Hu (2003) reports that more and more Chinese EFL teachers have increased their awareness of students' communicative needs and tried to design, create and organize activities (e.g. student-centred tasks) to increase students' exposure to the target language. In this study it was found that the task of student lecturing frequently experienced by the Chinese EFL students in the Chinese EFL context was an example of such a task. Actually, the task of student lecturing is "an individual performance in front of the class" (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). According to Hu (2003b), this instructional practice, which was frequently experienced by students in the Chinese EFL context, "reflected an embryonic interest in teaching English communicatively" and it was "a meaningful communication in English" (p. 297). Moreover, this was an example where Chinese students "were often encouraged and given an opportunity to communicate ideas and opinions in English in the practice stage of a lesson" (Hu, 2003b, p. 297). As Hu points out, it is very important and necessary for English teachers to adopt appropriate language games/activities resembling real-world tasks to

create interactive contexts for practising both language knowledge and skills to meet the special Chinese EFL context.

This study found that both the Chinese EFL teacher and all of her EFL students commented that Chinese EFL students could benefit a lot from this task of the student lecture, for example obtaining teaching experience for being a teacher in the future, developing the ability to communicate, and cultivating self-confidence. On the one hand, it seems that this task is Focus-on-Meaning instruction, practising oral English; on the other hand, the focus of student lecturing is Focus-on-FormS instruction, which was consistent with the positive perspectives of the New Zealand ESL teacher participant in the SRI. The New Zealand ESL teacher stated that the student lecturing task was really a CLT one, Focus-on-Meaning, and was quite different from the rest of the tasks in the Chinese EFL classroom she observed. However, the New Zealand ESL teacher participant also argued that the way the student gave the lecture was still predominantly teacher-centred and Focus-on-FormS instruction. That is to say, the teaching method this Chinese EFL student adopted was not dissimilar to the grammar-translation method of her Chinese EFL teacher. The task they were given was asking them to use English language in a CLT approach. To some extent, this kind of task can be regarded as a good example of an eclectic combination of GTM and CLT. Possibilities for the future of English language teaching in China can be seen in this task. English teachers of the next generation in China might be seen to inherit the same teaching approach as their teachers do now, GTM with the general teaching objectives of focusing on the all-round four skills of communicative ability, with an eclectic combination of grammar instruction and the use of communicative activities, providing an optimum situation for effective EFL learning (Fotos, 2005).

With respect to the New Zealand second language acquisition teaching context, the results of this present study revealed that Chinese ESL students held positive views on some classroom tasks conducted in the New Zealand ESL setting, such as standing on one leg, describing an imaginary picture and role play of intonation. They preferred interesting and novel activities which impressed them deeply and make new knowledge easier for them to remember. The Chinese ESL tertiary student participants perceived that some tasks, like describing an imaginary picture, were well-designed and could enable students to develop their imagination. From the perspective of

language development, some tasks conducted in the New Zealand ESL context provided the Chinese ESL students with opportunities to use English language for true communicative purposes.

Picturing someone on one leg might be a reminder of balance but it certainly would not give a student any strategies to develop such balance. Actually, there were three IRC classes every morning in the New Zealand ESL context. However, only one of three classes in the morning was randomly chosen and videotaped and interviewed each time. The New Zealand ESL teacher explained during the SRI that during the other two classes on that morning some strategies to develop the balance of an essay were presented by her and she also let her ESL students practice these.

The qualitative data in this study revealed that all EFL and ESL teacher and Chinese EFL and ESL student participants from the two contexts believed that well-designed tasks in the classroom could develop students' communicative ability. The findings also revealed that the Chinese ESL students showed high respect for the authority of their teacher and pleased their teacher by unquestioning submission to their teacher's teaching plans. The Chinese ESL students thought a number of classroom tasks in the New Zealand ESL context very helpful, something not found in previous studies (Li, 2004; McLeod, 2003; Quirke, 2002).

However, this study also indicated that while not rejecting the advantages of group work and activities, the participants, especially Chinese ESL student participants, expressed their dissatisfaction with some tasks conducted in the New Zealand ESL context. Some Chinese ESL student participants commented that some ESL classroom activities were not highly relevant in relation to their level of maturity and/or were age inappropriate. For example, some New Zealand Chinese ESL student participants who experienced these lessons felt that some activities, like the task of drawing a palm tree for ten minutes in class, seemed a bit childish and a waste of time. During the stimulated recall interview, one of the Chinese ESL student participants stated that it was a waste of class time to engage in too many games like the task of drawing a palm tree, which might make the pace of a lesson slow. She pointed out that they had wasted a lot of time in conducting tasks like this one.



This remark was shared with the Chinese EFL student participants and their EFL key teacher participant from China. These findings matched the reported views of the Chinese ESL participants in Li's study (2004) in New Zealand with respect to this issue, "learning at the school boring because [ESL] teachers were not serious with their teaching... spend too much time involving students in group work, discussions, debates, and games... that had nothing to do with language learning and the IELTS," and they "found the 'game-loving' teaching approach a waste of time and money" (p. 8).

This Chinese ESL student also outlined her reason why some tasks seemed to be inappropriate to them, Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context. She considered that people in her age group and with a basic education background should receive normal education, like learning language knowledge rather than playing games like drawing a picture in class. She indicated that as one grew older, one's attention span in class also increased. Therefore, she thought that it was unnecessary for her ESL teacher to use a task of drawing a palm tree to draw the students' attention. Finally, she expressed her expectation that her ESL teacher could teach her new knowledge directly and she believed that she could learn well from her teacher directly.

Some reasons for the use of age-inappropriate tasks in the New Zealand ESL context might be because the ESL key teacher participant had been a primary teacher before and she might unconsciously design a task which was more appropriate for primary students. One reason might be that the ESL teacher participant might not fully be aware of Chinese ESL learners' needs and learners' level of knowledge and learners' maturity and so on. Another reason might be the influence of the Chinese teacher-centred and explicit teaching approach that the Chinese ESL students had been used to in China, which led them to be distracted from the ESL class in New Zealand by certain classroom activities (e.g. drawing a palm tree), which reflects differences between New Zealand and Chinese teaching approaches. The qualitative data in this study also revealed that the New Zealand ESL student participants thought that certain classroom tasks had little effect, which did not coincide with their ESL teacher's objectives. As a result, the New Zealand ESL teacher's objective on certain tasks could not be achieved during the process of real practice of English language teaching and learning in her ESL classroom.

Hu has pointed out that appropriate language classroom activities should be “similar to real-world tasks to create interactive contexts for practicing both language knowledge and skills” (2003b, p. 301). However, the comments from the Chinese ESL student participants in this study indicate that appropriate ESL classroom tasks also needed to take into account age-appropriateness and the kind of expectations that the Chinese ESL students brought with them from previous learning experiences in China.

### **7.2.7 Summary of English classroom practice in the two contexts**

The findings in this study uncover the complexity of the phenomena of EFL and ESL tertiary classroom practice in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts and demonstrate the many faceted dimensions of it. It shows the various perspectives on it from the EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts in terms of different aspects of English language teaching and learning.

The teaching methodology in the Chinese EFL context is teacher-centred and textbook-oriented. The quantitative data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Section 5.4) and the qualitative data from SRIs and interviews (see 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 & 5.6) show that formS-focused instruction is used and in general is used focusing on language points, like grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and so on. As in Hu’s study (2003b), the findings in this study show that the Chinese EFL teacher participant closely adhered to the prescribed textbook, analysing texts in the prescribed textbook sentence by sentence, word by word sometimes, explaining and exemplifying language points in detail, paraphrasing sentences and so on. Similar to Hu’s study (2002b), the results of this research report that CLT is still new to the three Chinese tertiary EFL teacher participants in the Chinese EFL context. In short, all the results of this study show that GTM still dominates in the participating institute in the northwest of China, similar to the findings by Hu (2003b, 2005a) in his studies of regional differences in ELT and the professional development of secondary EFL teachers in China.

The findings in the Chinese EFL context are in line with previous literature which has shown that the main instructional approaches in China are still teacher-centred, Focus-on-FormS and pair work (Hu, 2003b; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002). However, unlike previous studies, this study reveals that CLT has also influenced some aspects of ELT in the Chinese EFL context, both theoretically and practically. For example, communicative ability has been the main focus, not only in the teaching objectives and the teaching materials of the IRC, but also in its classroom practice. Both the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL student participants in the present study agreed that Chinese EFL students had enough opportunities to practise oral English in class and they all agreed that the Chinese EFL teacher participant paid more attention to the meaning of her students' speech rather than to their accuracy. For example, the students reported their teacher did not interrupt them for error correction even though they expected their teacher to correct nearly all of their errors. Nearly all the Chinese EFL students reported that they learnt a lot from the tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom. In addition, one of the Chinese classroom tasks analysed in this study, student lecturing, can be regarded as Focus-on-Form, TBLT, a good example of an eclectic combination of GTM and CLT, which Fotos (2005) has called an optimum situation for effective learning in EFL contexts.

This study also shows that ELT in the Chinese EFL context does not embrace CLT in the way that many "absolutist" Chinese scholars expect (Kuo, 1995; Leng, 1997; Li, 1984; Liao, 2004). According to the literature, there are some reasons for this, such as the Chinese traditional culture of education, the long historical domination of the GTM, the specific EFL context, and the constraints of CLT itself.

It is evident that there is a significant difference in English language teaching and learning between the Chinese EFL context and the New Zealand ESL context, mainly in terms of classroom practice. However, the teaching practice in the New Zealand ESL context was somewhat more teacher-centred than expected (see Table 15). The findings in this study found that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant was well aware of the importance of teaching grammar and tended to use a Focus-on-FormS approach, in the New Zealand ESL context in which communicative language teaching was the primary focus. All the teacher and student participants in the New Zealand ESL context shared the same opinion of the importance of error correction

with the teacher and student participants in the Chinese EFL context. They all agreed that error correction should be done after students' speech so as to ensure students could implement their communication without interruption. All of the data in this study indicated that all the teacher and student participants paid attention to both the accuracy and fluency of students' speech in the language classroom.

As for the use of textbooks, the data in this study showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook; instead, she used it creatively and flexibly as a reference to support her teaching plans so as to develop her students' English communicative competence (see Section 6.4). This study revealed that all the ESL and EFL teacher and student participants believed that group work had played an important role and well-designed tasks could enable students to develop their language communicative competence. They all believed that most classroom tasks conducted in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context were interesting, vivid, novel, which were helpful to Chinese ESL students' language learning by means of making knowledge easier to remember, impressing students deeply and allowing full rein to their imagination. However, some negative voices on the age-appropriateness of classroom tasks were heard from some of the Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context. It seemed to them that they were treated like primary-school or high-school students in the New Zealand classroom when their New Zealand teacher conducted some so-called 'childish' classroom activities (see Chapter 6). These Chinese ESL students commented that it was a waste of time and money to conduct such tasks in the classroom, which is similar to the findings in Li's case study (2004) with Asian students in New Zealand language schools.

### **7.3 Discussion of language contexts**

In this section, the results will be discussed in light of Research Question 4, what were the effects of language contexts on teaching practice in these EFL and ESL contexts? The context in education has been considered by many education scholars as "a highly significant variable" (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2003, p. 24). Gibbons (2002) summarizes the works of Halliday and Hasan (1989) and points out that there are two kinds of contexts when a language is used, a context of situation, which was mainly

examined in this study, and a context of culture with “particular assumptions and expectations, the particular occasion on which the language is being used” (p. 2). Some researchers argue that it is the teaching and learning context that makes the difference in teaching and learning approaches (Liu, 2001).

The findings from the present study show that two different approaches to ELT are being used in these two contexts. This may be due to ESL/EFL differences (discussed in Section 2.2). It also may be due to historical or cultural factors (discussed in Section 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). This study suggests that a method is not equally suited to all contexts, and that different methods suit different teachers and students in different contexts, which supports the notion from some researchers (e.g. Holliday, 1994) that a method cannot easily be exported from one context to another, and teaching and learning should be modified in accordance with specific contexts (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2003). The present study supports the importance of teaching and learning contexts. For example, the findings of this study indicated that teacher-centred instruction and adhering to textbooks were suitable to the Chinese EFL context with its examination-oriented education system but not the New Zealand ESL context with its communicative-oriented education system. It also suggests that the formal communicative teaching method that is popular and used widely in ESL contexts may not fit the EFL situation, especially in China. For example, the typical classroom communicative practice of CLT in the ESL context, such as student-centred instruction, group work or role play, cannot be used easily in EFL contexts, especially in the Chinese centre-controlled examination-orientated education system, where English language teaching and learning, as shown from Table 15, was still dominated by teacher-centred instruction of GTM and where the Chinese EFL teacher participant in this study is actually using GTM to deliver her lecture. This study found, however, that there was also evidence of CLT in the Chinese EFL context and that it has been adapted to suit the Chinese EFL context by the inclusion of such tasks as the student lecture (sections 5.7, 7.2.5).

The task of the student lecture in the Chinese EFL context can be viewed as an example of CLT in the Chinese EFL practice after adaptation, evidence of CLT occurring in a way that is suitable for the Chinese EFL context. The findings were not consistent with some scholars' opinions (Liao, 2004), who wish to import CLT

directly into the Chinese EFL context with the help of the central-controlled government without considering how it needs to adapt to suit the Chinese EFL context. Some studies indicate that CLT does not occur frequently in the Chinese EFL context. However, my results suggests that even though Chinese EFL practice is very teacher-centred with very little group work, there is still evidence of CLT practice or emphases in certain Chinese classroom tasks.

This study also revealed that it is difficult to introduce CLT into China, which is supported by the literature (Mitchell & Lee, 2003), in that it is both complex and challenging to transfer effective pedagogies directly from one context to the other. It might be because it has not been introduced in a way that allows for adaptation to Chinese conditions, or it might be happening but not in a way that might be obvious to researchers in China. According to the literature, “it would be pedagogically naïve to directly transplant models developed in ESL contexts to an EFL context” (Li, 2002, p. 14) because pedagogies are not only context-dependent but also cultural products (Pica, 2005). That is to say, learners’ particular expectations, role assumptions, learning needs, goals and environments should be taken into serious considerations when applying a successful teaching pedagogy to a culturally different classroom setting. Such an assertion, supported by this research, certainly has implications for both ESL and EFL teachers who need to be aware of the cultural and contextual aspects of pedagogies of ESL and EFL.

## **7.4 Implications of findings**

The following sections discuss some theoretical and pedagogical implications of the findings in this research.

### **7.4.1 Theoretical implications**

The following sections discuss some theoretical implications which come from this study: new definitions of teacher-centred and student-centred instructional approaches, a new classification and relationship among language pedagogical approaches, and main trends for the development of English language teaching and learning in these two contexts.

### *New definitions of teacher-centred and student-centred*

An instructional approach of teacher-centred or student-centred, according to the literature discussed previously, refers to the way in which students are taught and are organized (see Section 2.4.1). The literature outlines how the teacher-centred approach is “characterized by teacher talk” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135), while the student-centred approach emphasises that students should “participate actively in their own learning experiences” (Moore, 2005, p. 141). Generally speaking, nearly all of Western researchers and scholars have claimed that English language teaching and learning should adopt the student-centred instructional approach. However, recently, a few researchers “have found that students learn basic skills more rapidly when they receive a greater portion of their instruction directly from the teacher” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135), in other words, using teacher-centred instruction, especially for EFL students in a non-English background context. Holt and Kysilka (2006) in their study examining instruction from the students’ point of view show how instructional patterns can be used to maximize the potential for students to learn. Teacher-centred instruction has been regarded as an efficient method and language communicative skills can be learned well by students when the teaching content is controlled by a teacher (p. 135). They argue that “a well-organized lecture delivered by a skilled teacher may cover a wide array of information and contain conceptual structure and applications from a number of subject areas. When learning objectives are narrowly defined as facts or skills, research indicates didactic (direct) instruction is especially efficient” (Holt & Kysilka, 2006, p. 135).

While the teacher-centred teaching observed in the Chinese EFL classroom in the present study was different to the largely student-centred teaching in the New Zealand ESL context, this may simply reflect that the different contexts have different purposes

for teaching the English language. This view was echoed in the opinions of several Chinese tertiary EFL students in the current study. For example, one Chinese EFL student commented that he thought that it was better for Chinese teachers to teach him language knowledge that he could understand clearly. This opinion was supported by another Chinese EFL student participant. She explained that she often failed to understand some language points taught by foreign teachers, especially some details of language knowledge, such as grammar or vocabulary.

The current study shows that the reality of the ELT situation in both contexts is complex but with certain trends. There was a general trend for the three New Zealand ESL teachers in this study to adopt a higher proportion of CLT, student-centred instruction than the three Chinese EFL teachers, while the three Chinese EFL teachers tended to use more GTM, teacher-centred instruction than the three New Zealand ESL teachers. However, the concepts of teacher-centred and student-centred are perhaps not as neat a dichotomy as has been conventionally presented.

The conventional perceptions of teacher-centred and student-centred instruction concern who talks most in the language teaching and learning classroom (Holt & Kysilka, 2006; Richards & Schmidt, 2002) (see Section 2.4.1). If a teacher talks most of the class time rather than students, it is teacher-centred instruction, otherwise, it is known as a student-centred instruction. The roles of teachers in the teacher-centred instruction are a giver or a transmitter of knowledge; a controller of activities; a knowledge authority who presents facts, rules, or action sequences, with explanations, examples, and opportunities for practice and feedback (Moore, 2005, p. 227). In contrast, student-centred instruction is a method of teaching which encourages “students to participate actively in their own learning experiences” (Moore, 2005, p. 141). This instruction “emphasises the active role of students in learning and tries to give learners more control over what and how they learn and encourages learners to take more responsibility for their own learning” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 359). Students carry out negotiation among themselves, contribute as much as they gain (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 110) and interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Thus, whether an instructional approach is teacher-centred or student-centred conventionally depends on who talks most and in what ways in the language teaching and learning classroom.



The findings of this study call for a redefining of the terms teacher-centred and student-centred instruction. I would argue that whether a classroom is teacher-centred or student-centred should not be defined in relation to who talks most in a class, but rather in relation to how students' learning needs and their language levels are really focused on in the language classroom.

Teacher-centred instruction can be redefined as instruction in which the teacher designs and manages the class but does not take into account the needs of the students. In other words, students' issues are not really focused upon; instead, students try to practise English with their limited language on topics assigned by the teacher and try to take responsibility for learning English independently themselves. For example, the findings of the present study showed that in the New Zealand ESL context, which might conventionally be labelled student-centred, some Chinese ESL students lacked enough vocabulary and enough knowledge to participate in the activities assigned by their ESL teacher and so they could not fully participate in classroom tasks. Some ESL student participants in the New Zealand ESL context mentioned that group work or discussion were appropriate for or designed for good students with high language levels. Thus, the classroom instruction in the New Zealand ESL context, while being less dominated by teacher talk than the Chinese EFL context, to some extent, could still be regarded as teacher-centred instruction, because students' specific needs and their language levels were not really met.

The revised definition of student-centred instruction proposed here refers to a class where the needs of the students, such as their learning needs, their learning expectations, their learning abilities, their language levels, their educational background and so on are the principal focus of the teacher. This means that the teacher designs the teaching plan flexibly, according to the needs of students. This new student-centred instruction can involve teaching grammar knowledge, vocabulary and using classroom tasks in order to successfully develop students' comprehensive communicative competence. This new definition of student-centred instruction, thus, may have a highly structured format that also emphasizes student involvement and success. GTM with some classroom tasks could thus be an example of student-centred instruction. In this context, a well organized lesson is taught by a teacher

systematically and efficiently according to students' language level, learning needs, and learning abilities.

By contrast, teacher-centred instruction refers to a class in which students' issues are not primarily focused upon, but rather one in which students talk on topics assigned by the teacher and take responsibility to learn by themselves. In terms of the redefinition being proposed here, a conventionally CLT classroom could also actually be teacher-centred. These distinctions of terms of instructional approaches are shown in Table 16.

**Table 16: The distinctions of former and new terms of teacher-centred and student-centred instructions**

		Instructional Approaches	
		Teacher-centred	Student-centred
<b>Former</b>	Definitions	Teacher lectures for most of time of a class	Students talk/practice on topics assigned by Teacher and construct their own learning
	activities	Lecturing, pair work, mechanical activities	Various classroom tasks, group work, games, role play, discussion
<b>Revised</b>	Definitions	Teacher designs topics and contents for students to practise, without focusing on students' requirements	Teacher designs classroom practice according to students' specific needs, language levels, expectations, background
	activities	Various classroom tasks: group work, games, role play, discussion	Teacher's lecturing and students' practising various classroom tasks specially designed to meet students' needs, language levels and learning abilities

In summary, based on the literature review (Chapter 2, and Chapter 3) and the findings from the data collection (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6), it is argued that whether an instructional approach is teacher-centred or student-centred should be decided by the degree to which students' language levels, specific learning needs and expectations are

centred or focused on, or not. The findings of this study, which closely investigated two ESL and EFL contexts, have shown that teachers can still lead in student-centred instruction, but the way they teach or the way they lead is focused on their knowledge of the specific needs of students. This revised definition of student-centred instruction does not mean that students do everything independently in the language classroom.

One of the Chinese EFL student participants gave her own perspective on this issue of what student-centred teaching might be like, which represented most of the Chinese EFL student participants in this study. During the stimulated recall interview in this study, she commented that each instructional approach had its own advantages and was suited to different courses of English language for Chinese EFL students. She thought that the Intensive Reading course and the Listening course should be taught by Chinese EFL teachers who could explain English language points very well and clearly. She perceived that the Spoken English course should be taught by foreign/ESL teachers, because they had standard pronunciation and intonation which could help EFL students a lot in their oral English. She also mentioned that foreign/ESL teachers could introduce Western culture to Chinese EFL students in class.


### *New classification and relationship among the language pedagogical approaches*

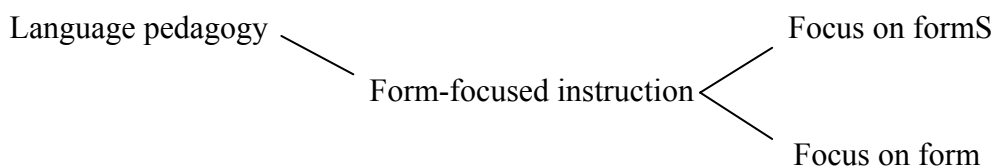
The language pedagogical approaches examined in this thesis, such as Focus-on-FormS, Focus-on-Meaning and Focus-on-Form are various approaches to English language teaching, and their definition and the relationship between them proposed by Ellis et al. (1999) were discussed in Chapter Two (see Section 2.4.2) as an attempt to achieve consistency in terminology in this research.

In general, the current study confirmed the theory of the relationship and classification among the language pedagogical approaches proposed by Ellis (1999) (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Some basic pedagogical options (Ellis et al., 1999, p. 2)**

Meaning-focused instruction





According to Ellis et al. (1999), language pedagogy can be implemented by means of meaning-focused instruction (Focus-on-Meaning) or form-focused instruction (Focus-on-Form), including two basic types: Focus-on-FormS and Focus-on-Form. As mentioned earlier (see Table 1), according to my own interpretation, Focus-on-Meaning represents CLT; Focus-on-FormS represents the teaching method of GTM; and Focus-on-Form, TBLT in terms of perspectives of SLA and applied linguistics. Then, if the related teaching approaches are added into Ellis et al.'s structure and relationship of language pedagogies, it can be developed as follows.

**Figure 16: Some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches**

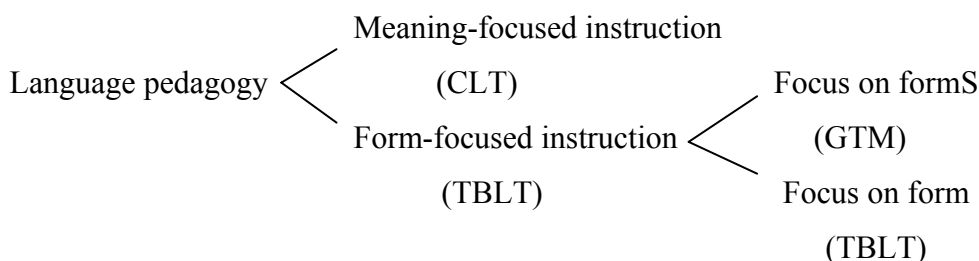
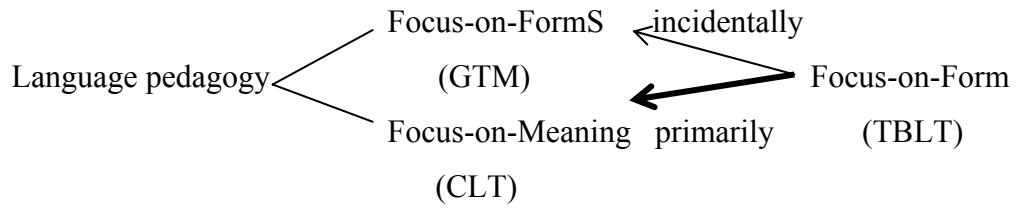


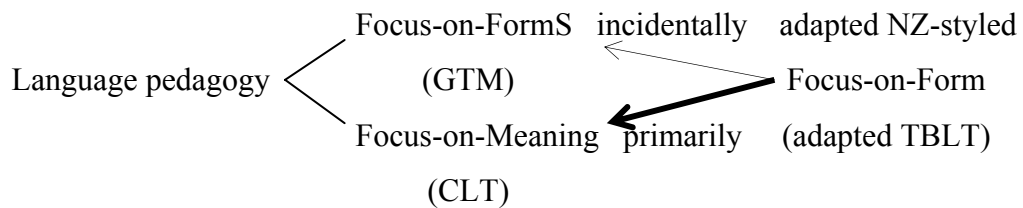
Figure 15 shows some difficulties in the structure and relationship of language pedagogies proposed by Ellis et al (1999). That is, meaning-focused instruction, (CLT), is deemed opposite to or completely different from form-focused instruction, (TBLT), and Focus-on-FormS (GTM) is derived from form-focused instruction, TBLT. As per the literature discussed in Chapter Two, TBLT, Focus-on-Form developed from CLT is principally focused on meaning rather than forms, and “takes a fairly strong view of communicative language teaching” (1996, p. 20). The description of the relationships among these approaches (Ellis et al., 1999) are no longer accepted by the researcher of this present research, and should rather be re-framed as below (Figure 17) in relation to the historical developmental perspective of second language learning, as well as in terms of the developmental process of Focus-on-Form.

**Figure 17: Some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches found in the New Zealand ESL context**



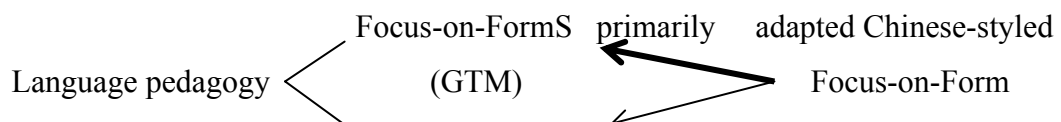
The results from the present study show that language pedagogy in the New Zealand ESL context focused primarily on communicative teaching but with some lecturing on language elements (Figure 18, Table 13), which can be regarded as Focus-on-Form, which is one of the features of the Task-Based Language Teaching approach (see Chapter 2).

**Figure 18: Some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches found in the New Zealand ESL context**



This study also shows that English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL context is still dominated by GTM, teacher-centred, Focus-on-FormS but with some communicative activities such as the task of the student lecture, which may be deemed as an example of Chinese-styled ways of attempting to adapt Focus-on-Form, TBLT into the Chinese special EFL context (Figure 19, Table 13).

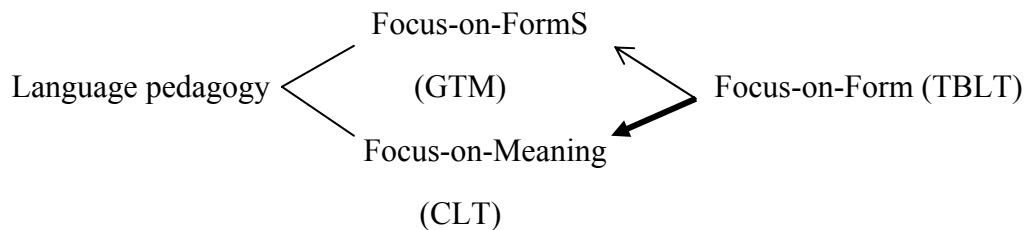
**Figure 19: Some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches found in the Chinese EFL context**



Focus-on-Meaning incidentally (adapted TBLT)  
(CLT)

In sum, according to the results above from the two ESL and EFL contexts in the present study, Ellis et al.'s theory of the structure and the relationship of language pedagogies could be developed as Figure 19 in terms of the developmental process of FonF and the historical developmental perspective of second language learning (see the details in Section 2.4.2).

**Figure 20: New relationship of some basic pedagogical options and their teaching approaches found in the present study**

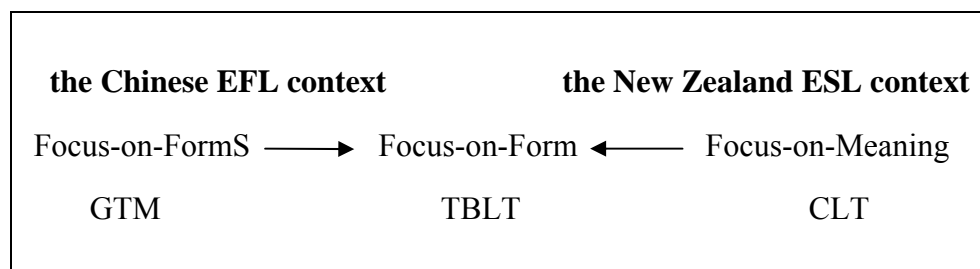


***Main trends of the development of English language teaching and learning***

The present study examined the classroom practice in one EFL and one ESL tertiary contexts, China and New Zealand. Its findings suggested that ESL in the New Zealand context is primarily a CLT approach but with some teachers lecturing on language elements. The findings revealed that grammar was regarded as being important and was focused on incidentally (Ellis et al., 2002) by the New Zealand ESL teacher participant in her English class. It is obvious to see that ELT in the New Zealand ESL tertiary context was in the process of transition from Focus-on-Meaning instruction, CLT, to Focus-on-Form instruction, TBLT (see details in Chapter 6). The findings showed that GTM was still dominant in the classroom of the Chinese EFL tertiary context but with some tasks of focusing on communication. This suggested that EFL teaching in the Chinese EFL tertiary context was in the process of transition from a different direction: from Focus-on-FormS, GTM, to adapted Focus-on-Form, TBLT (see details in Chapter 5). It is possible that the teaching styles in these two contexts are moving from complete FonM and FonFS respectively to a more middle ground in

which FonF and FonM are used where appropriate. These findings can be summarized as below.

**Figure 21: The main trends of the development of English language teaching and learning in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts**



Put simply, the results of the present study support the notion that the Task-Based Language Teaching approach, Focus-on-Form instruction, focusing on linguistic elements which occur incidentally in the process of the CLT approach (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; Ellis, 2003; Ellis et al., 1999; Richards & Schmidt, 2002), is an effective way of English language teaching and learning around the world and it is increasingly regarded as a better way than the GTM as well as CLT alone in the global language education (Ellis, 2005b; Fotos, 2005; Nunan, 2003; Pica, 2005; Rod, 2005; Williams, 2005). This finding adds a new dimension to the theorizing of English language education in both ESL and EFL contexts.

#### **7.4.2 Pedagogical implications**

There are several pedagogical implications from the findings of this study, relating to the importance of instructional approaches, the future of Chinese EFL teaching and learning, the possibility of implementing group work in the Chinese EFL classroom, context's influence on attitudes and perceptions of Chinese ESL students, and maximising appropriateness of ESL classroom activities.

One of the implications of the findings in this study relate to the importance of two instructional approaches. This study reported that both teacher-centred and student-

centred instructions could play an important role in the process of English language teaching and learning. As the English proverb says, don't throw out the baby with the bath water. This study revealed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participants in the communicative language teaching approach environment were aware of the importance of grammar for the development of ESL students' communicative competence and paid attention to forms (grammar), while the Chinese EFL teacher participants realized the importance of communicative competence and use of some communicative activities. There is an implication from this study that both ESL and EFL educational practitioners must understand clearly before designing their teaching plans what classroom practice constitute a student-centred, or teacher-centred approach, how, what not, and why.

The present study also suggests that future English language teaching and learning in China will tend to be TBLT, Focus-on-Form with Chinese-styled features. A picture of the future of EFL in China can be gleaned from the task of the student lecture examined in this study (see Section 5.7.3). The English teachers of the next generation in China are likely to inherit the same teaching approach as their teachers do now, GTM with general teaching objectives focusing on the all-round four skills of communicative ability, an eclectic combination of grammar instruction and the use of communicative activities, providing an optimum situation for effective EFL teaching and learning (Fotos, 2005) in the Chinese EFL context. The implication is that an education practitioner should be aware that both advantages and disadvantages of his/her teaching method can be inherited by his/her students, the future teachers, generation by generation. This finding has not hitherto been addressed in the literature.

The present study shows that there was no group work in the Chinese EFL classroom, though group work is important to develop students' communicative competence. For the Intensive Reading Course (IRC) to be maximally efficient and successful, it is necessary to encourage and help Chinese EFL teachers to heighten their awareness of the importance of group work, to build up their competence in designing and creating and organizing short and efficient group work tasks and overcoming contextual constraints. Some of these constraints can be overcome by having an appropriate awareness of the special features of English language teaching and learning and taking some effective measures. It is suggested that schools in China should pay attention to



the special requirement of classroom settings for English courses and provide removable chairs and desks, particularly for English classes when a new lecture building is built or an existing one is reformed. It may be easier for Chinese universities to deal with this issue because they do not have a fixed classroom for each class, as tertiary institutions in New Zealand do, and they can design a special English classroom with removable chairs and desks practically for English lessons, in which group work can be conducted. Class size is a problem which can be solved with the fast development of the economy and technology in China. It is also necessary to mention that Chinese EFL teachers need or should be encouraged to have re-training in CLT theories (Hu, 2005a) and do less lecturing but create and design more novel and interesting classroom activities so as to offer students with more opportunities to practise English rather than using mechanical pair work and traditional activities and to appropriately implement CLT in the Chinese EFL context. This may be an effective way to change ELT teaching practice in China in the future.

It is worth noting that the Chinese ESL student participants in this current study, who shared the same Chinese English education background as the Chinese EFL students, now had significantly different opinions on tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL context after they had studied English even for a short time in a Western English speaking country, New Zealand. This finding implies that different learning environments, to some extent, might affect and change learners' previous attitudes or perceptions on language teaching and learning, something also not hitherto addressed in the literature.

The findings of this study also have implications for the way New Zealand ESL teachers can maximise the appropriateness of classroom activities so as to meet Chinese ESL students' learning expectations in relation to their maturity and their preferred classroom activities, based on their previous ELT experience in China. This appropriateness can perhaps be achieved by New Zealand ESL teachers explaining the purpose of each activity explicitly and clearly before conducting each classroom activity so that Chinese ESL students may fully engage with it. Therefore, the appropriateness and effectiveness of classroom tasks should be taken into serious consideration when ESL language teachers design their teaching plans for Chinese

ESL students. It might also help for ESL teachers to have some knowledge of the Chinese EFL context that Chinese ESL students come from.

### **7.5 Limitations of this study**

This qualitative research has provided some detailed insights into tertiary classroom practice in English language teaching and learning experienced by EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts, China and New Zealand. However, there are a number of key limitations to this study.

One of the limitations of the present study relates to the extent of generalizability of the findings. That is, it was relatively small in scale, involving only 3 EFL tertiary teachers and 104 Chinese EFL students in the Chinese EFL context and 3 ESL tertiary teachers and their 16 Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context. This was because this research was concerned primarily with the ESL and EFL classroom practice issues in six classes of the two contexts, China and New Zealand. Nonetheless, there was a clear discrepancy in size between the Chinese EFL student participant group in China and that in New Zealand and there was also the fact that classes in New Zealand were not Chinese-only but included a mix of nationalities, such as Korean and Japanese. The results from this study thus might not be typical of other ESL and EFL contexts. With only two contexts involved in the study, it is difficult to generalize about features of tertiary classroom practice for all other tertiary ESL and EFL contexts. Different features might be found with other ESL and EFL classes in New Zealand and China or other ESL and EFL contexts. However, the present research does not aim to develop systematic generalizations to all classroom practice but rather to provide an in-depth snapshot of what classroom practice was like in two particular Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts. Although the EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese students in these two contexts were not necessarily representative of all other teachers and Chinese students in China and New Zealand, they reflect the partial reality of current language teaching practice in China and in New Zealand.

Another limitation stems from the researcher's bias. Since the researcher was a Chinese EFL tertiary teacher before and is a bilingual ESL tutor of a Chinese Social English group for the English Language Partners, Waikato now, it is therefore possible that the researcher held some bias during the data collection and interpretation in this study through her previous 25-year EFL tertiary learning and teaching experience in China and more than 6-year ESL teaching in New Zealand. However, this background in both ESL and EFL settings also gave the researcher insight in her analysis of the data in the present study.

All of the above factors are identifiable limitations to this study. However, the method of data triangulation (questionnaires, the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme, audio-visual recording, stimulated recall interviews and group and individual interviews), self-awareness of the researcher's bias and the ethical guidelines for human research (informed consent, confidentiality and consequences) ensured that these limitations were addressed appropriately. Following from this are some tentative recommendations for future research.

## **7.6 Further research recommendations**

It is recommended from this study that ESL and EFL researchers or practitioners do more research on the teacher-centred versus student-centred instructional approaches issue. For example, is it better to have teacher-centred and Focus-on-FormS when teaching vocabulary, grammar and texts in order to help students to build up their linguistic knowledge for their communicative competence, or is it more efficient to focus on student-centred, Focus-on-Form and group work to enable students to practise the knowledge they have learned doing interesting and meaningful communicative tasks?

It is suggested that more research be done to find out an appropriate teaching method for EFL teaching in China rather than to study how "to impose CLT" into the EFL Chinese context (Hu, 2005a, p. 67). Much remains to be done in determining how and how much linguistic knowledge should be focused on in the Chinese EFL context

with its centrally-controlled, examination-orientated educational system, or in an ESL context, such as New Zealand; what kind of CLT communicative activities best suit the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL classrooms, and how TBLT can be implemented efficiently in the Chinese EFL context as well as in the New Zealand ESL context.

It would also be of interest for future research to investigate ESL learners who are younger in age. Future research could also explore in what ways New Zealand ESL teachers can recognize age-appropriateness in the design of classroom activities so as to meet Chinese ESL students' learning needs and learning expectations in an ESL context. Further research could be conducted in other contexts to empirically validate or modify the concept of age-appropriateness of classroom activities. Further research needs also to focus on exploring appropriate and efficient classroom practice for different contexts so as to meet the special learning needs of Chinese EFL and ESL students.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

The findings in this study uncover the complexity of the phenomena of EFL and ESL tertiary classroom practice in the Chinese EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts and demonstrate the many faceted dimensions of it. It shows the various perspectives on it from the EFL and ESL teachers and their Chinese EFL and ESL student participants in the Chinese and New Zealand contexts in terms of different aspects of English language teaching and learning.

The teaching methodology in the Chinese EFL context is teacher-centred and textbook-oriented. The quantitative data from the Adapted COLT Observation Scheme (see Section 5.4) and the qualitative data from SRIs and interviews (see 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 & 5.8) show that formS-focused instruction is used and in general is used focusing on language points, like grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and so on. As in Hu's study (2003b), the findings in this study show that the Chinese EFL teacher participant closely adhered to the prescribed textbook, analysing texts in the

prescribed textbook sentence by sentence, word by word sometimes, explaining and exemplifying language points in detail, paraphrasing sentences and so on. Similar to Hu's study (2002b), the results of this research report that CLT is still new to the three Chinese tertiary EFL teacher participants in the Chinese EFL context. In short, all the results of this study show that GTM still dominates in the participating institute in the northwest of China, similar to the findings by Hu (2003b, 2005a) in his studies of regional differences in ELT and the professional development of secondary EFL teachers in China.

The findings in the Chinese EFL context are in line with previous literature which has shown that the main instructional approaches in China are still teacher-centred, Focus-on-FormS and pair work (Hu, 2003b; Li, 2002; Liao, 2002). However, unlike previous studies, this study reveals that CLT has also influenced some aspects of ELT in the Chinese EFL context, both theoretically and practically. For example, communicative ability has been the main focus, not only in the teaching objectives and the teaching materials of the IRC, but also in its classroom practice. Both the Chinese EFL teacher and her EFL student participants in the present study agreed that Chinese EFL students had enough opportunities to practise oral English in class and they all agreed that the Chinese EFL teacher participant paid more attention to the meaning of her students' speech rather than to their accuracy. For example, the students reported their teacher did not interrupt them for error correction even though they expected their teacher to correct nearly all of their errors. Nearly all the EFL Chinese students reported that they learnt a lot from the tasks conducted in the Chinese EFL classroom. In addition, one of the Chinese classroom tasks analysed in this study, student lecturing, can be regarded as Focus-on-Form, TBLT, a good example of an eclectic combination of GTM and CLT, which Fotos (2005) has called an optimum situation for effective learning in EFL contexts.

This study also shows that ELT in the Chinese EFL context does not embrace CLT in the way that many "absolutist" Chinese scholars expect (Kuo, 1995; Leng, 1997; Li, 1984; Liao, 2004). According to the literature, there are some reasons for this, such as the Chinese traditional culture of education, the long historical domination of the GTM, the specific EFL context, and the constraints of CLT itself.

It is evident that there is a significant difference in English language teaching and learning between the Chinese EFL context and the New Zealand ESL context, mainly in terms of classroom practice. However, the teaching practice in the New Zealand ESL context was somewhat more teacher-centred than expected (see Table 13). The findings in this study found that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant was well aware of the importance of teaching grammar and tended to use a Focus-on-Form approach, in the New Zealand ESL context in which communicative language teaching was the primary focus. All the teacher and student participants in the New Zealand ESL context shared the same opinion of the importance of error correction with the teacher and student participants in the Chinese EFL context. They all agreed that error correction should be done after students' speech so as to ensure students could implement their communication without interruption. All of the data in this study indicated that all the teacher and student participants paid attention to both the accuracy and fluency of students' speech in the language classroom.

As for the use of textbooks, the data in this study showed that the New Zealand ESL teacher participant did not adhere closely to the textbook; instead, she used it creatively and flexibly as a reference to support her teaching plans so as to develop her students' English communicative competence (see Section 6.4). This study revealed that all the ESL and EFL teacher and student participants believed that group work had played an important role and well-designed tasks could enable students to develop their language communicative competence. They all believed that most classroom tasks conducted in the classroom of the New Zealand ESL context were interesting, vivid, novel, which were helpful to Chinese ESL students' language learning by means of making knowledge easier to remember, impressing students deeply and allowing full rein to their imagination. However, some negative voices on the age-appropriateness of classroom tasks were heard from some of the Chinese ESL students in the New Zealand ESL context. It seemed to them that they were treated like primary-school or high-school students in the New Zealand classroom when their New Zealand teacher conducted some so-called 'childish' classroom activities (see Chapter 6). These Chinese ESL students commented that it was a waste of time and money to conduct such tasks in the classroom, which is similar to the findings in Li's case study (2004) with Asian students in New Zealand language schools.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I Invitation Letter (Ts)

Dear teachers,

I am studying for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand and have reached the stage where I am ready to carry out my research program. I am seeking your deliberations and decision to grant me a Research Permit to undertake my fieldwork in one of your classes in your Department. This research is entitled, *the process of English language teaching as experienced by teachers and learners in the two contexts: China and New Zealand*. This is an attempt to explore the different processes in the English language teaching and learning as well as different classroom practice in the two tertiary classes, one in Baotou Normal University, China and the other in the University of Waikato Language Institute, New Zealand.

This study will follow a descriptive qualitative comparative case study. It is anticipated that the data collection procedure will take place within a three-week period. Audio-visual recording will be conducted by the researcher during the research program as a tool to gain live data of the teacher's teaching style and the level of interaction with the students from the classroom activities. The participants will be asked to answer questions around the above areas during the stimulated recall interviews and questionnaires, with myself as the researcher. A more definite schedule and dates for these activities will be made with the teacher participant once the participants have confirmed their availability and consent to participate in the study.

I believe that this will be the first comprehensive study of the different processes of English language teaching and learning as experienced by teachers and students both

in China and New Zealand in terms of a specific comparative perspective. The findings of the study will, I hope, be of significance at both a theoretical level and a practical level. From a theoretical perspective, it is hoped to add a further dimension to the literature on improving second language teaching and learning particularly with respect to Chinese students at a tertiary level. From a practical perspective, the findings from the study will provide China with useful information about what kinds of English language teaching approaches are most effective for the Chinese situation. To some extent, this study may also provide some reference for English background countries like New Zealand on how to teach Chinese students English effectively.

In undertaking this research program, I will respect the rights of the participants to privacy and confidentiality. All participants will be informed that participation is entirely voluntary, that they may withdraw from the study at any time and that they do not have to answer all the questions. The research will follow the principles outlined below:

- To be well aware of not disturbing the normal teaching activities.
- To gain informed consent from all participants.
- To respect the participants' ownership of the information given during the research program.
- To acknowledge the contribution made by other people in conducting this research.
- To respect the confidentiality of the participants by only discussing relevant materials from the information received with my supervisors.
- To report the findings of the study objectively and frankly.

This study is being supervised by Professor Stephen May, Associate Professor Terry Locke and Dr Nicola Daly of Arts and Language Education Department, School of Education, the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Xiufang Wang

PhD Student

Arts and Language Education Department

School of Education

University of Waikato

New Zealand

## **Appendix II Invitation Letter (Sts)**

Dear students,

I am studying for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand and have reached the stage where I am ready to carry out my research program. I am seeking your deliberations and decision to grant me a Research Permit to undertake my fieldwork in one of your classes in your Department. This research is entitled, *the process of English language teaching as experienced by teachers and learners in the two contexts: China and New Zealand*. This is an attempt to explore the different processes in the English language teaching and learning as well as different classroom practice in the two tertiary classes, one in Baotou Normal University, China and the other in the University of Waikato Language Institute, New Zealand.

This study will follow a descriptive qualitative comparative case study. It is anticipated that the data collection procedure will take place within a three-week period. Audio-visual recording will be conducted by the researcher during the research program as a tool to gain live data of the teacher's teaching style and the level of interaction with the students from the classroom activities. The participants will be asked to answer questions around the above areas during the stimulated recall interviews and questionnaires, with myself as the researcher. A more definite schedule and dates for these activities will be made with the teacher participant once the participants have confirmed their availability and consent to participate in the study.

I believe that this will be the first comprehensive study of the different processes of English language teaching and learning as experienced by teachers and students both in China and New Zealand in terms of a specific comparative perspective. The findings of the study will, I hope, be of significance at both a theoretical level and a practical level. From a theoretical perspective, it is hoped to add a further dimension to the literature on improving second language teaching and learning particularly with

respect to Chinese students at a tertiary level. From a practical perspective, the findings from the study will provide China with useful information about what kinds of English language teaching approaches are most effective for the Chinese situation. To some extent, this study may also provide some reference for English background countries like New Zealand on how to teach Chinese students English effectively.

In undertaking this research program, I will respect the rights of the participants to privacy and confidentiality. All participants will be informed that participation is entirely voluntary, that they may withdraw from the study at any time and that they do not have to answer all the questions. The research will follow the principles outlined below:

- To be well aware of not disturbing the normal teaching activities.
- To gain informed consent from all participants.
- To respect the participants' ownership of the information given during the research program.
- To acknowledge the contribution made by other people in conducting this research.
- To respect the confidentiality of the participants by only discussing relevant materials from the information received with my supervisors.
- To report the findings of the study objectively and frankly.

Any complaints which may arise in relation to the way this research has been conducted should be made to my principal supervisor Professor Stephen May, who will then bring them to the attention of the School of Education Ethics Committee.

Your assistance and participation would be greatly valued by myself, as a researcher with a genuine quest in searching for ways and means to improve the ELT in China as well as in New Zealand. If you are happy to participate, please fill in and sign the attached Consent Form.

Yours truly,

Xiufang Wang

PhD student

Department of Arts and Language Education,

School of Education

University of Waikato

New Zealand

### Appendix III Research Permit (1)

Permission is hereby given to:

1. **Name:** Xiufang Wang
2. **Country:** New Zealand
3. **To undertake research in (subjects):** English teaching and learning
4. **Area Councils:** University of Waikato Language Institute
5. **Participants:** Chinese students and their teachers
6. **Conditions:**
  - To undertake research only in the subject area specified in 3 above.
  - To undertake research only in the Area Council specified in 4 above.
  - To observe with respect at all times teachers and students and teaching activities in the area in which the research work is carried out.
  - You must not, at any time, take part in any political or missionary activities or local disputes.
  - This permit is valid until Dec 31, 2005 provided all conditions are adhered to.
  - A failure to observe the above conditions will result in the automatic cancellation of this permit.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

University of Waikato Language Institute

Hamilton

New Zealand



## Appendix IV Research Permit (2)

Permission is hereby given to:

1. **Name:** Xiufang Wang
2. **Country:** New Zealand
3. **To undertake research in (subjects):** English teaching and learning
4. **Area Councils:** Baotou Normal University
5. **Participants:** Chinese students and their teachers
6. **Conditions:**
  - To undertake research only in the subject area specified in 3 above.
  - To undertake research only in the Area Council specified in 4 above.
  - To observe with respect at all times teachers and students and teaching activities in the area in which the research work is carried out.
  - You must not, at any time, take part in any political or missionary activities or local disputes.
  - This permit is valid until December 31, 2005 provided all conditions are adhered to.
  - A failure to observe the above conditions will result in the automatic cancellation of this permit.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Baotou Normal University

Baotou, Inner Mongolia

P. R. China

## Appendix V Consent Form

**Topic:**            **The process of English language teaching as experienced**  
**by teachers and learners in the two contexts:**  
**China and New Zealand**

**(For participants in New Zealand)**

Please fill in and tick whichever is applicable.

- a) I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent to participating questionnaires and stimulated recall interviews in the above mentioned research program started in New Zealand from October 2004. I understand that all issues regarding privacy and confidentiality will be adhered to by the researcher and that I may withdraw myself and any information provided by me, at any time.
- b) I give my consent for the researcher to record the interviews on tape.  
Yes/No
- c) I agree that the researcher can keep the questionnaires, the transcripts and tape(s) of my interview with the researcher.  
Yes/No
- d) I give my consent for the researcher to use the information I give during this program in her PhD thesis or any information that may stem from it in subsequent publications provided that it is fully acknowledged.  
e) Yes/No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks for your cooperation!**



Code : \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is being used as part of a PhD research study to obtain information about your English education background, motivation, and expectations for the English Course, along with your plans for the future and your perspectives on some issues associated with English language teaching approaches as well as classroom verbal interaction. This questionnaire is anonymous and your answers will be treated as confidential.

Please tick the one which is suitable to your situation.

### Background

1. Name of your school:  University Of Waikato Language Institute  
 Baotou Normal University
  
2. What is your gender?  Female  Male
  
3. How old are you?  under 20  above 20
  
4. What is your first language at home?  
 Mandarin or  \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. When did you graduate from high school in China?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What is your expectation for your English language course?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **The importance of your teachers' qualities**

	4: very,	3: fairly,	2: of some,	1: not
1. A very interesting way of presenting things	4	3	2	1
2. A very good knowledge of the subject	4	3	2	1
3. A carefully prepared and well organized course	4	3	2	1
4. A way of teaching that explains slowly and carefully	4	3	2	1
5. Able to correct the grammar errors of students	4	3	2	1
6. Speak English fluently	4	3	2	1
7. A native English speaker	4	3	2	1
8. Good class control	4	3	2	1
9. Strict control over noise	4	3	2	1
10. The ability to make you work really hard	4	3	2	1
11. A sense of humour	4	3	2	1
12. An outgoing and interesting personality	4	3	2	1
13. A real interest in you as a student	4	3	2	1

### **Teaching methodology**

5: always    4: frequently    3: occasionally    2: rarely    1: never

1. lecturing	5	4	3	2	1
2. eliciting (asking questions to prompt students to think about ideas)	5	4	3	2	1
3. feedback (asking questions to check students' understanding of language and ideas)	5	4	3	2	1
4. modelling (demonstrating language use and asking students to imitate the model)	5	4	3	2	1
5. pair work or group work (students work on assigned task materials in pairs or in groups)	5	4	3	2	1
6. role play	5	4	3	2	1
7. showing or observing (asking students to observe particular objects, people, events or actions)	5	4	3	2	1
8. project (students are directed to undertake a task that requires them to systematically collect, analyse, interpret and report on information about a particular topic)	5	4	3	2	1
9. How often does the teacher use tape recorders in class?	5	4	3	2	1
10. How often does the teacher offer English video programs to students?	5	4	3	2	1
11. How often does the teacher use projects in class?	5	4	3	2	1
12. How often does the teacher use the language lab in your lecture?	5	4	3	2	1
13. How often does the teacher organize English activities after class?	5	4	3	2	1
14. How often does the teacher make students speak English in class?	5	4	3	2	1
15. How often does the teacher provide English newspaper and	5	4	3	2	1

magazines to students?

**Please circle each item using the following scale.**

5: strongly agree    4: agree    3: uncertain    2: disagree    1: strongly disagree

1. Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance should be judged. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The rules of grammar are the most important factor in learning a language. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for cooperative relationships to emerge and in promoting interaction among students. 5 4 3 2 1
4. Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of teaching time. 5 4 3 2 1
5. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue. 5 4 3 2 1
6. Substitution drills are effective. 5 4 3 2 1
7. Note-taking is important. 5 4 3 2 1
8. To become an effective communicator in a foreign language, the teacher's feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses. 5 4 3 2 1
9. The learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows students to develop their full potential. 5 4 3 2 1
10. The teacher should correct all the grammatical errors students make. If errors are ignored this will result in imperfect teaching. 5 4 3 2 1
11. It is impossible in a large class of students to organise your teaching so as to suit the needs of all. 5 4 3 2 1
12. The communicative approach to language teaching focuses more on fluency than accuracy. 5 4 3 2 1
13. It is easier for the students to understand the course if the teachers use Chinese in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1
14. The role of the teacher in the English language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing and examples. 5 4 3 2 1

**Thanks for your cooperation**

**Appendix VIII Questionnaire (Sts, Chinese Version)**

□□ : \_\_\_\_\_



4: □□□□ 3: □□□□ 2: □□□□ 1: □□□

1. □□□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
2. □□□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
3. □□□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
4. □□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
5. □□□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
6. □□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
7. □□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
8. □□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
9. □□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
10. □□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
11. □□□□□	4 3 2 1
12. □□□□□□□	4 3 2 1
13. □□□□□□□□□□□	4 3 2 1



5: 4: 3: 2: 1:

1. □□□□□□□□□□	
2. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	
3. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	
4. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	5 4 3 2 1
5. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	5 4 3 2 1
6. □□□□	5 4 3 2 1





Please indicate (✓) which is suitable to your situation.

5 4 3 2  
1

**Background**

5 4 3 2  
1

1. Are you a  male  
 female.

5 4 3 2  
1  
5 4 3 2  
1

2. Are you a native English speaker?  
 Yes  
 No

5 4 3 2  
1  
5 4 3 2  
1

3. If yes, please give the nationality \_\_\_\_\_, then  
go to 4.

4. Have you ever lived in and/or visited an English speaking country?  
Please give details \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your academic qualification?  
 Diploma  
 Certificate  
 Bachelor  
 Master  
 PhD

6. What is your position within the school / what is your job title?  
 Senior Lecturer  
 Lecturer  
 Associate Lecturer  
 Tutor

7. Is the position  
 full-time  
 part-time

8. How long have you been teaching English as a second or foreign language?

\_\_\_\_\_years or

\_\_\_\_\_months.

9. How many Chinese students are there in your class?

\_\_\_\_\_students.

10. How much experience have you had with Chinese students in your classes?

This is my first year with Chinese students.

I have had Chinese students in my classes for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

11. What is your expectation for your English language course?

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## Teaching methodology

Please circle how frequently you use each of the following activities in your teaching methodology:

5: always    4: frequently    3: occasionally    2: rarely    1: never

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. lecturing   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. eliciting (asking questions to prompt students to think about ideas)  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. feedback (asking questions to check students' understanding of language and ideas)  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. modelling (demonstrating language use and asking students to imitate the model)   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. pair work or group work (students work on assigned task materials in pairs or in groups)  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. role play   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. showing or observing (asking students to observe particular objects, people, events or actions)   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. project (students are directed to undertake a task that requires them to systematically collect, analyse, interpret and report on information about a particular topic) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. How often do you offer English video programs to students?  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. How often do you organize English activities after class?  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. How often do you make your students speak English in class?  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. How often do you provide English newspaper and magazines to students?  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Please circle each item using the following scale.**

5: strongly agree    4: agree    3: uncertain    2: disagree    1: strongly disagree

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance should be judged. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. The rules of grammar are the most important factor in learning a language.                              | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Group work activities are essential in providing opportunities  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

- for cooperative relationships to emerge and in promoting interaction among students.
4. Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of teaching time. 5 4 3 2 1
  5. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue. 5 4 3 2 1
  6. Substitution drills are effective. 5 4 3 2 1
  7. Note-taking is important. 5 4 3 2 1
  8. To become an effective communicator in a foreign language, the teacher's feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses. 5 4 3 2 1
  9. The learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows students to develop their full potential. 5 4 3 2 1
  10. The teacher should correct all the grammatical errors students make. If errors are ignored this will result in imperfect teaching. 5 4 3 2 1
  11. It is impossible in a large class of students to organise your teaching so as to suit the needs of all. 5 4 3 2 1
  12. The communicative approach to language teaching focuses more on fluency than accuracy. 5 4 3 2 1
  13. It is easier for the students to understand the course if the teachers use Chinese in the classroom. 5 4 3 2 1
  14. The role of the teacher in the English language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing and examples. 5 4 3 2 1

**Thank you for your kind cooperation!**

## **Appendix X Prompts for the Stimulated Recall Interview (Sts)**

### **1. Procedural Language**

- 1.1 Is it easy for the students to follow the teacher's instructions?
- 1.2 Did you understand what the teacher said to you?
- 1.3 Do you think the students would learn language from these instructions?

### **2. Teacher Interaction and Feedback**

- 2.1 Did you notice anything specific about the interaction with the student?
- 2.2 Do you think the teacher is signalling that s/he is not happy with the student's/your utterance?
- 2.3 How is the teacher doing this?
- 2.4 What do you think is the problem?
- 2.5 Did you notice your error(s) in your utterance at the time when the teacher pointed it/them out?
- 2.6 Which type of feedback do you think the teacher is giving the students/you?
- 2.7 How effective do you think the teacher's feedback is?
- 2.8 Do you think there has been uptake on the part of the learner(s)?

### **3. Content**

- 3.1 How do you think the teacher arrived at this topic/task?
- 3.2 How interesting/useful/significant/familiar was this topic/ activity for you/the students?

### **4. Teacher Requests (Pseudo or genuine)**

- 4.1 How do you feel about answering questions like this when the teacher already knows the answers to them (pseudo)?
- 4.2 How do you feel about answering questions like this when the teacher does not expect one right answer (genuine)?
- 4.3 What do you think the teacher was expecting from you when answering this question, accuracy or fluency (or both)?

4.4 Do you think that you/the students are comfortable trying out their language in this activity? (Researchers say that it's important for learners to have the opportunity to try out language forms --- this is called hypothesis testing.)

## **5. Content control**

5.1 Who has chosen the teaching materials?

5.2 Do you think the teaching materials used here are interesting/useful /significant/effective? If so, how? If not, why?

## **6. Final general questions**

6.1 Do you think the students were given sufficient opportunity to practise their oral English language in the classroom?

6.2 Did you learn anything from this activity? (If so, what?)

6.3 What were the strongest or weakest features of this lesson?

6.4 What do you think about the teacher's teaching approach?

6.5 What do you perceive to be the differences of the teaching approaches in two classrooms, China and New Zealand?







## **Appendix XII Prompts for the Stimulated Recall Interview (Teachers)**

### **1. Procedural language**

- 1.1 Is it easy for the students to follow your instructions?
- 1.2 Do you think the students would learn language from your instructions?

### **2. Teacher Interaction and Feedback**

- 2.1 Do you notice anything specific about the interaction with the student?
- 2.2 Do you think you/the teacher were/was signalling that you/s/he were/was not happy with the student's utterance?
- 2.3 How were/was you/the teacher doing this?
- 2.4 What do you think is the problem?
- 2.5 Did the student notice the error(s) in his/her utterance at the time when you/Teacher pointed it/them out?
- 2.6 Which type of feedback do you think you/the teacher are/is giving the students?
- 2.7 How effective do you think the teacher's feedback is?
- 2.8 Do you think there has been uptake on the part of the learner(s)?

### **3 Content**

- 3.1 What was the reason for the decision of that task?
- 3.2 How do you think you/Teacher arrived at this topic/task?
- 3.3 How interesting/useful/significant/familiar was this topic/ activity for the students?

### **4 Request information (Pseudo or genuine)**

- 4.1 How do you think questions for students to answer like this when the teacher already knows the answers (pseudo)?
- 4.2 How do you think questions for students to answer like this when the teacher does not expect one right answer (genuine)?

- 4.3 What are you expecting from the student when answering this question, accuracy or fluency (or both)?
- 4.4 Do you think that students are comfortable trying out their language in this activity? (Researchers say that it's important for learners to have the opportunity to try out language forms --- this is called hypothesis testing.)

## **5 Content control**

- 5.1 Who has chosen the teaching materials?
- 5.2 Do you think the teaching material used here are interesting/useful /significant/effective? If so, how? If not, why?

## **6. Final general questions**

- 6.1 Do you think the students were given sufficient opportunity to practise their oral English language in the classroom?
- 6.2 Did the students learn anything from this activity? (If so, what?)
- 6.3 What were the strongest or weakest features of this lesson?
- 6.4 What do you think about your teaching approach?
- 6.5 What do you perceive to be the differences of the teaching approaches in two classrooms, China and New Zealand?
- 6.6 What were you aiming at there?
- 6.7 What were you getting at with that question?
- 6.8 What were your thoughts at that point?
- 6.9 What were your teaching goals in this class?
- 6.10 How did your teaching approach help students to be successful in the class?

Appendix XIII The Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

The Adapted COLT Observation Scheme

School	Grade	Teacher	Subject	Lesson (min)	Observer	Visit No	Date																																													
TIME	ACTIVITIES & EPISODES	INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH		LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY		USE OF TEXTBOOKS				STUDENT MODALITY				MATERIALS																																						
																		Class		Group		Individual		Pair work		Conversation		Type		Source																						
																		1	2	T->S/C	S->S/C	Choral	Same task	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29					

## Appendix XIV UWLI Curriculum Outcomes Descriptors for Levels 1-8

<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p><b>Overall outcomes descriptors</b></p>	<p>This is a basic level of proficiency in English.</p> <p>An averagely successful* level 1 student has studied English for around 250 hours and/or spent around three months in an English speaking environment.</p> <p>This student should not attempt the IELTS Academic Module, but would be likely to gain an Overall 2.</p>
<p><b>Speaking</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 1 student can respond to a range of questions, restricted to social needs in specific situations, such as giving personal information, expressing preferences, wants and needs.</p> <p>This student can initiate a limited range of exchanges in a social context (e.g. basic courtesy formulae) or in order to satisfy immediate needs (e.g. asking for directions).</p> <p>Pronunciation is strongly influenced by L1 and can be difficult to understand.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 1 student can produce upper and lower case letters independently, and can punctuate simple sentences with one clause.</p> <p>Familiar words and simple sentences can be produced accurately with guidance. Free writing will be largely inaccurate.</p> <p>Writing may not be legible.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 1 student can read personal information and short descriptions of things, people and places in short simplified texts with guidance.</p> <p>Simplified texts longer than 100 words will cause difficulty to this student.</p> <p>Cue words on forms can be recognized, eg. Name, address, nationality, age.</p>
<p><b>Listening</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 1 student will be able to listen to monologue or dialogue between 2 speakers and identify key details such as personal information and facts, provided they listen twice and respond to guide questions or prompts.</p> <p>This student will recognize readily greetings, and other social</p>

	<p>expressions, e.g. Hello, how are you? Excuse me. Sorry.</p> <p>Listening to discourse for longer than 3 minutes at time will be difficult for this student.</p>
<p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p><b>Overall outcome descriptors</b></p>	<p>This is an elementary level of proficiency.</p> <p>An averagely successful* level 2 student is able to use English in a limited range of situations.</p> <p>This student might score an Overall Band of 3 on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<p><b>Speaking</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 2 student can produce a range of short utterances for predictable social purposes and can talk for 1-2 minutes about familiar topics with questions or prompts for guidance.</p> <p>This student uses very simple sentences, mostly inaccurately, with almost no use of sentence connectors. Use of question forms is limited and generally inaccurate.</p> <p>Restricted lexis leads to frequent long hesitations.</p> <p>Pronunciation is strongly influenced by L1. The listener may have difficulty understanding, even with repetition.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 2 student will be able to write simple and compound sentences, using <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, <i>because</i>, <i>so</i>.</p> <p>This student can write a paragraph of around 100 words on a familiar topic independently and a guided essay of 150-200 words with paragraph topics provided.</p> <p>Simple sentences, using present simple and past simple, are rarely accurate.</p> <p>Lexis is limited and the range of meaning restricted.</p> <p>Spelling and punctuation may be incorrect.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful level 2 student can read simplified texts on general topics of around 200-250 words, identify the topic and find specific information independently.</p> <p>Longer texts and texts on unfamiliar topics will be difficult for this student to understand.</p> <p>This student might have a receptive vocabulary store of approximately</p>

	<p>1,500- 2,000 words.</p> <p>This student can use the Oxford Elementary Dictionary.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>An averagely successful level 2 can identify the topic and key detail in simple discourse on familiar topics spoken by one or two people, usually male and female to assist in distinguishing speakers.</p> <p>Discourse on a single topic longer than 4 minutes will cause difficulty and strain for this student</p> <p>Discourse involving more than two speakers will be more difficult for this student to follow.</p>
<b>Level 3</b>	<p>This is an early intermediate level.</p>
<b>Overall outcome descriptors</b>	<p>An averagely successful* level 3 student will have a limited command of English BUT should be beginning to develop independence.</p> <p>This student might achieve an Overall Band of 4 on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<b>Speaking</b>	<p>An averagely successful level 3 student can communicate satisfactorily for social survival purposes, can answer simple questions on familiar topics and can speak independently for one minute on a familiar topic.</p> <p>Simple sentences can be linked with basic connectors.</p> <p>Question forms can be used, but may not be accurate.</p> <p>Lexical range is restricted and circumlocution to avoid communication breakdown is not yet possible.</p> <p>Pronunciation is marked by hesitation and many errors.</p> <p>Repetition can resolve miscommunication on most occasions.</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>This student can write multiparagraph texts of 200-250 words with guidance, describing people and places, narratives, letters and essays with the rhetorical structure of advantages/disadvantages and comparison/contrast.</p> <p>Sentences are simple, compound or complex with basic connectors, eg. <i>While, when, before, after</i> and <i>however</i>.</p> <p>Lexical range is restricted so that only basic meaning can be expressed.</p> <p>Spelling and punctuation are sometimes inaccurate.</p>

<b>Reading</b>	<p>This student can read simplified texts of about 300 words with understanding of topic and detail independently.</p> <p>This student can begin to use the Collins Cobuild NEW Students' Dictionary, with a defining vocabulary of 2,500 words.</p> <p>Short authentic texts on familiar topics will be accessible to this student if support (questions/prompts) is provided.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>This student can identify topic, key and supporting detail in monologues and dialogues on familiar topics of 5 minutes total listening time, if support in the form of questions or prompts is given and if the student can hear the discourse twice.</p>
<b>Level 4</b>  <b>Overall outcome descriptors</b>	<p>This is an intermediate level of proficiency.</p> <p>An averagely successful* level 4 student will have partial command of the language and should cope with meaning in everyday situations.</p> <p>This student is ready to begin to study English for academic purposes.</p> <p>This student might gain an Overall Band of 4.5 on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<b>Speaking</b>	<p>An averagely successful level 4 student can maintain a conversation on familiar topics.</p> <p>This student can produce simple sentences with basic tenses and connectors accurately and ask questions with reasonable accuracy.</p> <p>If more complex sentences are attempted they will be marked by error and are likely to result in misunderstanding.</p> <p>This student is beginning to modify utterances, eg using <i>can</i> to express uncertainty and conditionality.</p> <p>Lexical range is limited and causes hesitation. Circumlocution can repair breakdown of communication.</p> <p>Pronunciation errors occur and can cause misunderstanding. Repetition will usually repair any breakdown.</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>An averagely successful level 4 student can write a multiparagraph essay of at least 200 words on general topics independently.</p> <p>The organization of the text may sometimes cause difficulty, but overall there is a sense of an underlying message.</p> <p>Short simple sentences are sometimes accurate, but errors of grammar</p>



	<p>may be frequent.</p> <p>Lexical range is restricted, so that the text is stilted.</p> <p>Spelling and punctuation are sometimes inaccurate.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>This student can identify gist, key and supporting detail in texts of around 750 words on general topics.</p> <p>This student can identify reference and other formal features of text structure, as well as certain text types (novel, article)</p> <p>This student can use the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary independently, with a defining vocabulary of 3,000 words.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>This student can identify topic, key and supporting detail in monologues and dialogues on general topics of up to 10 minutes in length, with guidance and the opportunity to listen twice.</p> <p>This student can begin to take notes with a supporting framework for guidance.</p>
<b>Level 5 Overall outcome descriptors</b>	<p>This is an intermediate level of proficiency in English.</p> <p>This student is making progress in English for academic purposes.</p> <p>A level 5 student might achieve an Overall Band of at least 5 on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<b>Speaking</b>	<p>Can engage in spontaneous conversation and speak at reasonable length (1-2mins) on general topics. Meaning will usually break down when speculation or abstract topics are introduced.</p> <p>Reasonably accurate in simple and compound sentences and can use a range of sentence connectors, but long, complex sentences may be inaccurate.</p> <p>Can modify meaning using conditionals and adverbs.</p> <p>Accent can mar comprehension and some repetition may be needed by both speaker and listener.</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>Can write a multiparagraph essay of 250 words on familiar general topics and some academic topics.</p> <p>Meaning is generally clear but limited use of cohesive devices will</p>

	<p>affect both coherence and clarity at times.</p> <p>Simple sentences are usually grammatically accurate, though longer complex sentences will be marred by inaccuracy of grammar and syntax.</p> <p>Vocabulary is limited but basic meaning is conveyed.</p> <p>Spelling and punctuation of words is generally accurate, though errors may be found.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>This student can read texts of around 1, 000 words on general, some academic and some professional topics to identify topic, key and supporting detail.</p> <p>This student is beginning to make inferences from ideas supplied in the text.</p> <p>This student can make notes with guidance.</p> <p>This student can use the Collins Cobuild Dictionary independently.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>Level 5 students can listen to monologues and dialogues of around 10 minutes on general and academic topics and identify gist, key and supporting detail.</p> <p>Level 5 students can take notes with guidance.</p>
<b>Level 6 Overall outcomes descriptors</b>	<p>This is an upper intermediate level of English proficiency.</p> <p>An averagely successful* level 6 student can communicate generally successfully in most social situations, in familiar vocational fields or academic areas or topics of interest.</p> <p>A level 6 student might achieve an Overall Band of at least 5.5 on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<b>Speaking</b>	<p>An averagely successful* level 6 student can engage in spontaneous conversation and speak at some length (2-3mins) on general and some specialised topics. A range of meaning can be expressed.</p> <p>The student has good control of basic sentence structure and can link sentences with a range of connectors. Longer, more complex sentences may be marked by errors.</p> <p>The range of lexis available allows for speculation but communication breakdown can be repaired with circumlocution and paraphrase.</p> <p>Accent may interfere with communication and repetition may be</p>

	needed.
<b>Writing</b>	<p>This student can write a research essay of 800-1,000 words and 300-350 word essays on academic and professional (economics, management, international business) topics</p> <p>This student can present key points of information and ideas so that a reader can follow the text with only occasional strain. There may be omissions and errors of fact, but overall the script shows evidence of control.</p> <p>Sentences, particularly complex ones, may contain errors.</p> <p>Lexis may be insufficient to express shades of meaning.</p> <p>Punctuation and spelling are generally accurate, though errors can occur.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>This student can read texts of around 1,500 words on general, vocational and academic topics and identify topic, key and supporting detail with guidance or in response to tasks. They can make inferences from the text.</p> <p>This student can analyse text structure and identify other features of text, such as style and register.</p> <p>This student can make notes in different formats (tables, linear, mind maps) with guidance.</p> <p>This student can use the Oxford Advanced Learners or Collins Cobuild Dictionary independently.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>This student can identify topic, key and supporting detail in monologue and dialogue of up to 15 minutes in length on general and academic topics.</p> <p>This student can take notes and identify the discourse structure with limited guidance.</p>
<b>Level 7</b>	This is an advanced level of proficiency in English.
<b>Overall outcome descriptors</b>	<p>An averagely successful* level 7 student can communicate satisfactorily for most social, vocational and academic purposes.</p> <p>This student might achieve an Overall Band of at least 6 on the IELTS Academic Module</p>

<b>Speaking</b>	<p>An averagely successful* level 7 student can convey meaning in a variety of contexts.</p> <p>This student can use verb tenses appropriately in complex sentences, using a range of modifiers, usually accurately.</p> <p>Lexical range is broad, and usually accurate. Circumlocution is used when necessary.</p> <p>This student speaks fluently, with very little hesitation, but with some noticeable errors in pronunciation, stress or intonation.</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>This student can write research essays and research reports of up to 1,500 words and essays of 250 words.</p> <p>This student can present information and arguments logically with full supporting detail. Ideas are generally relevant and the reader has little difficulty in understanding the script.</p> <p>Sentence structure is varied and well controlled.</p> <p>Lexical range is varied and allows nuance of meaning to be expressed.</p> <p>Errors of spelling and punctuation may occur but do not detract from the communicative effect.</p> <p>The conventions of academic writing are observed, eg use of citations.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>This student can read authentic texts, including reference texts, professional and academic articles with understanding of gist, factual detail and inference.</p> <p>This student can identify text structure, text purpose and author's intent, independently.</p> <p>This student can make notes from authentic and L1 texts and use them appropriately for study purposes.</p> <p>This student can use any specialist dictionary independently when necessary.</p>
<b>Listening</b>	<p>This student can understand lectures of around 20 minutes length and take notes for study purposes.</p> <p>This student can listen to radio and other sound media with understanding of familiar topics.</p> <p>This student can identify discourse structure independently.</p>

<p><b>Level 8</b></p> <p><b>Overall outcome descriptors</b></p>	<p>This is an advanced level of proficiency.</p> <p>An averagely successful* level 8 student is able to meet almost all the communicative needs of his academic or vocational field.</p> <p>Although there may be inappropriateness and occasional error in communicative use of English, understanding is easily repaired.</p> <p>This student might achieve an Overall Band 6.5 at least on the IELTS Academic Module.</p>
<p><b>Speaking</b></p>	<p>An averagely successful* level 8 student can meet almost all the general and academic communicative needs including leading discussions and making presentations.</p> <p>This student can convey meaning precisely, using a range of structures accurately. The student is able to self correct when necessary.</p> <p>Accent does not generally impede communication in any way (pronunciation/intonation/stress). There may be idiosyncratic mispronunciation of certain lexis, especially new items.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<p>This student can write critical reviews and research reports, as well as essays.</p> <p>Writing is relevant to the task, ideas are presented logically and supported with appropriate detail, so that the reader has no difficulty in following the argument.</p> <p>Sentence structures of all types are accurate and verbal groups are well formed.</p> <p>Lexical range allows for fine expression of meaning.</p> <p>Spelling and punctuation are accurate, with occasional slips.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p>	<p>This student can read authentic texts of any length with good understanding for study and leisure study purposes.</p> <p>Dictionary use may be required for unfamiliar lexis.</p> <p>A student can make notes independently for study purposes.</p>
<p><b>Listening</b></p>	<p>This student can listen to lectures intended for L1 students, or watch TV and experience only occasional gaps in understanding as a result of lexical omissions.</p> <p>There is no limit to the length of discourse which this student can cope with successfully.</p>