

INTERACTIONS DURING TEACHER-FRONTED CLASS TIME OF ENGLISH
CLASSES IN A CHINESE UNIVERSITY

By

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ABSTRACT

This research employs an ethnographic approach to examine teacher-student interaction during teacher-fronted classroom time in classrooms for English majors in a Chinese university. It involves two teachers and their respective classes. The data was collected through classroom observing, audio- and video-taping, oral report, interviewing and stimulated reflection across a two and a half month period. The data is analyzed qualitatively, using Nvivo as the main research tool and grounded theory as the approach.

Informed by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory which puts talk at the core of successful teaching and learning, the analysis presented explores the patterns of interaction established in the two classes and learning opportunities embedded in them through the way the teachers interacted with their students. Erickson's (1982) constructs: academic and social participation structures, were adopted as the main frames for analyzing the data since these allow the integration of pedagogical and interactional aspects of teacher-student interaction.

Analysis of the academic participation structures in the two classes revealed a traditional textbook-directed, teacher-controlled transmission mode of teaching with the focus on rote learning, vocabulary, mechanical practice, recalling from memory and knowledge rather than on language skill, meaningful interaction, understanding and method. Students were afforded fewer opportunities to participate meaningfully in classroom interaction. The teachers controlled not only the topics of academic learning but the way to learn the content.

Analysis of the social participation structures showed that the teacher-student interaction was dominated by the teacher-initiated monologic IRF sequence with the I move mainly used to initiate known-information questions and the F move used to both evaluate and carry on with more instruction. The data shows how the heavy reliance on the strict IRF constrained the students' opportunities to participate in classroom discourse and to develop cognitively and linguistically. At a more general level, reliance on the IRF also shaped and constrained the students' epistemologies and learning styles. However, the picture that emerged was not all bleak. Both teachers

allowed for variations to the ways the students participated, allowing the students some choice over when and how to participate. In spite of a relaxed participatory control, student initiations still rarely occurred.

Consistent with the holistic nature of qualitative research, the current research also investigated contextual issues which shaped the teacher-student interaction. A range of issues were identified which largely arose from the teachers' view of language and language learning and their lack of professional development. The students were also found responsible for the interactive environment: they shared a lot of their teachers' view of language and language learning, and their cultures of learning, limited language resources and anxiety also contributed to their passive speech role, thus allowing their teachers to play a dominant role in classroom discourse unchallenged.

Based on the analysis, a range of pedagogical implications have been suggested addressing academic and social participation structures and professional development of the teachers and contextual issues. The thesis concludes by proposing directions for future research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

As a university teacher of English in China for six years, I have been perplexed to find that after four years' study, most English major students do not engage competently in real life communication. Undoubtedly, the lack of an English-speaking environment restricts successful language learning. However, my own teaching experience and occasional observing of my colleagues' lessons suggested that poor performance on the part of the students may be also attributed to teachers' dominance while interacting with the students, which is especially obvious in teacher-fronted class time (i.e. class time when the teacher interacts with the students with the whole class as the intended audience). More specifically, teacher talk tends to centre on the transmission and assessment of knowledge rather than as a means for collaboration with students to construct shared understanding (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992). As a result, students are passively engaged in classroom activities and often fail to reach their full potentials, and their poor performance is ascribed to their limited English proficiency and their lack of effort rather than the absence of challenging and engaging opportunities that are provided for them to make their own sense of the task at hand (ibid).

In addition to too much teacher talk, the other factor which, in my opinion, contributes to listless classrooms and reluctant student engagement is insufficient attention to classroom discourse (i.e. oral interaction between and among classroom participants (Hall & Walsh, 2002)), teacher-student talk in particular. Like my former colleagues, I used to attach much importance to teaching techniques, to offering variety in lesson activities, believing that they were essential to engaging students. Whenever we had free time in the staff room, we would exchange ideas on different variations of classroom activities. No doubt varying activities can engage students in a way but as teachers we all have the experience that they cannot sustain students' engagement. During an interesting activity students will be active for a while but afterwards they will slump back in their seats and go back to a state of apparent lethargy. We have long been inattentive to one important aspect of our teaching: our own interactive behaviours. The

prevalence of our talk leads us to take it for granted. As such it doesn't gain the attention it deserves. However, a lot of classroom-based research has already shown that what we say to students, how we structure our talk has profound impact on students' language use, hence learning opportunities that are made available to them. So I think it is time for my colleagues and me to accord due attention to teacher talk.

A range of courses are offered to first year English majors in Chinese universities which include those targeting discrete skills such as listening, reading, speaking and one which integrates four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, namely "Integrated Reading". The Integrated Reading course was chosen as the research focus as it carries the most weight in terms of importance and time. Moreover as the teachers have to attend to each component skill, although not equally as speaking is given priority in the first year, the Integrated Reading course provides a lens through which to see what transpires in other courses such as Listening, Extensive Reading, Grammar and Oral. I hope that the findings derived from this course can be extrapolated to other courses offered for the same program.

This study sets out to investigate teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time within classes for English majors through the way the teachers conduct the Integrated Reading course. Four main outcomes are expected from this research:

- a) extensive knowledge will be gained of the nature of teacher-student interaction in teacher-fronted class time;
- b) greater understanding will be attained of the ways in which knowledge is co-constructed between teachers and students in teacher-fronted class time;
- c) broader contextual issues that shape teacher talk will be identified;
- d) there will be implications for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time.

1.2 Importance of the study

This study is important in four ways. First, it can fill a gap in research to date in the Chinese context to investigate how teachers interact with students in English classrooms over time. Among the few studies along this line situated in the Chinese context, data,

qualitative data in particular is very thin. The current study thus represents an empirical contribution to this issue. Additionally, it is a pioneering work in that it looks at teacher-student interaction from a sociocultural perspective which is little heard-of in China.

Second, it shows the ways in which teachers, through their talk, construct patterns of communication with students in teacher-fronted class time over time. Over the years, there have been documentations of how patterns of communication were established and maintained in classrooms, of the effects of those patterns on how students participated in classroom activities and of how their participation shaped the ways in which they used language for learning and the opportunities they were afforded and ultimately what they learnt (e.g. Gutierrez, 1994; Hall, 1997; Johnson, 1995; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Nystrand, 1997). So far, most of the previous studies regarding patterns of interaction have been conducted in western countries. Little research has been carried out in language classrooms in Asia. Even less has been done in the tertiary-level classrooms for English majors in a foreign language environment as in China where academic pursuits and cultural contexts are different. Although studies done in other research contexts can motivate the current study, they cannot predict the specific nature of classroom life in the two classrooms I am examining as each classroom is a unique mini-culture in its own right. Events in each classroom are different as teachers and students are different and over time they construct their own “norms and expectations, rights and obligations, and roles and relationships” (Green, Kantor & Rogers, 1991:338).

Third, it reveals broader contexts which shape teacher-student talk in teacher-fronted class time. From the sociocultural perspective (see section 2.2), interaction is part of the larger context. Interaction and context are inseparable and constitutive of each other. A thorough understanding of teacher-student interaction cannot be achieved without taking into account the larger context in which it is embedded. So far, most studies situated in the Chinese context have centred on the impact of aspects of Chinese “cultures of learning”, i.e. “socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is” (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998:749) on English classrooms, and as a by-product, they

have touched upon some culture-based issues which shaped both teachers' and students' talk, such as the view of teaching as transmission, the students' reluctance to volunteer a turn, to respond extensively as they did not want to show off or challenge the teacher. Yet data remains very thin elaborating this line of inquiry. Why do the teachers and students talk the way they do? This is another question that the current research attempts to answer.

Lastly, it stresses the dual importance of classroom discourse and researching classroom discourse. Educators such as Barnes (1969) and Tharp & Gallimore (1991) have argued that education is a process of interaction. This philosophy especially prevails in the western world. Empirically, studies in classroom discourse have shown that the language used by the teacher affects the language produced by the learners, the nature of interaction generated and hence the kind of learning that occurs. Likewise what learners say and do affect what the teacher says and does as well. Classroom discourse is even more consequential in second language and foreign language classrooms where language is multi-functional. It is the subject of study, the medium for communication, the tool for learning and teaching and the goal of instruction (Hall, 2001). Considering the importance of teacher talk in shaping "the students' knowledge, skill, and abilities as learners and users of the target language" (Hall, 2001:78), the study of teacher discourse becomes significant as it provides a lens through which to view the teaching and learning that occurs inside classrooms (Greenleaf & Freedman, 1993).

1.3 Research questions

In order to investigate the above-mentioned issues, the following research questions were formulated for this study of two teachers and their classes:

- a) How do the teachers use language in teacher-fronted class time?
- b) How do the teachers, through their interactions with the students, locally and historically (i.e. across the course) construct learning with the students in teacher-fronted class time?
- c) What are the contextual issues that shape the teachers' and students' talk?

1.4 Methodology and design of the study

A combination of sociolinguistic and ethnographic perspectives has been taken to approach the above research questions. In order to find the answers to the questions, data was collected using a range of techniques: interviewing, classroom observing, audio- and video-taping, oral report and stimulated reflection.

The participants for my study came from a university where I was a student for four years and a teacher for six years. I selected this site because I had easy access to it and also I found willing participants for the study there.

The two case study teachers, Miss Qian and Miss Hou, were selected on the basis of their willingness to have their lessons observed and recorded. They were informed of my research focus in advance. I observed, audio- and video-taped the two teachers and their respective classes for two months, eight hours a week. I conducted three interviews, one with ten teachers (including the two case study teachers) in the School, the other two with the two case study teachers only. From each case study teacher, I collected 34 hours of lesson observations and recordings, a total of 20 five-minute oral report sessions and five half-hour stimulated reflection sessions. 34 students were involved in stimulated reflection sessions, 17 from each class.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Although carefully designed, the study has limitations resulting from the following four sources:

a) The study adopts a case study research design (see section 4.2), which has its inherent strengths and limitations. It enables me to study the two teachers and their classes in depth. However, due to the small size of the samples and their homogeneity in background (i.e. from the same school and region), findings cannot be generalized to a wider English teaching community in China.

b) Data collection was started one month into the course when the teachers and students were completely into the routines. I missed crucial data as to how the teachers set up the routines from the very beginning on. However, I could not do anything about it as the School was going through a nation-wide teaching assessment in the first month and the Head of the School did not want research to be carried out in that period.

c) It is always possible that the presence of the researcher and the equipment affects the behaviours of those observed. More conscious of the accuracy of her language production, Miss Qian repaired her own erroneous utterances much more frequently (IN-Qian-2&3). Miss Hou was affected by the video clips I played to her, in which she was critical of some of her interactional behaviours, e.g. unnecessary repetition in her talk (IN-Hou-2). However, the students did not seem to be affected by the data-collection process as they told me in the casual chat during break.

d) Most of the time, the students in Miss Hou's class called out answers all at once. It was extremely hard, sometimes simply impossible to capture all the student replies, which engendered some difficulty in the categorization of her subsequent moves.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is made up of eleven chapters. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical perspectives which underlie and inform this study. Along a similar line but with a focus on empirical work, Chapter 3 reviews the studies done pertaining to teacher-student interaction.

Chapter 4 deals with the research methodology employed in the current study and the rationale for using it. Additionally, it provides a detailed description of the entire data-collection process, starting from enlisting participants to gathering data through different techniques. Chapter 5 gives a detailed description of data management and retrieval system, data-analysis procedures and data categorization. Chapter 6 presents the context where the research was carried out, which includes the university, the School, the course and the participants involved in the current study. It also provides an overview of the structures of both classes in terms of cycles of activity.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 present the findings by giving a detailed account of how the two teachers interact with their students respectively at each level of analysis. Chapter 7 focuses on the cycles from the Student's Book. The Workbook cycle is the subject of Chapter 8. Chapter 9 is devoted to supplementary cycles.

Chapter 10 explores contextual issues which shape the way that the two teachers interact with their students. Finally, drawing on the findings presented in the previous chapters, Chapter 11 offers implications for teachers and proposes future research directions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW (THEORIES)

This chapter addresses the theoretical bases of the study through bodies of literature from two perspectives: second language acquisition and sociocultural theory.

2.1 Classroom interaction in second language acquisition (SLA)

2.1.1 The Input Hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) is a widely-accepted theory with emphasis on the receptive end of language learning. It states that comprehensible input at $i + 1$ level (i is the learner's current competence level and $i + 1$ is a level slightly beyond the learner's current level) is the only way for learners to acquire a language (Krashen, 1985). According to Krashen (1985), this hypothesis has two corollaries:

- a) One learns to speak by listening. As long as the learner receives enough comprehensible input, in time production ability will emerge automatically.
- b) Learners acquire grammar rules of a language by understanding the input which contains those rules in the same way as children learn their first languages. There is no need for explicit grammar instruction.

To its supporters, the prime role of language teachers is to create a learning context rich in comprehensible input. Although Krashen's hypothesis has been hotly debated and criticised because of its overemphasis on the role of input and its disregard of the importance of learners' active participation in second language interactions, it points out an important language teaching principle: for successful language learning to occur, learners should be provided with message-oriented input they can understand (Ellis, 1990).

2.1.2 The Interaction Hypothesis

Long (1983a; 1983b) suggests that while exposure to comprehensible input is necessary, it alone cannot ensure acquisition. For acquisition to occur, learners should be afforded ample opportunity to negotiate meaning when communication breaks down. Negotiation

raises learners' awareness of those language features which do not match the standard of the target language (TL) and the parts that are still beyond them (Gass, 1997). Also through negotiation, learners obtain feedback from interlocutors on their language output, normally in the form of comprehension check, clarification request and confirmation check. The feedback serves as an indication for learners to modify their production. Gass & Varonis (1994) discuss the importance of negotiated interaction in promoting second language acquisition by saying that it

...crucially focuses the learner's attention on the parts of the discourse that are problematic, either from a productive or receptive point of view. Attention in turn is what allows learners to notice a gap between what they produce/know and what is produced by speakers of the L2. The perception of a gap or mismatch may lead to grammar restructuring (p. 299).

Like Krashen, Long has given prestige to comprehensible input but he puts more emphasis on two-way interaction, conversational adjustments as a result of negotiation (Johnson, 1995) and how negotiation can make the input more comprehensible.

2.1.3 The Output Hypothesis and others

The Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995) encapsulates that in addition to comprehensible input, learners' output has three important contributions to make in enabling second language learning. Talk can push learners to pay attention to not only semantic processing of the language but syntactic processing, i.e. learners are pushed to attend not only to what they say but also to how they say it. Moreover the process of using the TL is also the process for learners to test their hypotheses about it. It is also when learners have to produce the TL that they realize how limited their interlanguage is. It is also when faced with negative feedback that they are "pushed" to come up with alternative linguistic forms to get their meanings across. Lastly, talk plays a metalinguistic function: learners use language to reflect upon their language use. Unlike reception-based theories represented by Krashen and Long, Swain's theories have credited language development

to learners' attempts at actually producing the TL. Another significant difference between Krashen and Swain which is immediately relevant to the current thesis is the role played by speaking. Unlike Krashen who views speaking as developing from previous learning, Swain contends that learners' production is a source of learning per se, not simply an outcome of learning (Gibbons, 2006).

There are other important production-based theories like the Discourse Hypothesis (Givon, 1979) and the Topicalization Hypothesis (Ellis, 1984; Long, 1983a). Each of them has emphasized a different factor as contributing to second language acquisition. The Discourse Hypothesis proposes that learners only acquire the type of language which is found in the social situations they tend to engage in. For example, if learners only have access to the formal language discourse, that is the language they will acquire. Likewise, if they participate only in informal/unplanned settings, they will develop competence to perform only that type of language. Of particular relevance to language teaching is that teachers should provide learners with opportunities to practice in a variety of communicative contexts to help them acquire a full repertoire of linguistic competencies. The Topicalization Hypothesis stresses giving learners the chance to initiate and control the topic of discourse as a way of promoting their language development.

2.1.4 Implications

In the field of SLA, some theorists have accorded importance to comprehensible meaning-focused exposure to the TL, other theorists have given significance to learners' active negotiation and their production of comprehensible output. Despite different points of emphasis, other than Krashen, they all point out the importance of interaction and negotiation in facilitating learners' second language acquisition. These hypotheses complement each other and form a more complete picture of language acquisition. Taken as a whole, they have the following important implications for language teachers:

- a) Teachers should ensure that the input that they provide to students is comprehensible. If necessary, they need to adjust the complexity of their language to suit their students' needs and levels.
- b) Teachers and students must make every effort to be understood by each other by negotiating meaning.
- c) Teachers should give students ample practice in actually using the TL especially for communicative purposes.
- d) Teachers need to broaden opportunities for learners to participate in a wide array of communicative contexts which allow their full performance of language functions.
- e) Teachers should give students the chance to choose and control the topic of conversation.
- f) Students should have chances to practice both planned and unplanned discourses as they encounter both in real life situations.
- g) Students should be offered opportunities to produce extended discourse.

2.1.5 SLA view of language and language learning

Although the above-mentioned hypotheses have taken different routes in investigating classroom interaction and language development, they share three fundamental assumptions about language learning and the role of language in language learning. First, language is a 'conduit' (Reddy, 1979; Hammond, 2001) whereby knowledge is transmitted from one person to another. Therefore language learning is a process in which "input flows from an external source (e.g. teachers or peers) to the learner, who processes it and then makes it available to produce output" (van Lier, 1996:50). Input can be made more comprehensible since learners can negotiate by requesting and providing modifications (ibid). This so-called input/output view defines the role of the

teacher as passing on knowledge and information to students and the role of students as being receiver of that information. Second, SLA theorists conceive of language learning as an individual undertaking which takes place in individual learners' minds. Hence it ignores the "social nature of language and cognition" (van Lier, 1996:50) and fails to capture the complexities of language learning or the moment-to-moment interactive process between teachers and students in achieving goals (Takahashi et al, 2000). In this interactive process learners' role is not as passive as the SLA proponents claim. In effect, learners bring choices, strategies and cognition to a learning task (van Lier, 1996). Third, language acquisition is separate from language use. Language acquisition is viewed as a decontextualized process of acquiring isolated bits of language whose meanings have already been fixed.

Dissatisfied with this oversimplified view of language and language learning, some researchers in the field of SLA began to look to other fields for theoretical and methodological insights, for example, cultural psychology, linguistic anthropology and social theory. It is based on the theoretical assumptions and empirical investigation from this variety of disciplines that a sociocultural perspective found its way into the field of applied linguistics (Hall & Walsh, 2002).

2.2 Classroom interaction in sociocultural theory (SCT)

A sociocultural theory was pioneered by Vygotsky (1978) and extended by his colleagues and followers. The core of the theory is the proposition that cognitive development (i.e. learning) originates in social interaction. In other words, learning is a social activity. Vygotsky (1981) formulated the trajectory of cognitive development as from the interpsychological plane (or the social plane) to the intrapsychological plane (or the individual plane) by saying:

Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or in two planes: first, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane; first it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an

intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, and the formation of concepts and the development of volition (p. 163).

Put simply, learning first takes place between a child and an expert (e.g. the child's care-giver or parents) when they engage in joint undertaking. The expert assists the young child to appropriate his/her greater knowledge or skills in relation to the task at hand and gradually hands over the task to the young child. The child internalizes part or all of the expertise of the expert and transforms it into his/her own resources that can be used for subsequent participation or for individual thinking and problem solving. The assistance from the expert is mainly mediated by means of talk. Talk plays three crucial and integrated functions in the cognitive development of a child: a) talk as a social or cultural tool; b) talk as a cognitive tool and c) talk as a pedagogical tool to carry out teaching and learning (Mercer, et al., 1999). The three functions will be treated one by one below with the focus on language learning and teaching.

2.2.1 Talk as a social or cultural tool

Like cognitive development in other fields and disciplines, language development finds its origin in social interaction as well. That is to say, learners' language development starts from their engagement in a variety of communicative activities which are accomplished through cognitive and linguistic means (Hall, 2001). Through repeated and extended participation in these activities with more competent language users (normally teachers in classroom settings), learners acquire the whole set of communicative competence, which consists of the ability to manipulate language structures, the ability to choose the language which is appropriate to the occasion, the ability to compensate for communicative breakdowns and the ability to manage conversational turns effectively and to make coherently extended utterances (Canale & Swain, 1980). In addition, through joint participation with the more skilled and knowledgeable, the learner also develops shared understanding and perspective (known as "intersubjectivity" (Mercer, 1992:217)) of the task at hand, which provides contexts for future cooperation (Wells, 1992). Linguistic and cognitive development occur when

the learner internalizes the specific means and resources used to accomplish a particular activity. As Donato (1994:37) explained, “the experienced individual is often observed to guide, support, and shape actions of the novice, who, in turn, internalises the expert’s strategic processes”.

From this viewpoint, language learning is a process of “changing participation” (Young & Miller, 2004:519), which leads learners from peripheral participation in communicative activities as a result of limited linguistic resources to full participation as they acquire more linguistic resources and communicative skills. In this process, language learners not only appropriate the knowledge and communicative skills of more competent and experienced members but are enculturated into accepting the values, attitudes and beliefs the experts hold towards language learning.

2.2.2 Talk as a cognitive tool

Another key concept to understanding language development from a sociocultural perspective is talk as a tool mediating individual mental development. It stands between language and language learners, facilitating learners’ language development in the same fashion as calculators are used to help with calculation, computers are used to store up data, etc. In language classroom settings, through participation in activities which make up daily classroom life and in the communications that accompany them, learners encounter and appropriate discourse tools and practices (e.g. planning, negotiating, summarizing) which mediate mental operations such as “remembering, thinking, and reasoning” (Wells, 1999:136). These mental operations, once mastered or internalized, construct the resources for the learners to process language on the individual level. This processing from the social level to the individual level entails at least a “triple transformation” (Wells, 1999:137): first, a transformation of the individual’s cognitive development and of their ability for more effective participation in the activity; second, a transformation of the situation in which subsequent activity takes place; third, a transformation of the tools and practices which individuals appropriate from the community into their own resources which they can adapt to suit the needs of subsequent activities in similar situations (Wells, 1999).

In this process of transformation, learners are far from being passive. Right from the beginning they involve themselves in interpreting the expert's talk, exploring different possibilities of linguistic resources in their repertoires, observing and analysing communicative behaviours of their more competent interlocutors, trying to make their own sense of the activity at hand. They process language by observing, forming hypotheses, testing and then modifying them if necessary.

2.2.3 Talk as a pedagogical tool to carry out teaching and learning

In light of the social nature of cognitive development, it is self-evident that learning cannot be viewed as an individual achievement (Cole, 1985). On the contrary, Vygotsky stressed the crucial role of more expert member(s) of the community in guiding and assisting the novice to become increasingly more independent and autonomous in engaging in activities. Let us first look at the role played by the child's caregiver in the process of a child's language development. Before the child is able to understand the full substance of what is being talked about, s/he has already been engaged with a variety of forms of communication with his/her care-giver, a much more skilled conversationalist (Gregory, 1994). The participation on the part of the child is made available by the adult's assistance in various forms, for example, by adjusting his/her talk to a level that is comprehensible to the young child, by making 'rich interpretations' of the child's talk (Brown, 1977; Gregory, 1994), by offering linguistic resources when the child gets 'stuck' or by confirming, clarifying or extending the child's attempts. This assistance or guidance is termed "scaffolding" by Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976). Scaffolding enables learners to reach a higher level than they can attain by themselves. The distance between what the learner is capable of achieving unaided and what s/he is able to accomplish with the help of an expert is referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

In classroom situations, it is talk that is embedded in joint thinking and problem-solving that provides the teacher with the opportunity to discover the interests, purposes and current states of understanding of students, in turn, this knowledge enables the teacher to

tune his/her talk and the cognitive demands of classroom activities within their ZPD. The teacher allows the students to take charge of the part(s) of the task which they can handle and offers support and guidance for the part(s) of the task which are still beyond them. Gradually, as the students show signs of independence, the teacher transfers to them the responsibility of completing the task. Thus scaffolding is not just any assistance from the teacher. To qualify as “scaffolding”, it has to be assistance which enables the students to complete a task which they cannot handle alone, and it has to be assistance which is provided with the conscious intention in mind of handing over the principal responsibility to the students themselves (Maybin et al, 1992). Scaffolding makes high demands on teachers. To provide effective assistance, teachers have to be highly sensitive to their students’ emerging needs and capabilities, offering help only when it is needed and withdrawing it when it is no longer needed.

2.2.4 Patterns of classroom interaction

In language classrooms, in and through their interactions with each other, teachers and students co-construct patterned ways of acting and interacting, that is, a particular classroom culture. The notion of co-construction means that classroom discourse is not given but jointly produced as classroom participants act on each other as Mehan (1979:40) commented, “the assembly of classroom events is a joint accomplishment of teachers and students”. Students are by no means passive in this process of co-construction. Student actions, even when receptive, e.g. nodding heads, making eye contact, constantly shape what the teacher does and can do and vice versa. Although patterns of communication are jointly constructed by the teacher and students, there is no doubt that the teacher plays a primary role in them by means of their institutionally-bestowed status.

These jointly-constructed patterns of communication involve a common body of both academic knowledge (e.g. what counts as legitimate subject knowledge; what counts as academic success or failure) and social knowledge (e.g. what counts as appropriate participation; what counts as being a teacher and a student). These habits of participation signalled by the teacher become resources students draw on for their future participation.

They influence particular ways of engaging in content area and particular opportunities for participation in classroom life and ultimately what students have opportunities to learn (Bloom & Theodorou, 1988; Green & Dixon, 1994; Green, Kantor & Rogers, 1991; Gutierrez, 1994; Heras, 1994). By looking closely at the patterns and social practices that emerge from the interactions, we are able to see the learning opportunities that the teacher creates for the students (Green & Dixon, 1994; Gutierrez, 1994). “Learning opportunity” here refers to

access to any activity that is likely to lead to an increase in language knowledge or skill. It may be the opportunity to negotiate meaning in a discussion, to read and derive meaning from a printed text, to explore a pattern in language usage, or to get direct feedback on one’s own use of language (Crabbe, 2003:18).

2.2.5 The role of affect in learning

In addition to creating a challenging and engaging cognitive environment in which students can acquire knowledge, skills and abilities essential to engage in a wide range of communicative activities, the teacher has to attend to the affective dimension of instruction, which involves taking care of students’ “emotions, interests, feelings, beliefs, values, and appreciations” (Kissock & Lyortsuun, 1982:79). The cognitive and affective dimensions are inseparable and equally important in promoting learning and development as Vygotsky (1962: 150) stated: “Thought itself is engendered by motivation, i.e. by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions”. Cognitive development requires the learner to have self-confidence in himself/herself, the desire to learn, the willingness to take risks, the satisfaction and excitement of sharing ideas with others, taking others’ perspectives into account and providing support for others. In turn these qualities contribute considerably to both the individual’s and collective’s cognitive development. Thus one key role of the teacher is to build a caring and safe interactive atmosphere by creating rapport, cohesiveness and solidarity among classroom members. Only in this positive environment will students feel secure to speak out, offering suggestions, voicing opinions, challenging the teacher’s or other students’ thoughts and

opinions with the knowledge that their contributions are much welcomed and valued and that their mistakes are acceptable. As Wells (1999:333) concisely noted, “learning will be most successful when it is mediated by interaction that expresses mutual respect, trust and concern”.

2.2.6 A social view of language and language learning

From the sociocultural perspective, language is a social semiotic system just like music, art, dance, architecture, symbols and writing systems which represent life in a particular culture (Hammond, 2001). Rather than being a means of transmitting messages, language can be seen as a vehicle for making meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1997; Hammond, 2001).

This semiotic view of language implies that first, knowledge or meaning is not something that is ‘stored’ in the head and ready to be accessed. It is built and assembled here and now and on the spot when we speak/write or listen/read (Gee, 2004). It is a social construct, “constituted in semiotic systems, with language as the most central” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1997:3). Applied in classrooms settings, knowledge or meaning is constructed in and through daily discursive and social practices of classroom participants. From this perspective, the teaching and learning relationship should be re-conceptualized. Teaching, thus viewed, “is not a didactic transmission of pre-formulated knowledge, but an attempt to negotiate shared meanings and understanding” (Wells, 1985:38). Accordingly, learning is not a process of passive reception of others’ expertise but “an active process of coming to know (expanding one’s meaning potential)” (Hammond, 2001:12).

The semiotic view of language also implies that language, language use and context cannot be separated from each other. They are “mutually constitutive” (Poole & Patthey-Chavez, 1994:4) as Halliday (1978:3) stated, “the context plays a part in determining what we say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context”. As for what constitutes “context”, Vine’s (2003) definition is very illuminating here although applied in classroom settings. According to her, a classroom interaction is an

interrelation of three-layered contexts: within-text context, surrounding-text context and beyond-text context.

Within-text context is what the participants are doing as they participate in the interactions, i.e. it is part of the interaction along with the text; surrounding-text context is the teacher's planning of curriculum units and its enactment in the classroom, which the interactions are part of; and beyond-text context is the wider practice of education that the curriculum unit is part of. (p.101)

Thus a thorough understanding of teacher-student interaction can only be achieved by examining it together with those contextual issues which shape it into what it is.

2.3 A sociolinguistic perspective

The analytic approach adopted in this study is a sociolinguistic approach to the study of social interactions between the teacher and students (Green & Wallat, 1981; Green, Weade & Graham, 1988). The reason for framing the analysis and interpretations in the sociolinguistic perspective is based on understanding the classroom as a social setting where members (teachers and students) construct everyday life together (Green, Kantor & Rogers, 1991). Like in other social settings, members in classroom settings affiliate over time to form a common culture and referencing system which mark them from outsiders. Members in this culture have expectations as to accepted ways of doing things.

The classroom culture is a complex communication environment. As the teacher and students interact with each other, various messages are being signalled and interpreted simultaneously. These messages are categorized not only in terms of the demands made on students for academic responses but for social responses. These two demands are referred to by Erickson (1982:155) as "the academic task structure" and "the social participation structure" respectively.

The academic task structure involves four aspects: “(a) the logic of subject matter sequencing; (b) the information content of the various sequential steps; (c) the “meta-content” cues toward steps and strategies for completing the task; and (d) the physical materials through which tasks and task components are manifested and with which tasks are accomplished” (ibid). In this thesis, I have modified Erickson’s (1982) construct “academic task structure” to “academic participation structure” for two reasons. One is that the changed term better reflects what students were actually doing, i.e. participating in academic activity. The other is to avoid confusion caused by the term, “task” as it is widely-used and multiply-defined in and beyond the field of applied linguistics.

The social participation structure consists of the information about “roles and relationships, norms and expectations and rights and obligations” (Green & Dixon, 1994:231) for participation flagged by the teacher, e.g. who can talk, to whom, about what, when, where, how, for how long, for what purpose(s) (Green, Weade & Graham, 1988). These norms and expectations can include turn-taking, pairs of turns such as question-answer or IRF (Initiation, Response, Follow-up) exchange sequences (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) and listening behaviour in relation to speaking behaviour.

The academic participation structure and social participation structure co-occur and are interrelated. That is to say, first, as teachers deliver academic information, they are simultaneously communicating messages about how students are expected to participate (Randolph & Evertson, 1995). For example, when the teacher says, “what’s the past tense of “seek”, Tom?”, academically the teacher is calling for the past tense form of “seek” and simultaneously the teacher sends the message about how students are expected to participate, that is, responding when called on. And perhaps the designated student, Tom, has to stand up to answer it, depending on the social process established in that particular classroom.

The two aspects of participation structures are also intertwined in the sense that mistakes made by students within the academic participation structure make it hard for the teacher

to maintain the social participation structure. For example, if a student provides undesired content information, the teacher may need to interrupt the interactional sequence of a lesson to rectify it. Similarly, correct answering which is inappropriate in timing or manner may involve the teacher adjusting the logical sequence of the content information to be delivered (Johnson, 1995).

Thus, to ensure that teachers teach what they mean to teach, both sides have to make an effort. Teachers need to issue clear directions, to make clear their pedagogical purposes and expectations for appropriate classroom behaviours at the onset of a lesson. Students have to learn to be competent in perceiving both aspects of participation structures to successfully display their knowledge. Any miscommunication or misinterpretation from either party will engender confusion and even sabotage a lesson.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW (STUDIES OF TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION)

As there is little previous research on teacher-student talk in classrooms for English majors at a university level in China, I have to look beyond this immediate context into FL classrooms in other geographical areas or second language (L2) classrooms or even first language (L1) classrooms to see what previous research has offered. L2 classrooms are those in which the language learned is also the language of the wider community. FL classrooms are those in which learners' exposure to the TL is largely constrained within classrooms (Hall & Walsh, 2002).

3.1 Monologic and dialogic interaction in classrooms

In the following review, I distinguish two types of interaction in classrooms by using Bakhtin's (1984) constructs: "monologic" and "dialogic". One version is associated with monologism, which "pretends to possess a ready-made truth" (p.110). Classroom discourse is viewed as monologically organized if the teacher has a predetermined script in mind. The teacher's and the textbook's voice is the only or the dominant voice. By contrast classroom discourse is dialogic when the teacher follows up on students' contributions to modify or expand on them (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long, 2001). In dialogically-structured classrooms, the teacher's voice is still an important voice but it is only one of the many voices (Nystrand, 1997).

3.1.1 Teacher-initiated IRF and monologic interaction

Several researchers who have used in-class observations to study elementary and secondary education classrooms in the western world (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) have documented a common instructional pattern, "IRF", where 'I' represents an initiating move, usually a question posed by the teacher; 'R' stands for the response, normally a short and simple response from student(s) and 'F' stands for follow-up or feedback from the teacher. The follow-up move is largely evaluative, normally taking the form of an explicit acceptance or rejection of student response (e.g. "well done"; "excellent"; "no") or an implicit indication that the answer is unacceptable (e.g. full or partial repetition of the response with a rising tone). It was later referred to

as the “recitation script” by Tharp & Gallimore (1988) and the “triadic dialogue” by Lemke (1990).

The IRF mode has been empirically revealed to be the default pattern of classroom interaction at all levels of education and in all types of classrooms. Cazden (1988:39) noted that IRF is “the most common pattern of classroom discourse at all grade levels”. Edwards & Westgate (1994:29) described the exchange as “the deep grooves along which most classroom talk seems to run”. The comparatively few studies conducted in Chinese English classrooms (e.g. He, 2001; Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Lin, 1999a, 1999b; Rong, 2000; Tsui, 1985) have reported the same exchange pattern.

In this tightly-framed participation pattern, the teacher initiates topics usually in the form of questions whose answers are normally known to him/her with the purpose of checking students’ mastery of what has been taught. Students are expected to display what they have learnt when asked to. Their display of knowledge is evaluated by the teacher. Through this exchange sequence teachers not only control the direction and content of classroom discourse but forms of student participation. Specifically, by initiating the sequence, teachers have the exclusive right to organize and orchestrate lessons, starting a new topic whenever they want and nominating turns, e.g. whose turn it is to speak, when a student can bid for a turn.

In spite of its ubiquity, there has been disagreement among classroom researchers regarding the educational value of the IRF. A series of studies have documented that heavy reliance on the restrictive IRF limits students’ learning opportunities. For example, in examining her own and others’ L1 classrooms, Cadzen (1988) indicated that the use of IRF was more facilitative of teacher control of classroom discourse than of students’ learning. Worse still, discourse environments such as the IRF could have powerful impact on learners’ epistemologies, i.e. their ways of knowing, longitudinally changing the course of their development. Lemke (1990:11) also criticised the over-use of IRF for limiting students’ opportunity to contribute as he noted, “...students have

little or no opportunity for initiative, for controlling the direction of the discussion, or for contesting teacher prerogatives under Triadic Dialogues”.

Although many previous studies have argued against the extensive use of the restrictive IRF format, few have provided empirical links between long-term participation and learning. Nystrand & Gamoran’s (1997) study is an exception. In an examination of 112 eighth and ninth grade language arts and English classrooms, they uncovered that the recitation script was pervasive in most classrooms. The findings indicated that the strict IRF script adversely affected learning. More specifically, the students who were instructed primarily through this interactional pattern were less able to recall and understand the topical content than were those students from classrooms where there was more discussion, reciprocity and responsiveness between teachers and students. This recitation script was even more apparent in low-ability classes. Across time the researchers found that this tightly-framed instructional discourse was largely accountable for creating inequalities in student opportunities to develop cognitively complex language skills, leading to the widening gap in achievement between low-track and high-track classes.

The studies investigating teacher-student interaction in Chinese English classrooms yielded results similar to those derived primarily from research conducted in the west. For example, Lin’s (1999a) study revealed that the restrictive IRF format was even more apparent in the classes made up of the students from socio-economically disadvantaged families. In the reading lessons observed, the teachers were only concerned with extracting textbook-based information. The researcher illustrated this concern with an episode where one boy contributed something funny from a popular comic strip book as a response to the teacher’s literal comprehension question. Although amused by the boy’s imaginative contribution, the teacher held onto the rigid IRF pattern and insisted on obtaining a reply based on the text. Lin (2000) argued that by controlling the content of the students’ contributions through the IRF discourse format, the teacher created an aversion towards English as a language and culture in the students.

In contrast, some researchers have tried to justify the usefulness of this mode of classroom discourse. For example, Newman, Griffin & Cole (1989:137) described the “gate-keeping” function of the third move by arguing that the three-part structure is “quite nicely designed with a built-in repair structure in the teacher’s last turn so that incorrect information can be replaced with the right answers”. Along a similar line, Cullen (2002) maintained that the feedback from the teacher was especially important in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms as it allowed learners “to confirm, disconfirm and modify their interlanguage rules” (Chaudron, 1988:133). Mercer (1992) pointed out that the sequence could be effectively deployed to monitor students’ understanding and scaffold their learning. Van Lier (1996) disagreed with Mercer with regards to the scaffolding function of the restrictive IRF. According to him, if the IRF was deployed as a way of scaffolding, it must display the visible efforts on the part of the teacher to hand over interaction to students. Unfortunately, in all the data he had examined in ESL and EFL classrooms, the teachers used the F move to close exchanges rather than open up to student-initiated thoughts, hence the sequence did not lead students towards independent functioning.

The findings of van Lier’s (1996) study can be used as a summary of this part of literature review. He commented that while the strict IRF sequence was effective in enabling the teacher to lead students in carefully designed direction and progression, to provide students with immediate feedback on their performances and to maintain an orderly lesson, it “reduces the student’s initiative, independent thinking, clarity of expression, the development of conversational skills (including turn taking, planning ahead, negotiating and arguing), and self-determination” (p.156). In a word, the monologic IRF has its place in language classrooms, however, it should not be made the norm of classroom interaction. A less controlling discourse mode has to be used if teachers desire to raise the quality of teacher-student interaction.

3.1.2 Teacher-initiated IRF and dialogic interaction

If we restrict the use of the F move in the IRF sequence to evaluation, we are not doing justice to the educational potentials of this exchange pattern. In effect, a series of studies

have established that the IRF sequence does not have to be monologic. Wells (1993) proposed that if the third move was used to “extend the student’s answer, to draw out its significance or to make connections with other parts of the students’ total experience” (p. 30), this sequence could be developed into “a genuine dialogic co-construction of meaning” (p. 35). This proposal came about from his having spent extensive time observing a number of science classrooms instructed by what he considered expert teachers. Nystrand (1997) captured this quality of the F move in the term “high-level evaluation”. High-level evaluation consists of not only the teacher’s acknowledgment of student responses but above all, his/her incorporation of student responses into the course of discussion. That is to say, when the teacher gives high-level evaluation, the student typically gets the floor (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). Nystrand (1997) reported that by using high-level evaluation, the teacher not only acknowledged the importance of student responses but challenged students to further their thinking, offered space for student-generated thoughts and provided effective assistance in transforming their understanding. He concluded that high-level evaluation was one of the dialogic bids which could be used to ignite discussion and enhance the length of student contributions.

The interactional potential of the F move is further substantiated by Nassaji & Wells (2000) in their extensive study of the triadic dialogue in teacher-whole-class episodes of interaction in Canadian middle schools. Apart from extending Sinclair & Coulthard’s (1975) work by identifying a wider range of functions realized in follow-ups, the researchers found that it was the F move that determined the nature of the IRF sequence, thus the opportunities students were afforded. When the teacher dominates the F move by evaluation, it suppresses students’ participation. Conversely when the teacher “avoids evaluation and instead requests justifications, connections or counter-arguments and allows students to self-select in making their contributions” (Nassaji & Wells, 2000:400), s/he promotes student participation and offers students more opportunities for learning.

Although Nassaji & Wells’ categories of the F move are sophisticated, Lee (2007) is of the opinion that those specific categories still fail to capture the contingencies the third

turn exhibits. In fact, the F turn is unpredictable and has an infinite range of variants depending on the prior student turn which itself is far from being predictable. Lee's observations based on 46 hours of classroom interactions collected in an ESL classroom shed great insights into the contingent nature of the F move.

Drawing on the data from a scaffolding action research project which involved ESL classrooms in Australia, Hammond & Gibbons (2005) found that teachers used the IRF sequence to increase prospectiveness (Wells, 1999), that is, giving back the responsibility of continuing conversation to students. The transfer of responsibility could be realized by the teachers opening up the F move to students' ideas and perspectives in the form of asking for clarification, elaboration or probing a student's reply. In so doing the teachers extended the interaction with the students and gave them "a greater voice in the construction of classroom knowledge" (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005:35).

3.1.3 Turn-taking

The teacher-initiated IRF interactional pattern reviewed above not only represents the sequence structure of how teachers present and deliver subject knowledge but signifies how teachers apportion communicative rights. Under this pattern, the teacher has a variety of options for regulating turns. For example, in the I move, the teacher can address the question to the whole class or select a specific student to reply. In the F move, the teacher can choose to give the floor back to the responder by asking him/her to modify or elaborate his/her reply or give away the floor to other students.

3.1.3.1 Turn-taking procedures

Turn-taking, or the means whereby classroom participants "take, hold and relinquish the speaking floor" (Poole, 2005:301) is fundamental to all classroom interaction and is essential to understanding the social participation structures of a classroom. Mehan (1979) outlined three basic turn-regulating procedures in teacher-fronted interaction: individual nominations (i.e. the teacher verbally or nonverbally designating a specific student to reply); invitations to bid (i.e. the teacher asking students to indicate their

willingness to reply by some means, e.g. raising hands, maintaining eye contact) and invitations to reply (i.e. the teacher inviting anyone to reply directly).

As classroom turn-taking is dynamic, situated and mutually constructed through the participation of both the teacher and students, it is not as straightforward as it seems to determine which technique is used, especially when the teacher does not issue an explicit direction. Sometimes the way that students interpret the type of turn-allocation is different from what the teacher intends it to be. For instance, when the teacher provides an elicitation, students start to answer if they interpret it as an open bid. However, the teacher ignores their responses and gives the floor only to those who have their hands up. That is to say, the students take the turn-allocation as invitations to reply. However, the teacher intends it to be an invitation to bid. Thus, an accurate pinning-down of the type of turn-regulation has to take the subsequent turn into careful consideration (Poole, 2005).

3.1.3.2 *Turn-taking patterns and learning opportunities*

A few studies situated in the Chinese context document how Chinese students participate in English lessons. In their survey of the participation strategies of 73 non-English major students in a Chinese university, Zhang & Zhou (2004) captured two techniques most frequently used by the teachers to involve the students' participation: individual nominations and invitations to reply. Drawing on the data from observing, audio-recording and transcribing ten teachers' Integrated Reading course at a university level, Zhao (1998) identified four strategies the teachers deployed to get an answer to an elicitation: individual nomination, invitations to reply, students' volunteering and the teachers' self-answer. Students' volunteering accounted for the biggest percentage, which was encouraging. However, the researcher found that the volunteers were largely confined to the more proficient students. Zhao also reported a considerable number of teacher's self-answers and expressed her great concern. She maintained that although saving time, teachers' self-answers led to students' over-dependence on teachers and considerably reduced the significance of eliciting. This observation corresponds to Hu's (2004) findings in his study of university-level English classrooms in China. In his

research, the teachers' self-answers made up 38.9% of the total of the teachers' ways of eliciting an answer.

By controlling speaking turns, the teacher is able to provide differential treatment to student contributions, thus, producing "academic stratification" (Hall, 1997:388). By focusing on the opportunities made available to the students through the teacher's turn management in a high school Spanish-as-a-foreign-language classroom, Hall (1997) revealed how turn-regulation patterns led to different ability groupings and thus different opportunities for learning. One group of students received more interactive attention from the teacher in that they were allowed to initiate topics and even to take other students' floor. Their contributions were often made important and relevant, ratified and valued by the teacher in that he followed up their responses by asking them to elaborate or incorporating their responses into the course of interaction. In contrast, the teacher was less attentive to the other group of students in that he mostly overlooked their initiations or contributions. Even if they were taken up, they were only evaluated. Due to differential treatment from the teacher, two different status groups were formed: primary and secondary participants, in Hall's terms. Although secondary participants took an equally active part or even a more active part in classroom interaction, they were not given as much talking space as primary participants were. Hall argued that the teacher played an important role in distributing learning opportunities by means of constructing different social participation structures with different individual students, and consequently produced two unequal groups of learners. It was not the IRF sequence itself that restricted learning opportunities as many classroom-based researchers have claimed, rather it was both the quantity and quality of the opportunities for participation in the exchange that the teacher made available to students. In addition to students' own attitudes and motivation in language learning, teachers' motivation and interest in giving them participatory rights to engage in classroom interaction also had an important role to play in promoting development of learning opportunities.

3.1.4 Variations to the teacher-initiated IRF

A few studies have argued that by imposing less control over the content and direction

of classroom interaction and allowing for more variations to the IRF structure, teachers can produce more opportunities for student participation in the learning process. One example is Gutierrez's (1994) study of several language arts classrooms engaged in the same event: journal sharing. She identified three types of instructional discourse: the recitation script, the responsive script and the responsive-collaborative script.

In the recitation script, the teacher followed the monologic IRF discourse pattern. She took up the role of being a critic and relegated the students to the role of listeners rather than active participants. The teacher herself initiated comments on the students' writings without providing any space for student-generated ideas. In the responsive script, teacher-initiated IRF discourse sequences were more relaxed: teachers issuing questions for which there were several correct answers; teachers acknowledging and expanding students' responses; teachers accepting any and all student contributions and integrating them into the course of discussion. In the responsive-collaborative script, the teacher was willing to relinquish the teacher-initiated IRF discourse structure and transferred to the students considerable control over classroom discourse. The teachers asked questions with no specific answers. The students were encouraged to self-select and select others. Student-student interactions were welcomed, initiating questions or perspectives or even commenting on their peers' ideas.

Gutierrez found that the students were provided more learning opportunities in the latter two modes of instruction while the fewest opportunities were available in recitation classrooms. The responsive and responsive-collaborative modes of instruction led to more student participation, longer student responses and more complex and topically related student thoughts, while the recitation script contributed to short and truncated student replies and constrained students' thinking. Gutierrez (1994:361) concluded that "by shifting the patterns of what counted as a topic and how students could interact, the teacher opened up options and increased participation among students".

In a similar vein, using Erickson's construct "participation structures" as the analytic tool and drawing on data from ESL and EFL classrooms, Johnson (1995) further

corroborated that by enforcing less control over the content and direction of classroom discourse and by accepting more variations to participation structures, teachers generate more opportunities for the students' language use. Less control over the content of the discourse could entail allowing the students to initiate topics which were of great interest to them and accepting any student contribution on the topic. More acceptable variability to the IRF sequence involved allowing the students to self-select and interact with each other and giving them latitude to choose how and when they participated.

3.1.5 Student-initiated interaction

Recently some researchers began to shift their focus from teacher-initiated IRF exchanges to student-initiated interaction. Sunderland (2001) argued that student-initiated exchanges warrant great research interest as students are those who are supposed to benefit from classroom discourse and student-initiated exchanges have received much less attention than they deserve. Candela (1999) claimed that the IRF sequence as such does not determine who is in control of classroom discourse.

Candela (1999) reported how the students in his study influenced classroom discourse and thus gained some power over it by not only expressing their own judgments and defending them but openly evaluating the teachers' and their peers' assertions. Focusing largely on student-initiated questions in a FL classroom, Sunderland (2001) found that the students did initiate questions, both academic and procedural and they even followed up the teachers' replies to their initiations. Nikula's (2007) study further confirmed that students could break away from the teacher's control in the IRF pattern and bring their cognition, content knowledge and discourse strategies into play.

Both Candela (1999) and Sunderland (2001) suggested a link between the frequency and nature of student initiations and what the students were academically involved in. More specifically, as Candela (1999) claimed:

when the students get more engaged with the academic task, their participation in knowledge construction is more active and they can

manage to make various discursual “moves” to use their power and wield it (p. 157).

3.2 Questioning behaviors

Given the importance of questions in eliciting students’ responses and engaging their participation, a lot of studies of questions have been done both in content and language classrooms. They have different points of emphasis. Some studies focused on demarcating question types and the effects of the question types on student learning. Others looked at questions in interaction, exploring the ways teachers modified questions to facilitate student learning. Still others centred on how teachers jointly constructed knowledge with students by way of questions.

3.2.1 Types of questions

Researchers have used many different ways to classify questions to suit their own research purposes. The following categories have proved useful in my study: open-ended, closed, display, referential, types of elicitation, and cognitive level.

Barnes (1969) initiated the distinction between open-ended and closed questions on the basis of the openness of content. An open-ended question allows for more than one right answer (e.g. “what do you think of the movie?”) while a closed question expects only one right answer (e.g. “did you return the book to the library?”).

With an increased concern for communication in language classrooms, several other studies (e.g. Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Pica & Long, 1986) have distinguished between display questions (i.e. questions for which the teacher knows the answer) and referential questions (i.e. questions for which the response is not known to the teacher) in ESL classrooms. The distinction between display and referential questions is similar to that between closed and open-ended questions. However, they differ in that referential questions may be either open or closed but display questions tend to be closed.

Many researchers (e.g. Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Nunan, 1987; Pica & Long, 1986) in the west have reported that in language classrooms, the number of display questions issued by teachers was far greater than that of referential questions. Studies in English classrooms in China have yielded similar results. In a study of teacher talk in the Integrated Reading course at a Chinese university, Zhao (1998) revealed the prevalence of display questions in the classes observed. This finding was echoed by Hu (2004). In an investigation of questioning behaviours of four university teachers' English classrooms in mainland China, Hu found that display questions asked by the teachers accounted for 68% of the questions asked in total. By contrast, in a study to examine teacher discourse in university English classrooms in China, Zhou & Zhou (2002) reported that the most prevalent question type raised by the teachers observed was referential questions rather than display questions. The range of referential questions was from 73% to 82% in the four teachers observed who were believed to organize their classes in a student-centred mode. Unfortunately the researchers did not give any description of what their student-centred classrooms were like or the discourse environments which the referential questions were embedded in as these descriptions might help account for the notable differences between this particular study and the aforementioned ones in the use of question type.

The distinction between display and referential questions is not without critics. Banbrook & Skehan (1990) pointed out that the classification of display and referential questions was sometimes not as clear-cut as it looked in studies like those cited above. In Banbrook & Skehan's data, some display questions had "referential" features while some referential questions had a lot of "displayness" in them. Similarly, Nunn (1999) also pointed out the difficulty in categorising questions as either display or referential. He proposed a three-level analysis in order to better capture the pedagogical functions display questions can undertake in classrooms. Furthermore, the studies referred to above classified teachers' questions based on the researchers' own assumptions and interpretations. They did not investigate either the teacher's intention in posing the questions or the students' interpretations of the questions. Hence there was a strong need for the inclusion of a qualitative perspective which draws on an emic (or insider)

viewpoint and adopts a more holistic approach. For example, using a sequential analysis to investigate teachers' display questions, Lee (2006) brought into view the contingent nature of teacher questioning, how each display question in the series was tied to the prior student reply and acted on it.

Some researchers have classified questions in terms of their eliciting functions. For example, focusing on the function of student responses prospected by the elicitation, Tsui (1985) classified elicitation into six subcategories: a) informing: inviting the addressee to supply a piece of information; b) confirming: inviting the addressee to confirm the speaker's assumption; c) agreeing: inviting the addressee to agree with the speaker's statement; d) committing: inviting the addressee to commit to further interaction; e) repeating: inviting the addressee to repeat the previous utterance(s) and f) clarifying: inviting the addressee to clarify the previous utterance(s).

Another taxonomy of teacher questions focused on the cognitive level: higher and lower level questions. Redfield & Rousseau (1981) defined higher level questions as those requiring students to manipulate information learnt to create or support a response with sound evidence. The mental operations involved in higher order questions are application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation in Bloom et al's (1965) taxonomy, e.g. "what do you think is the best way to solve this problem?", "what does this reading tell about the personalities of the main character?". Lower cognitive questions were defined as those calling for factual recall of information, e.g. "what's the name of the person who invented the compass?", which corresponds with the questions at the level of knowledge and comprehension (ibid). Mastery of complex and varied cognitive language functions is an important index of language development, especially in the light of the school context (Damhuis, 2000).

3.2.2 Modification of questions

When an initial question fails to elicit student verbal responses or when the teacher senses that a question is difficult or ambiguous, s/he tends to modify the form and/or content of the question by a variety of means, such as, repetition, rephrasing, offering

cues or providing examples. Drawing on data from EFL classrooms in secondary schools in Hong Kong, Wu (1993) reported that the teachers used five questioning strategies when no reply was forthcoming. They were: rephrasing, simplification, repetition, decomposition (i.e. breaking down an initial question into several parts) and probing. Hu's (2004) study added another questioning strategy: chaining, which referred to situations when the teacher tied together two exchanges with a question, e.g. "do you agree with him?", "what do you think of her reply?". The use of this strategy helped the students be attentive to each other's answers as they were likely to be called on to comment on the previous student's reply. Hu found that the most frequently used strategy was repeating the original question. The second most frequently used were simplification and rephrasing. The teachers seldom used probing, chaining or decomposition, which the researcher claimed indicated their unfamiliarity with these strategies. Hu's findings came about after classroom observations and transcript analysis of four university teachers' first and second year English classes in China.

"Wait-time" is the amount of time the teacher pauses after asking the question before nominating a student to answer it, pursuing with another question, directing it to another student or supplying the answer. Swift & Gooding (1983) reported that teachers usually allowed only one second for a reply and if none was forthcoming, they took back the conversational floor. The rapid-fire questions led to short, incomplete and thoughtless answers. By contrast if teachers waited for three seconds or more especially after a student answer, "there are pronounced changes in student use of language and logic as well as in student and teacher attitudes and expectations" (Rowe, 1986:43). Increased wait-time contributed to more varied student participation. Students were no longer restricted to responding to teachers' questions but got the chance to initiate. It also contributed to more student participation. Even quiet students began to become active. Furthermore, there were more flexible teacher responses indicated by fewer discourse errors, greater coherence in the development of ideas; more higher-order teacher questions and improved skill in using students' ideas. These findings in content classrooms have been corroborated by those from language classrooms (e.g. Hu, 2004; White & Lightbown, 1984), which continued to find that extended wait-time increased

the quality and quantity of students' responses and contributed to more participation and greater confidence on the student's part.

3.2.3 Questions and learning opportunities

In language classrooms, learner use of language is closely tied to learning opportunities. A series of studies conducted on the use of teacher questions in ESL and EFL classrooms have explored questioning behaviours and the amount of learner production elicited. Drawing on data from adult ESL classes, some researchers (e.g. Brock, 1986; Long and Sato, 1983) found that the use of referential questions stimulated much longer and syntactically more complex student responses than the use of display questions.

In examining the questioning behaviours of CLIL (Content and Language-integrated Learning) teachers in Austria, Dalton-Puffer (2006) pointed out that it was over-simplistic to classify the question according to its purpose. A question's object (i.e. information that a question stimulates) should be taken into account. She revealed that open questions which ask for reason, explanation, description and opinion evoked linguistically and cognitively more complex student replies than questions for facts. Dalton-Puffer also argued that engaging the students in more complex open-ended questions called for a higher L2 proficiency on the part of the teacher as student responses could lead the teachers in an unprepared and unplanned direction.

Wu's (1993) research in EFL classrooms in secondary schools in Hong Kong confirmed that referential questions did not necessarily lead to higher quality student language use. Students' attitude and motivation had to be considered. In her study, the student responses generated by referential questions were as restricted as those generated by display questions. The researcher offered two explanations. One was that the students were reluctant to show off better performances than their peers by contributing more. The other was that the students were worried about being negatively evaluated by their teacher as the more substantive replies they gave, the more mistakes there would be in them. Wu's study indicated that the type of questions used did not guarantee either the quantity or quality of student discourse. In order to generate more language use, instead

of letting the student get away with a one or two-word reply or no reply, the teachers could probe further by asking the same student further questions, thus s/he could be “forced” to produce a longer answer.

Likewise, display questions are not necessarily ineffective in every context. Boyd & Rubin’s (2003) study justified the use of display questions. They examined student extended turns of talk and the local discourse contexts which facilitated student extended turns in an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom. They found that the teacher’s display questions engendered as many extended utterances as referential or authentic questions. The researchers located instances of display questions and uncovered that the teacher did not use display questions to elicit recall or assess performance as they are typically used. Rather, those questions were mainly employed to be responsive to prior student utterances, to push students to further articulate and extend their thinking.

Working from a sociocultural perspective, McCormick & Donato (2000) approached the questioning behaviours of a teacher of an adult ESL class from a different angle. They examined how questions were deployed as scaffolding devices to enable students to achieve tasks beyond them. This research broadened consideration of the role of questions in language classrooms by looking at questions as “tools for shared cognitive functioning in the social context of tasks, courses, and goals” (McCormick & Donato, 2000:197). It moves beyond the demarcating of question types and focuses on the dynamic nature of questions.

Teachers usually initiate interaction with questions in interrogative form, but questions-in-form are not the only or necessarily the best way to promote students’ engagement. There are alternatives to ‘real’ questions such as statements (e.g. telling, speculating, suggesting), pauses and listening, which Dillon (1988) termed “non-question moves”. In fact, several studies have reported better effects from alternatives to questions-in-form on promoting students’ learning. For example, in a quantitative case study of three American high schools, Dillon (1982) criticised teachers’

overuse of known-answer questions for the effect of signalling the teacher's authority and limiting students' thinking. He argued that the alternatives led to more talk, more profound thoughts and more participation.

Similar findings have been reported by Wood (1992) in a study of L1 classrooms. Wood added that alternatives could enhance authenticity and symmetry necessary for real dialogues, thus encouraging students to offer their views and reveal their knowledge and uncertainties.

In a similar vein, in an examination of the discourse strategies of a particularly dialogic teacher, Verplaetse (2000) found that the teacher employed a particularly noticeable discourse strategy: wondering out aloud (e.g. "I was wondering..."), which "indicates tentativeness and suggests that it is an offering that is open to evaluation and critical appraisal" (Cordon, 1992:176). It was this non-expert position underlying the teacher's utterances that encouraged the students to contribute in order to "help" the teacher.

To sum up, previous research has revealed that the effectiveness of any particular type of teacher questions is tied to both contexts in which they are raised and the teacher's intention in raising them (Wells, 1992). Better questions do not necessarily lead to better answers. Investigation of the effectiveness of teachers' questions needs to take into account both the teacher's intention and the student's interpretation of the teacher's intention. Even if the teacher asks a good quality question, as long as the purpose s/he has in mind remains to test and then evaluate students' recall of information, or to guide students towards his/her way of interpreting the task at hand, the question will not be likely to get a high quality answer. In contrast it will be more likely to hamper students' thinking rather than extend it. By contrast even if the teacher asks a question s/he knows the answer for, as long as s/he shows sincerity to hear students' responses and appreciate them, it may well be effective in promoting more and better student participation. Additionally, students' attitudes, motivations or learning styles also play a part in determining the effectiveness of a particular type of questions. If necessary, different questioning strategies need to be used to enhance students' active participation.

3.3 Feedback

Providing feedback to learners on their performance is one of the most important aspects of teacher discourse. In language classrooms, this feedback may be a response to the accuracy of a student's TL use or to the message of what a student has said. The former is generally known as "corrective (or negative) feedback", defined as "an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect" (Lightbown & Spada, 2002:172). The review below will use these two categories: corrective feedback and feedback on content or meaning.

3.3.1 Corrective feedback

In the literature, a large body of research has been carried out regarding corrective feedback centred on three questions framed by Hendrickson (1978): should learner errors be corrected; how should errors be corrected and who should do the correcting.

3.3.1.1 Should learner errors be corrected

Corrective feedback has been well documented in empirical research in both ESL and EFL classrooms. There seems to be a general consensus among the researchers that: corrective feedback has a role to play in L2 acquisition in that it can prevent learners from over-generalising L1 rules in the L2 context (Rutherford, 1987; White, 1989, 1991); it helps learners, especially adult learners, with abstract linguistic generalizations (Carroll & Swain, 1993); it allows learners "to confirm, disconfirm and modify their interlanguage rules" (Chaudron, 1988:133) and it helps learners notice the gap between their erroneous utterances and the TL, thus enhancing intake, a first condition for learning (Lightbown, 2001; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Swain, 1998).

Some studies (e.g. Kim & Mathes, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Nagata, 1993) that asked learners about their attitudes towards error correction showed that the learners had a strong preference for error correction. However, Zhou & Zhou's (2002) study presented different findings. The university students involved in their study did not like to be frequently corrected. The authors' tentative explanation was that after six years' English learning in middle schools, the students had learnt a lot of explicit knowledge.

When they came to university level of learning, they were eager to get more opportunities to convert their explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge, to put English to communicative use. Thus, as Chaudron (1988) argued, when the issue is considered whether learner errors should be corrected or not, both learners' preference and the effectiveness of error correction should be prioritised. Besides, as Ellis (1990) pointed out, learners' language proficiency and what they are required to do has to be taken into account as well.

3.3.1.2 How should learner errors be corrected

Considerable research interest has been centred on different formulations of corrective feedback and their effectiveness in L2 acquisition and the research has yielded controversial results. Many researchers (e.g. Carroll & Swain, 1993; Chaudron, 1977, 1988; Ellis, Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Loewen & Erlam, 2006) argued for a more direct type of feedback or "explicit feedback procedures", defined as any feedback that "overtly states that a learner's output was not part of the language-to-be-learned" (Carroll & Swain, 1993:361). They contend that an explicit type of feedback is more effective as it indicates the locus and nature of the error. Thus students can notice the existence of the errors and/or revise their hypothesis accordingly. On the contrary, an implicit type provided often in the form of recasts, referred to as "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997:46) or in the form of requests for repetition, is less beneficial as it involves students in a lot of guesswork of the erroneous part (Carroll & Swain, 1993). Some studies (e.g. DeKeyser, 1993; Kim & Mathes, 2001) did not find any significant differences between explicit and implicit feedback. Ellis, Loewen & Erlam (2006) warned that great care should be taken in generalizing the above findings as both explicit and implicit feedback procedures were operationalized in very different ways in the studies cited above.

The studies which measured the effectiveness of the error correction techniques on the basis of learner uptake (i.e. learner's immediate responses to feedback) argue for those techniques which involve negotiation of form. For instance, in their investigation of the effect of feedback type on learner uptake in four French immersion classrooms at the

primary level, Lyster & Ranta (1997) identified six feedback types in the teachers observed: explicit correction (e.g. “we don’t say X in French; we say Y”), recasts (the teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance), elicitation (e.g. “how do we say X in French?”), metalinguistic feedback (e.g. “you need past tense”), clarification requests (e.g. “what do you mean by X?”) and repetition of the students’ ill-formed utterances. Although recasts were identified to be the most frequently used technique, they resulted in uptake much less frequently than did such feedback types as clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback and repetitions. Moreover, elicitations and metalinguistic feedback were much more effective in eliciting student-generated repair, i.e. corrected forms from learners or peers, as they allowed for negotiation of form and offered students an opportunity to self-correct. The authors attributed the negative effect of recasts on student uptake to ambiguity in students’ perception of the teachers’ intent as the teachers also deployed the same technique to respond to the students’ well-formed utterances, which was further corroborated by Lyster (1998). Explicit correction was also ineffective in that by giving out correct forms directly, the teachers deprived the students of opportunities to self-correct and to reformulate.

Of all error correction techniques, recasts were reported to be the most widely used type of corrective feedback in language classrooms not only in communicative classrooms (e.g. Lyster & Ranta, 1997) but in FL classrooms characterized by a mixture of meaning-focused and form-focused instruction (e.g. Lochman, 2002; Tsang, 2004).

Due to their frequent use, recasts have drawn a lot of research attention. Some L2 researchers have accused previous researchers of measuring the efficacy of recasts only by the presence or absence of immediate uptake of the student the recast was addressed to. In a quantitative study of recasts in intensive English language classes in Australia, Mackey & Philip (1998) reported that although the learners did not produce correct forms immediately after the teacher’s recasts, they eventually did in subsequent interactions. Another example was Ohta’s (2000) study. Drawing on data from private speech (i.e. utterances addressed to oneself) of individual learners in a university-level Japanese FL classrooms, Ohta reported that recasts impacted both the addressees and the

auditors. While the teacher was providing recast to a particular student, other students were also actively but covertly responding to it mainly through repeating the correct form supplied by the teacher.

The bulk of studies pertaining to corrective feedback in the SLA framework centred on “implicit vs explicit input or the amount and the type of negotiation involved” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006:376). Researchers working with a sociocultural framework examined the same issue from a different and more holistic standpoint. Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994) investigated the interrelationship between types of error correction and the learner’s interlanguage development. Their data was derived from three ESL learners engaged in writing conferences with their tutor. The researchers developed a 13-point regulatory scale which described the mechanisms of effective help ranging from being implicit to being explicit. The scale was used to operationalize the quality and quantity of assistance provided by the tutor. Over time, the researchers found growth in the learners’ grammar competence as they needed less help to notice their errors and the help they needed became more implicit.

Drawing on the same framework, Nassaji & Swain (2000) provided both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the hypothesis that corrective feedback provided by the tutor within the learner’s ZPD was more effective than corrective feedback offered randomly. The authors also reported that when feedback was offered randomly and in a non-negotiable manner, the more explicit it was, the better result it led to.

The above two studies working with a sociocultural framework offered great insights into the criteria for the effectiveness of corrective feedback, i.e. every error correction was effective as long as “it is negotiated between the learner and the teacher and is provided at the right point or within the learner’s ZPD” (Nassaji & Swain, 2000:36).

3.3.1.3 Who should correct learner errors

A lot of researchers have expressed concerns as to who should correct learner errors, learners themselves, their peers or teachers. Most researchers have argued for self- and

peer-repair on the basis that these two techniques involve negotiation of form and the active processing of language on the part of the learner. Specifically, negotiation of form benefits learners in that it offers them opportunities to revise their hypotheses about L2 and to convert declarative knowledge they have internalized to procedural knowledge (Lyster, 1998).

Some researchers (e.g. Pica et al, 1989; Swain, 1985, 1995) also contend that “pushing” learners in their output, rather than providing them with correct forms may promote their interlanguage development. This concern is also shared by researchers such as Allwright & Bailey (1991), Chaudron (1977, 1988) and van Lier (1988), who argue that teachers should delay the corrective move because it deprives students of the opportunity to fix their own errors. Lyster & Ranta’s (1997) study cited above further corroborates that the feedback types which involve negotiation of form and give students opportunities to provide the target form have a positive effect on L2 acquisition.

3.3.2 Feedback on content or meaning

Based on data collected from an English lesson in a secondary school in Tanzania, Cullen (2002) captured four strategies that the teacher used in the F move: reformulation, elaboration, comment and repetition. A reformulation reshaped the student reply in a more acceptable form; an elaboration extended the content of the student reply and spiced it up; a comment was when the teacher expressed personal opinions on a student reply; a repetition reiterated a student reply for confirmation. Cullen concluded that being responsive enabled teachers to build on student contributions, sustain interaction with students and signal their genuine interest in what students said.

The particular discursive practices used by teachers such as paraphrasing, repetition or listening responses have also been documented in other studies. Verplaetse (2000) found that the teacher replaced evaluation of students’ responses by listening responses like repetition, back-channels in his F move. The other remarkable feature of the teacher’s follow-up was the use of paraphrases. The paraphrasing of a student’s response enabled

all students to hear a clearer and academically more appropriate version of the student speaker's thought. Moreover once recast by the teacher, the student's response became an expressed thought, hanging there for the same student to modify or expand or for the whole class to consider by elaborating on it. By paraphrasing students' incorrect or incomplete contributions rather than judging them, the teacher encouraged the students to continue to exchange ideas or opinions with him.

Similarly, Duff (2000) revealed that repetition could serve multiple functions in studies of content-based high school classes in Hungary and university-level German and Hebrew FL classrooms. The teachers in these studies used repetition to validate student-generated concepts, to give students credit for an idea, to provide cohesion and contingency through the spoken text and interlocutors, to claim students' attention to linguistic details and to highlight the structures where students erred. These findings are echoed by Damhuis's (2000) research into the effectiveness of the "Small Circles with Teacher" project which aimed to promote students' higher level thinking and self-initiated output. The study argued for the use of listening responses to value and respect students' contributions.

However, some researchers have cautioned against the use of paraphrasing and repetition. Hellermann, Cole & Zuengler's (2001) work is particularly illuminating here although their study drew on data from L1 science classes. The researchers expressed their concern about the use of revoicing for further reinforcing the teacher's position as the primary recipient of the student utterances. By rephrasing the student's response, the teacher did not leave any space for students to address each other's opinions. The utterance was directed to the teacher even on the occasion when a student was commenting on another student's answer. Over time, this practice led to the establishment of a community where the students did not hold themselves accountable for each other's ideas. From the observation and audio-recording of the lessons of eight experienced EFL teachers, Walsh (2003) pointed out that the teachers' echo disturbed the flow of students' utterances and resulted in excessive teacher talk, thus obstructing

students' learning opportunities. He proposed that the teachers use echo sparingly and appropriately.

To sum up, the quality of teachers' interaction with students is more crucial than the features of teacher-student talk like repetition, revoicing, etc. The argument presented here is that any particular discursive practice is only useful if it facilitates and enhances students' learning and understanding. A fuller understanding of the effect of a discourse strategy has to be considered in the context "in which such a move originates, the relative positions of the interlocutors, the immediate purposes of the exchange, and the institutional goals and constraints in which the interaction is embedded..." (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996:97).

3.4 Affective dimension

A series of studies on classroom discourse have noted the importance of the affective dimension of classroom discourse for building a positive classroom community and for language development. Christoph & Nystrand's (2001) case study of a ninth grade English teacher is a case in point. Drawing on data from observations and interviews, the authors attempted to search for factors which fostered dialogic inquiry in that class. They found that the teacher's success in promoting an ethos of involvement and respect contributed greatly to the number and kind of discussion that resulted. Through her personal involvement with students, she built up a rich knowledge of her students. She made good use of this knowledge by "directing questions to specific students, based on what she knew of their interests and backgrounds" (p. 8). She encouraged students to air their opinions, even disagreements, and respected those divergent ideas by adopting them or changing her own. In this kind of atmosphere, the students felt secure and comfortable to speak up their ideas and suggestions.

Previous studies have also revealed that teachers can attend to the affective aspect of students' learning by affirming their contributions. Affirmation involves listening to students' ideas, taking their perspectives into account and trying to understand them and whenever necessary providing support for them. It also involves building on students'

ideas and integrating them into the course of interaction. It can be realized through such discursive means as complimentary language (e.g. “that’s an interesting idea”, “excellent”), backchannels which indicate that the teacher is listening (e.g. “um”, “ok”), repetition or paraphrase (Hall, 2001). For example, Zhou & Zhou (2002) reported that the teachers’ positive feedback, especially feedback with specific comment, enhanced the students’ motivation and participation.

In an examination of language learning in a university-level English language and culture course, Boyd & Maloof (2000) explored the roles the teacher played in stimulating a large amount of extended student-directed talk. One particularly noticeable role assumed by the teacher was as an affirmer. The teacher acknowledged students’ contributions by employing student-generated words in his own subsequent utterances. The other technique he used was to comment positively on the student’s contribution and to privilege it by making it a focus for his following teaching. In this way, he conveyed the message that he was genuinely interested in students’ ideas and honoured them. Likewise, an exemplary ninth-grade English teacher in Nystrand’s (1997) study validated students’ contributions by first certifying them and then weaving them into the course of future discussion.

3.5 Choice of language

In EFL classrooms, it is often the case that teachers share their students’ mother tongue and both parties have English as a second language. Since the late 1980s, the use of L1 in FL classrooms has drawn considerable attention and debate. A lot of studies have examined L1 and TL use in such aspects as how much, when and why teachers used the L1 and TL in the FL context and the teachers’ and students’ beliefs and attitudes regarding their use (for a review, see Turnbull & Arnett (2002)).

Research conducted in FL contexts used to focus on the nature and extent of the teachers’ use of students’ L1 and at the same time attempted to capture the factors which hindered or promoted TL use (e.g. Duff & Polio, 1990; Polio & Duff, 1994). The research was based on the belief that in FL learning contexts, as students have little

opportunity for exposure to the TL outside the classroom and teachers are normally the only expert users of the TL, teachers should maximize the TL in class in order to “provide a rich TL environment” (Chaudron, 1988:121) or offer “valuable input” (Ellis, 1994:120) and the TL should be used for all purposes, not only for academic content instruction but for disciplinary and managerial matters. However, recently there seems to be a generally accepted opinion among researchers (e.g. Brooks & Donato, 1994; Cook, 2001; Nation, 2003; Turnbull, 2001b; van Lier, 1995) that teachers should use and permit the use of the L1 as it is an important pedagogical tool, although unbridled use is not encouraged. However, as Turnbull & Arnett (2002) noted, a benchmark for determining optimal TL and L1 use has yet to be established.

Recently there has been increasing research interest in Chinese English teachers’ language choice among Chinese researchers. The review of the literature presented below focuses on empirical studies situated in the Chinese context. In a large-scale survey of 435 English majors and 33 English teachers in a Chinese university across courses and levels, Chen (2004) revealed that L1 was commonly used in English classrooms in China. All teachers observed used L1 in varying degrees, depending on the specific course they taught. Retrospective interviews with them showed that the teachers were generally unaware of the extent of their L1 use. The study also revealed that most often the teachers’ switch to L1 was to enable clear delivery of content, to enliven classroom atmosphere, to improve lesson efficiency and to make up for lack of English proficiency. A majority of participants, teachers and students alike, responded favourably to the L1 use, believing that occasional use of L1 improved the students’ understanding of the subject matter and lessened their anxiety. Most students were satisfied with the amount of L1 used by their teachers. However, due to overestimation of the pedagogical functions of L1, some teachers were inclined to overuse it, thus helping breed teacher dependence.

Luo & Qiang (2006)’s questionnaire which investigated the use of L1 and TL reported similar findings from 331 English majors. The researchers also pointed out that there was no easy answer to how much and when L1 should be optimally used. However,

considering the relatively high English proficiency of English majors, it was proposed that the teachers used TL maximally and switched to L1 only when necessary.

Tang's (2000) empirical study of L1 use within the context of university level English reading classes in China presented very similar results. First, the majority of the teachers observed employed the L1 largely for language work and classroom management. Second, both the teachers and students held positive attitudes towards the use of the L1.

3.6 Teacher-student interaction and context

3.6.1 Contextual issues focusing on teachers

Recently a small body of research on classroom discourse has provided empirical evidence of the aspects of the wider context that shape teacher talk. For example, based on a five-month longitudinal study of whole-class discussions in a primary school maths classroom, Black (2004) identified two contextual issues: teacher expectations and time pressure, and illustrated how they influenced teacher-student talk and the social positioning of the students in the classroom.

Johnston, Woodside-Jiron & Day's (2000) study is one of a few studies that sought to link teacher-student interactional patterns to teachers' epistemologies, i.e. teachers' thoughts about knowledge, learning and teaching. As part of a larger study of 38 fourth-grade language arts classrooms in primary schools, the researchers highlighted the contrasting discourse practices of two teachers with two distinctly different epistemological stances. The teacher who believed that there was one single pre-existing truth and that knowledge was transmittable heavily relied on the monologic IRF mode to reinforce that she was the sole legitimate knowledge provider. She evoked student responses only to check their correctness. She did not invite different ideas from the students and classified as errors those student responses which did not conform to hers. By contrast, the other teacher who viewed knowledge as an interactive process and believed authority was distributed encouraged the students not only to volunteer ideas

but also to challenge her own and each other's ideas. She welcomed and valued different ideas and perspectives from students.

The research conducted in Chinese English classrooms has repeatedly articulated the contextual issues stemming largely from Chinese teachers' traditional transmission mode of teaching. For instance, Zhao (1998) revealed one major issue which contributed to too much teacher explanation in the Integrated Reading Course at the university level. That is, the teachers interviewed believed that their role in the course was to ensure the students' thorough understanding of text passages. The only way to achieve it was through detailed and lengthy explanation.

Focusing on teachers' strategies for providing practice opportunities in 35 tertiary English classes for non-English majors in China, He (2001) concluded that the classroom environment created by the teachers observed was not facilitative of students' language development as they put excessive emphasis on language points and deprived the students of the opportunity to actually use the TL. The data gathered from semi-structured interviews with the teachers revealed some factors which were responsible for the teachers' practices, e.g. the teachers' views on language development, teachers' own language learning and teaching experiences. The teachers observed defined their role as transmitter of knowledge by explaining language points as clearly and thoroughly as possible. What they expected their students to do was to listen attentively and take notes. They were of the opinion that language teaching was all about teaching linguistic knowledge and there was no need to put the TL to communicative use. He also reported the impact of lack of professional development on teachers' teaching practices. As there was no pre-service teacher training requirement for tertiary English teachers, the inexperienced teachers had nothing to resort to in their repertoires but to teach the way they had been taught.

3.6.2 Contextual issues focusing on students

In the last decade or so, as more and more English native speakers come to China to teach English and more and more Chinese students study overseas, there seems to be an

increasing body of empirical and anecdotal evidence of Chinese English classrooms and learners, especially with regards to their learning styles or learning strategies associated with the culture they are from. In most of the existing literature, Chinese English classrooms are portrayed as traditional, teacher-dominated and language details-focused (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 1996; Zhao, 1998). To be more specific, in Chinese English classrooms, excessive emphasis has been put on discrete language points such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation while little attention has been accorded to communicative skills. Rote learning, mechanical practice and translation have been used as the main techniques to acquire English. Chinese learners of English were reported to be reticent and quiet in class. They were reluctant to participate in classroom activities; they hardly volunteered a reply; they seldom answered questions, let alone initiating a question; even if they answered, they gave very brief replies; they seldom voiced their opinions even if they had one; they held back from expressing their views and they looked up to teachers and textbooks as authorities (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Jackson, 2002; Tsui, 1995).

Recent research has sought to uncover what causes Chinese students' relative reticence. Researchers have claimed a myriad of underlying causes for it, of which Chinese cultures of learning were the central concern. The much-cited Cortazzi & Jin (1996) study has shed important insights into this line of inquiry. They conducted questionnaires with 135 students from two universities about what a good teacher and a good student meant to them in English language classrooms and why students hesitated to ask questions in class. The questionnaires were complemented by observations and experience. Their study accounted for the students' reluctant participation in several Chinese traditional values. First, "face" is attached great significance in cultural and social life. To save their own face, the students did not venture an unsure reply for fear of making mistakes and being laughed at. To protect their teacher's and peers' face, they refrained from the confrontation if they had divergent opinions. Second, they put collective benefits before individual interests, thus avoiding bothering teachers with questions which might only belong to themselves. They raised questions only when they could not find out answers themselves. Third, influenced by the Confucian value of

modesty, the students did not want to be the centre of attention or show off, thus waiting for somebody else to speak first rather than making themselves the first one to contribute. Fourth, they respected the elder and senior by looking up at teachers as authority and not challenging them or interrupting them with questions. Similar cultural themes were articulated in other researchers' studies of the reticence of Chinese university students in English classes (Jackson, 2002; Liu, 2006; Peng, 2007; Tan, 2008).

Researchers (e.g. Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Liu, 2006; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Song, 1995) also ascribed Chinese students' non-participation in the teacher-centred format that students had been accustomed to operating in since formal schooling. For example, students were required to wait to be called on and to listen to the teacher attentively and not to make noise. Cortazzi & Jin (1996:748) summarised Chinese students' cognitive style as "learning through listening". This learning style is also revealed in Zhang & Zhou's (2004) study mentioned earlier. The students in Cortazzi & Jin's (1996) and Zhang & Zhou's (2004) studies seldom initiated questions or challenged teachers, which, however, did not necessarily mean that they were passive. In fact, they were taking an active part in a non-verbal way, e.g. listening, thinking and taking notes.

Other causes which have been found to contribute to Chinese students' low interaction level were students' lack of opportunities to use English for communicative purposes and their lack of English proficiency and confidence (Chen, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Liu, 2006; Liu & Littlewood, 1997).

Of all the above-mentioned studies, few linked up student's non-participation to the teachers' discourse style. Jackson's (2002) & Tan's (2008) studies are notable exceptions. Jackson reported that a limited range of questions, the paucity of high-order questions and insufficient wait-time also led to the students' low interaction level. Tan also maintained that the teachers should be partly responsible as they usually expected pre-determined right answers from the students, which held the students from

experimenting with new ideas and the TL. Inadequate wait-time also led to students' brief and disjointed replies or no replies at all.

Littlewood (2000) pointed out that although East Asian students might appear reticent and quiet, it did not necessarily follow that they wanted to be spoon-fed every piece of knowledge by the teacher. His large-scale survey of 3,307 students studying at the secondary and university levels in eight Asian countries indicated that, similar to their European counterparts, the Asian student participants had the desire to discover and find out answers themselves. They preferred more communicative tasks and more active discourse roles.

From a different perspective, focusing on Chinese tertiary students' metacognitive knowledge about language learning, i.e. beliefs and assumptions about language and language learning process, Goh & Liu (1999) reported that the subjects in their study generally considered using a language in daily life the best way to learn it, which implied that many Chinese students had departed from the view of seeing grammar as of primary importance to language learning. However, most of them still held that pattern drills, translation and memorization were effective learning strategies. The explanations offered were that first, they helped the students better cope with all levels of examinations which measured students' mastery of linguistic details; second, these three activities were so frequently implemented in Chinese English classrooms that the students had been accustomed to them.

3.7 Summary

In sum, although research regarding teacher-student interaction is abundant in the west, be it in L1 classrooms or ESL classrooms, when it came to an EFL context as in China, the research is sparse as Chinese researchers have just started to show research interest in this particular aspect. Within the comparatively few studies in this regard in China, first, all of them are grounded in the SLA perspective rather than in the SCT perspective with the exclusive focus on interaction as language development but not as learner development. Second, most of the studies are quantitative inquiries, which fail to

provide a more detailed and holistic picture of the topic under discussion or to “give a true flavour of what is happening” (Sunderland, 2001:33). Third, data remains extremely thin at any level of EFL classrooms in China that is derived from a study over time or from elaborating the link between patterns of communication and learning opportunities. To my knowledge, so far, no researchers have investigated the patterns of interaction established in EFL classrooms situated in China where the teachers and students share the mother tongue and “educational enculturation” (Johnson, 1995:53), that is, social and cultural norms regarding what roles teachers should play, what roles students should play and the expectations, intentions and perceptions of what appropriate participatory and communicative behaviours consist of. This current investigation about patterns of teacher-student interaction in a Chinese context aims to throw some light upon the assumptions derived primarily from research conducted elsewhere.

With regards to contextual issues which shape teacher-student talk, most of the studies stop at a theoretical level and there is very limited empirical evidence. While there is considerable research into Chinese students’ learning styles, little has provided a detailed account of how these cultures of learning are manifested in the way they interact with their teachers. Besides, by and large, the studies focus largely on non-English majors. English majors have warranted little attention in the literature. It is highly likely that there will be different issues which govern their classroom participation from those which shape other groups of English learners as they differ from others in a variety of ways, e.g. learning objectives, motivations, attitudes and career orientations associated with English learning. This thesis is dedicated to adding more substantial evidence to the limited literature currently available.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter is devoted to discussion of the methodology used for the current study, including the data-collection techniques employed.

4.1 Research purpose

The aim of the research is to investigate the nature of teacher-student interaction during teacher-fronted class time of English classes in a Chinese university in order to understand the knowledge construction process of teacher-student interactions in teacher-fronted class time and identify contextual issues which shape teacher-student talk, and then to give implications for future teaching practices.

4.2 The two case studies

Qualitative case studies form the methodological basis of the study. They involve two teachers, Miss Qian and Miss Hou, who were chosen as they were willing to participate, and their respective first year English major classes.

The literature has offered a wide array of descriptions and definitions of the case study, for example: “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context ...in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984:23), “...the qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988:16). Different from other research studies which aim for generalizable findings, case studies aim for “an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy, in its complexity” (Stake, 1988:256).

The case study aligns with my research objectives. My study focused on two single entities, namely two teachers and their respective classes. The phenomenon studied was the interactive behaviours of the two teachers and their students. In order to provide a detailed and in-depth analytical description of the interactive features of the two cases, the researcher went to the research site and collected data from multiple sources in a naturalistic setting, namely, in a setting where teacher-student interaction occurs as it

actually is. The main purpose of the study was not to attempt to generalize the conclusions to a larger population but to gain a thorough and in-depth understanding of the topic at issue and to develop new or revised theory, concepts and hypotheses which provide food for further research.

4.3 Rationale for using an ethnographic approach

The current study is qualitative in nature. Specifically, it employs an ethnographic approach. Watson-Gegeo (1988:576) defined ethnography as “the study of people’s behaviour in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behaviours”. Using Watson-Gegeo’s definition as point of departure, Ramanathan & Atkinson (1999) extended it based on the existing literature. They proposed that first, Watson-Gegeo’s version should not be taken to exclude “case studies of single or very small numbers of individuals as group representatives” (p. 47); second, the term “cultural” should be extended to comprise “basically any more-or-less stable social grouping that takes on its own norms of behaviour, interaction, and socialization in the course of intensive, prolonged contact” (p. 49). As a result, they defined ethnography more broadly as “a species of research which undertakes to give an emically oriented description of the cultural practices of individuals....Ethnographic research aims to bring a variety of different kinds of data to bear in such description, on the principle that multiple perspectives enable more valid description of complex social realities than any single kind of data could alone” (p. 49).

Taken as a whole, these two versions of ethnography have implied several key principles of ethnographic work. These include focus on cultural behaviours of groups in natural settings; relatively long term immersion; the use of holistic research (i.e. examining the issue under investigation within the context in which it is embedded) and the use of interpretive, qualitative approach (Nunan, 1992); multiple types of data and data-collection techniques and the emic (or insider)-oriented perspective. The current study was ethnographic in approach in six aspects:

- a) The researcher immersed herself in the research site for an extended period of time, i.e. about two and a half months. Throughout this period, the researcher observed the participants two hours a day, eight hours a week and interpreted their customary patterns of interaction as reflected in daily classroom life.
- b) The study views the classroom as a culture in which participants construct routine ways of acting, interacting, and perceiving and interpreting everyday classroom life in and through interactions with each other and it focuses on “a particular cultural practice” (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999:52) within the classroom, namely, teacher-student interaction.
- c) The study is naturalistic in that it describes and explains teacher talk as it occurs, attempting to understand it rather than judging it or trying to interfere with it in any way.
- d) Data was gathered from a range of sources which included interviews, observation, audio- and video-taping, oral reports and stimulated reflections. In other words, the researcher relied on observations and the participants’ viewpoints as predominant sources of data rather than imposing an outsider’s viewpoint to gain insights into the issue under discussion (Rubio, 1997; van Lier, 1988). The juxtaposition of the multiple perspectives from the researcher, the teacher participants and the student participants helped reveal the complexity involved in classroom life and teaching-learning processes.
- e) The approach to data analysis was “unstructured” in the sense that it was data-driven. All the categories used to describe the teachers’ or the students’ verbal behaviours were not pre-determined but derived from the data. That is to say, I did not have a pre-conceived notion of what I would find in the data.
- f) The study examined teacher talk by placing it within the broader context of which it was a part in order to gain a fuller and richer picture of the topic at hand.

To sum up, as far as the present study is concerned, an ethnographic approach provides a strategy which enables the researcher to capture the nature of teacher-student interaction in the focus classrooms. In addition it provides a lens through which those often invisible and implicit patterns of life in classrooms are made visible and explicit (Frank, 1999). In the meantime, this approach “honours the complexity of daily life, the local nature of such life, and the over-time nature of learning within and across events of daily life” (Dixon, Frank & Green, 1999:4).

4.4 Issues of reliability and validity

Despite its advantages, the researcher is fully aware of the criticisms levelled at the ethnographic approach. The criticisms are centred on four aspects: a) data collected through such techniques as observation and interview is subject to bias; b) the data analysis tends to be interpretative and subjective; c) the findings obtained lack generalizability and are hard to transfer to other contexts and d) the research is left at the mercy of the untrained researcher (Hammersley, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Selinger & Shohamy, 1989; van Lier, 1990).

To minimise subjectivity and bias in the data collection, the researcher used the strategy of triangulation or obtaining multiple data sources: both methodological triangulation (classroom observation, analysis of transcripts, oral report, interview, stimulated reflection) and data triangulation (transcripts, field notes, audio-and video-taped lessons, taped commentary made by the teachers and students). For example, the evidence I obtained from the interview with the teachers was used to complement and cross-check the evidence I gathered from my observation of the teachers’ actual practices.

In order to strengthen the validity of the data analysis, the grounded theory approach was used. Working on this approach, the data collection and data analysis were conducted in alternation. The researcher coded the data collected from the early stage to generate tentative and initial understandings and interpretations. The initial findings were not only used to inform subsequent observations but were validated by the data collected at subsequent stages to see whether they were consistent with each other. Inconsistencies

and deviations from recurrent patterns were explored, explained where possible and documented. Some of these deviations offered important insights into the third research question regarding contextual issues.

While ethnographic research lacks generalizability, the proponents of ethnographic approach maintain that, unlike quantitative researchers who tend to study large samples in breadth, qualitative researchers elect to study small samples in depth. Thus ethnographic findings are not intended to be generalized to the entire population of which case study participants are a small part. Instead they are used to develop and extend existing theories and hypotheses for future research (Hammersley, 1994).

In ethnographic research, the researcher is “the instrument” (Morse & Richards, 2002:168), i.e. what the researcher finds out is intrinsically tied up with how s/he finds out. Before I began collecting data, I tried out most of the data-collection techniques in one of the English Proficiency Program (EPP) classes at Victoria University. I learnt how to observe the class, how to take field notes and where to place the digital audio recorders and video camera in order to best capture the participants’ utterances. I also piloted the questions for the stimulated reflection sessions with the EPP teacher whose class I observed and the interview questions with several fellow doctoral students. In the course of the actual data collection, I rephrased the questions based on the respondents’ reactions to make sure that my way of eliciting yielded the kind of data required and the largest amount of data possible. Overall, the purpose of trying out the techniques was two-fold: one was to develop the skills of ethnographic research and the other was to rectify mistakes and modify my techniques if necessary. Last but not least, every step of my research design, data collection and analysis was guided by my principal supervisor, an experienced interpretative qualitative researcher.

As Cumming (1994) pointed out, ethnographic researchers always face the dilemma of whether to take an insider’s or an outsider’s perspective. I had been in the setting for four years as a student and another six years as an “Integrated Reading” instructor. My familiarity with the setting was simultaneously an advantage and a drawback. It enabled

easy access to understanding of the issue under investigation, but it had the danger of distorting my interpretations of the behaviours of the participants. To strike a balance, I chose to be a non-participant observer for distancing.

4.5 Participants

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University. In this thesis, the university, the School, the teachers and the students involved are identified by pseudonyms. The two case study teachers are referred to as Miss Qian and Miss Hou respectively. The reason for using a combination of Miss plus a Chinese surname was to reflect the practice in the two classrooms. Both Qian and Hou are Chinese surnames. They were chosen as they were easy for me to distinguish them as Qian is phonetically similar to the Chinese word for “former” while Hou is phonetically similar to the Chinese word for “latter”. I entered Miss Qian’s class earlier than I did Miss Hou’s. In the lesson transcripts, students are referred to by their Chinese surnames. As the same surname is normally shared by several students in the same class, it is unlikely that the students involved would be identified. Thus confidentiality could still be kept.

Before I went to the research site in China, I had already got the approval of the head of the School to carry out this research (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the letter to the Head of the School), and the two case study teachers had expressed their willingness to participate (see Appendix 4 for a copy of the letter to two case study teachers). When I arrived at the research site, first of all, I talked with all the teachers in the School about my research and got their permission for the initial interview (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the letter to all teachers). I then met with the two case study teachers and outlined what they were going to be involved in. Afterwards I went to the two classrooms to invite the students’ participation. I briefed them on the purpose of the study and the procedures, handed out the information sheet (see Appendix 5 & Appendix 6) for them to read and answered questions or concerns they had regarding the research. I obtained the permission of all students in both classes to participate.

4.6 Data collection procedures

The primary means of data collection consisted of classroom observations, audio- and video-taping, oral report, stimulated reflections and teacher interviews. Data consisted of field notes from observations, transcripts from audio- and video-recording the classes and interview notes from the teachers and students.

I planned to enter the classrooms at the very beginning of the semester. However, the first month was a hectic month for the School as it was going through a nation-wide teaching assessment. The head of the School asked me to start my project after the assessment was over. As a result, I entered the classrooms to begin collecting the data on 9th Oct 2006, one month after the semester had started. The data-collection lasted till 19th Dec 2006, the end of the teaching weeks for the semester.

4.6.1 Initial interviews

Prior to the in-class data collection, eleven English major teachers in the School were interviewed in order to situate the two case study teachers within the range of the teachers in the School. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes.

Nunan (1992) categorised interviews into three types. They are, in ascending order of the degree of formality: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. An unstructured interview is directed by the respondents' responses not by the researcher's agenda. Thus the researcher has no control over the course of the interview. A structured interview is the opposite, in which the researcher has total control over where the interview goes and what should come of it by raising the pre-formulated questions in a pre-fixed order. A semi-structured interview stands in between. The researcher prepares some questions in advance, but the researcher is not constrained by these questions. In the course of the interview, the researcher constructs further questions based on the respondent's responses.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews as they are more flexible and suit my research purpose better. I prepared five interview questions (see Appendix 7 for sample

questions). They were points of interest which I was keen on hearing the teachers' opinions on. In the meantime, I kept my mind open and probed further whenever necessary. In this way, I realized my agenda and at the same time I got the chance to hear the respondents' ways of looking at the 'world', especially the ways that were of great concern to them (Silverman, 1993).

The interview followed three procedures: first, I engaged the teachers in some casual chat in order to put them at ease; second, I briefed them on the purpose and procedures of the interview, and asked for their permission to record it. The participants could choose the language of the interview. All except two of them used English and all of them agreed to be recorded. Lastly, I started asking questions, which were all open-ended in order to get the teachers to talk as much as possible.

4.6.2 Class observations

The two case study teachers and their respective classes were observed in turn for a two-month period resulting in a total of 34 observational visits. The two teachers' classes were alternately visited, with the odd weeks devoted to Miss Qian and the even weeks to Miss Hou. Both teachers' classes were visited for five weeks each, four times a week. Each visit constituted one class session with two 50-minute periods. While observing, I sat at the back of the classroom and noted down what was happening in class. I tried to provide as many details as possible in my field notes. In addition, I also made analytical and explanatory comments in my field notes which recorded my initial interpretations and insights of the data and my impressions. In the third part of my field notes, I recorded my data-collection experiences and places where improvements needed to be made upon the data-collection. Thus every day's entry was made up of three parts: observation notes, reflective entry and journal entry.

A lot of researchers have argued for the presence of the researcher in the research site, observing and writing down the participants' behaviours. The fundamental assumption in this data-collection method is that watching and listening are the best ways for the researcher to discover what is happening and to capture the most important events,

which tend to be taken for granted in a setting (Morse & Richards, 2002). By being there, the researcher can “get a “feel” for the atmosphere of the setting” (Zuengler, Ford & Fassnacht, 2005:4) in a multi-dimensional way. S/he observes, listens, feels and interprets. The observation technique is the first-order approximation of the actual events, which offers vital insights into the analysis.

My observations were consistent with a privileged observer approach (Wolcott, 1988), that is, I have privileged access to the two case study teachers’ minds as I have known them for several years through work. And when I was in the classroom, I tried to be unobtrusive, minimizing my interactions with both the teachers and students. If I needed clarifications, I approached the participants after class. I managed to be not much noticed by the participants.

4.6.3 Audio- and video-taping

The observational strategy was complemented by audio- and video-taping. The two classes were video- and audio- taped in turn. Two digital audio recorders were placed in the classroom: one hung around the teacher’s neck, the other put on the frame of the middle window. The video recorder was placed in the open space in one corner at the back of the classroom in order to cover the teacher and the biggest number of the students at the widest range. The microphone of the video recorder was on as well. The pieces of equipment formed a triangle in order to capture the utterances of the participants from different corners. The teachers’ voices could be clearly captured. However, due to practical circumstances, i.e. the size of the class and the number of the students (30 students in each class), student voices could not be adequately recorded especially when they were talking simultaneously or when they were not directly involved with the teacher. However, these undesirable points did not have a significant effect on my project as the teachers were the main focus.

The audio- and video-recorded lessons were made into lesson transcripts. Transcripts have three advantages: a) they overcome the limitations of intuition because they enable repeated scrutiny and visits of the data; b) other researchers have access to the

data about claims which are made; and c) data can be reused and reexamined for new investigations (Silverman, 1993).

4.6.4 Oral report

After each class session, the case study teachers were asked to give a five-minute oral report of what influenced their decisions about their interactions with the students in that particular session. Most oral reports were conducted immediately after class during the 20-minute big break. Some had to be delayed till the end of the day. I was allowed to call the teachers at home to conduct it over the phone. Thanks to the teachers' generosity, sometimes they gave me more time than requested. These oral reports gave me insights into what made them change what they normally did and the chance to clarify with them anything I had observed that was unclear to me.

4.6.5 Stimulated reflection

Stimulated recall is the technique of playing back video recordings to participants and asking them to report their behaviours. A lot of researchers (e.g. Marland, 1977, cited in Nunan, 1990; Nunan, 1991; Woods, 1989) have utilized it to elicit teachers' comments upon their interactive decision making. As Nunan (1992) noted, this technique has at least two advantages: to produce insights into the teaching and learning process which would be hard to obtain by other means and to make the class participants' voice heard. The use of this technique is based on the assumption that when teachers act and interact in class, the judgments and decisions they make is shaped by their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about the nature of language and language learning (Nunan, 1989). I extended the original technique of stimulated recall to stimulated reflection as my participants were asked both to report their behaviours and to reflect upon them. That is to say, the participants' own interpretations were also sought and drawn upon as my data.

The stimulated reflection task was carried out with the participants as soon as practicable after the relevant class session in order to enhance the reliability of the data. Each case study teacher participated in one stimulated reflection session every other week. A total

of five 30-minute stimulated reflection sessions were held with each teacher over the ten-week period of the data collection. The purpose was to elicit the thoughts, judgments and decisions behind their interactional behaviours. Stimulated reflection was also implemented with three selected students each week in order to bring out their understanding and interpretation of their teachers' language use. The students were those involved in episodes selected for analysis or they were randomly chosen. It took each student around 15 minutes each time.

Prior to the implementation of the technique, I identified recurrent interactional features or patterns based on the data collected from classroom observations and the taped lessons. The criteria for selecting episodes for analysis were that they were typical of the types of interactions observed.

At the beginning of the reflection I talked through the following protocol (Gass, 2000) with the participants:

- a) What you're going to say here will be kept strictly confidential.

- b) You're going to watch some video clips of your lesson, which I think interesting, but I'd like to hear your opinion about them. While you're watching them, whenever you feel an urge to say something, you can ask me to pause. Or you can talk after you finish watching the whole clip. Basically you just need to tell me what you were thinking at that moment. After your talk and comment, I may need to ask you further questions.

- c) You can choose the language to be used.

- d) If you agree, all your comments will be audio-recorded so that I can concentrate on what you are talking about.

- e) I will try to control the time within 30 minutes (or 15 minutes when the participants are students), but if you feel like saying more, you are more than welcome to do so.

While eliciting the participants' perspectives, I always started with a very open question such as "Could you talk me through what was going on in class at this time?"; "Could you tell me more about it?" before going on to more focused questions. This way of framing questions can avoid constraining the participants' thinking and allow them to raise issues that are of concern to them, which sometimes come as a 'surprise' to the researcher. While probing the participants, I took care not to "lead" my participants or put my words into their mouths as I tried to find out what they think not what I tell them to think. Before terminating each clip, I would always ask "anything else?" to encourage them to say more. After the first two stimulated reflection sessions, the participants were familiar with the procedures, so I removed the protocol in the following sessions.

4.6.6 Follow-up interviews

In addition to the initial interview, the case study teachers were interviewed two more times: once in the middle of the data collection period and again at the end. The purpose was two-fold. One was to probe the teachers' views on themes arising through preliminary analyses of the classroom observation and stimulated reflection data. The other was to triangulate the data collected through other means regarding those themes. Like initial interviews, follow-up interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix 8 for interview questions). Each interview took half an hour or so. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.

The two months' immersion in the research site familiarized me with the participants, especially student participants. This intensive contact enabled me easy access to their ways of doing and seeing classroom events. The rich and thick data acquired from various sources constituted a valuable resource for research on teacher-student interaction in the focus classrooms and also offered me insights into the participants' views and perspectives. The following chapter explains how I classified and analysed the data.

CHAPTER 5: DATA CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS SYSTEM

The range of data collection techniques described in the previous chapter generated rich and complex data. This called for careful categorisation and analysis in order to discover patterns at various hierarchical levels. I begin this chapter by introducing the system used to manage and retrieve all types of data, then proceed to the data-analysis procedures. I wind up by addressing how I developed the data categorization system and decided on them.

5.1 Data management and retrieval

The data from lesson transcript, observation and oral report was labelled according to the type of data, the participant involved and the session (referring to two 50-minute periods) and week. For example, a lesson transcript in Session 1, Week 4 with Miss Qian was labelled TR-Qian-S1/W4 and the observation notes and oral report with the same teacher on the same day were coded OB-Qian-S1/W4 and OR-Qian-S1/W4 respectively.

The data from interviews was labelled according to the type of data, the teacher involved and the order. Thus the initial interview with Miss Qian was coded IN-Qian-1 regardless of which week it occurred in. So were the initial interviews with all the teachers in the School.

The stimulated reflection data was labelled by using a combination of the type of data, the participant involved and the week where the chosen episode was from. Thus, a stimulated reflection session with Miss Hou about the episodes chosen from Week 4 was coded SR-Hou-W4 and the same session with Miss Hou's students was coded SR-Hou Ss-W4. Labelled this way, I could link up the stimulated reflection data to other types of data.

This labelling system clearly referenced the particular type of data and enabled easy retrieval of the data. It will be consistently used throughout the thesis to reference data sources.

5.2 Data-analysis procedures

I hired student assistants to transcribe the teacher-fronted sections of the audio- and video-taped lessons. Each assistant was responsible for one 50-minute period every week. They transcribed the audio-recordings verbatim, excluding paralinguistic features. They were required to hand in the transcripts one day after they got the audio-recordings so that my initial analysis would not be much delayed. After they handed them in, I double-checked the transcripts against the recordings. Two main reasons for using assistants were to increase the accuracy of the transcriptions through having two different people doing the initial transcription and the checking of transcription, and to free my time up for data analysis.

I myself transcribed the other types of data including oral report, stimulated reflection and interview. In these contexts, participants were allowed to choose the language to share their perspectives. Most of them chose Chinese which enables them to express themselves more clearly and thoroughly. After gathering the Chinese data, I translated it into English. In the process of translation, I tried to retain the flavour of the Chinese version.

All the data was loaded onto the computer software Nvivo (Morse & Richards, 2002) for analysis. All sources of data were put together to form one big project in Nvivo to make it easy to establish links across the teachers and across the types of data.

This computer program has four important advantages:

- a) It is user-friendly. A node (category) is created by simply highlighting any segment of text and assigning a name. Nodes can be easily operated in ways that suit the researcher's purpose. For instance, they can be deleted, renamed, merged and organized into hierarchies or assigned attributes.
- b) It enables the researcher to easily access every instance of the coded category and the context when it occurs.

c) The powerful search tool allows for combining nodes in all sorts of ways in order to search for patterns. Sometimes it may even bring out unexpected patterns the researcher fails to notice.

d) It is designed to handle a large amount of qualitative data.

Miss Hou's class was observed for five weeks in total, four sessions per week while Miss Qian's was observed for two more sessions than Miss Hou's as Miss Qian was slower in progress, thus she needed two additional sessions to be at the same point as Miss Hou. However, due to a technical problem, the data files for the first two sessions in Week 2 for Miss Qian were corrupted, so I had to exclude these two sessions from the close analysis. As a result, the number of sessions which underwent careful analysis was the same for the two teachers.

A review of both my observational notes and the content transcript of a particular session revealed some salient points, which I focused on in the next session. These included themes which recurred as well as points that struck me as unusual or contradictory to what I expected. I closely transcribed those salient points by checking them against the video recordings and adding nonverbal features which were not available in the audio portion.

The transcript is never a "verbatim" reproduction of discourse (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Gibbons, 2006). Transcribing entails the researcher's deliberate, interpretative and analytic decisions as to how much to transcribe, what to include and what to leave out. It is not beyond the data analysis but within it.

Initial reflection on the data revealed that the teachers were assuming a predominant position in classroom discourse. For instance, they talked and initiated topics most of the time. In order to highlight their dominance, instead of employing a linear representation of data, I separated out teacher and students and put them into separate columns. This layout of data made salient the contrast between the teachers and students.

The left-hand position is normally associated with power and control in English scripts. To ensure that the teachers did not simply look dominant by occupying that position, I placed student talk in the left-hand column. It is still evident from the transcript, however, that the teachers were taking up most of the talking time.

I followed two guiding principles when deciding how detailed the transcript had to be. One was to include only those features which serve my research purpose and suit the depth of the analysis (Gibbons, 2006). For instance, questioning behaviors are one of the main features of classroom discourse in any given classroom, the two focus classrooms included. I marked rising intonation as my data showed that both teachers employed this feature to signal that a response was requested or that a response was undesired and/or needed to be reconsidered. The other was to create a coherent and comprehensible transcript. The use of intonation units was the main attempt made to achieve this goal. An intonation unit is a speech segment that occurs with a single consistent intonation contour. Each intonation unit is numbered and begins on a new line. See Appendix 12 for transcription conventions.

5.3 Data categorization

The data was analyzed qualitatively and cycled through multiple times using Nvivo nodes to notice and code pedagogical and interactional aspects of the data. Over time, and multiple iterations of such analysis, recurrent pedagogical and interactional patterns in the data were identified.

Integrated Reading was conducted four times a week. Each time was referred to as a session, which consisted of two 50-minute chronological class periods bounded by the bell ringing. Within each session, seven hierarchical levels were identified through the analysis process. They were, in descending order of hierarchy: cycle of activity, phase, event, participation structures, sequence, exchange and move. A cycle of activity was the biggest unit coded in this system while a move was the smallest one.

The data showed that for the vast majority of time, the teachers were doing academic content. However, there were times when Miss Qian engaged the students in small talk with the purpose of establishing rapport with the students and times when both teachers talked for the purpose of organizing the classroom setting for academic purposes (Malamah-Thomas, 1987). Although everything that is talked about in any given classroom is potentially pertinent to learning opportunities for students, it is the discussion of academic content that is central to providing crucial insights into the patterns of communication established and maintained and the learning opportunities that are made available to the students. Besides, the talk in relation to small talk and administrative issues covered less than one percent of the teacher-student interaction. Therefore I decided to focus exclusively on the class time when the teachers did the academic content.

The data was classified into different levels and examined from different perspectives on the basis of grounded theory. The classification system was mainly developed from an examination of recorded lesson transcripts and sometimes from interview comments from the teachers and students. Some existing classification schemes were adapted, modified and/or extended to accommodate my data. The rationale for different categories will be discussed at length below and illustrated with examples from the data.

5.3.1 Cycle of activity and phase

A cycle of activity is a pedagogical unit in the teacher's planning of each curriculum unit. The cycle of activity was not bounded by chronological sessions. The teachers started a cycle of activity at a particular point in time within the session and continued through a routine. If a particular cycle of activity was interrupted by a session boundary, the teachers picked up the routine the next time they met their students. They were recorded as cycles of activity as they appeared in each teaching unit.

A cycle of activity was composed of a series of parts or phases, which exhibited how a cycle was structured. A phase is a pedagogically marked unit as well. Each phase

represented a shift in the “overall theme or content” (Spada & Frohlich, 1995:30) and its beginning or end was explicitly marked off by the teachers. For example, in the Dialogue I cycle, the teacher announced, “now let’s listen to the tape” to start the Text Reading phase. A new phase, the Questions phase started when the teacher marked the end of the Text Reading phase by “all right” and signalled, “now several questions for you to answer”. The same phase could occur in different cycles. For example, the Questions phase was not only captured in the Dialogue I cycle but in the Reading cycle as well.

After establishing boundaries of cycles of activity and phases, I realized that apart from differences, there were a lot of similarities between the two teachers. I decided to conduct a comparative case study to make the patterns more salient and findings more concise although I did not set out to do that at the beginning. These two levels of analysis had already provided some insights into learning opportunities offered by each teacher and how learning opportunities differed in two classrooms at a macro level. For example, Miss Qian’s Language Structures cycle was a five-part one while Miss Hou structured the same cycle as a seven-part one. However, previous research (e.g. Enright, 1984; Green, Kantor & Rogers, 1991; Green, Weade & Graham, 1988) provided evidence that opportunities to learn were not only influenced by the ways in which the teachers structured and delivered the lesson, but more importantly by what the students were required to do academically and socially. Informed by previous research, I decided to look inside each phase to see what transpired. The event and participation structure levels of analysis were therefore developed.

5.3.2 Event and participation structures

Within the same phase across sessions, there were routines in what the students were required to do. These routines were coded as “events” which were generally defined by the teachers in terms of a configuration of pedagogical focus, academic demand on the students and learning goal to be achieved. For example, within the Presenting phase in the Language Structures cycle, Miss Qian’s students were made to demonstrate

substitution practices in the Student's Book (Cued Dialogue event) whereas Miss Hou's students were required to form their own dialogues based on substitution practices (Created Dialogue event). Each of these two events, Cued Dialogue and Created Dialogue made different academic demands: they called on different linguistic and cognitive skills from the students. The task of building up a dialogue based on the cues differed from that of creating a new dialogue. Moreover, the pedagogical focus of Cued Dialogue was controlled practice and its learning goal was accurate use of the focus language structures whereas the pedagogical focus of Created Dialogue was a communicative task and its learning goal was communicative use of those structures.

An event could occur in more than one phase. For instance, the Opinion Questions event was instigated in both the Lead-in and Questions phases in both classes.

Most phases consisted of more than one event. The events in a phase sometimes occurred in sequence. That is, the teachers dealt with one event first and then moved on to the next one. For instance, in the Lead-in phase in Miss Hou's class, sometimes the teacher engaged the students in discussing some topics (Opinion Questions event) before making them report on the background information they gathered after class (Background Information event) and other times she reversed the order. Sometimes, the events recurred in a series. For instance, in the Language Points phase, we see a Vocabulary Explanation event followed by a Pronunciation event, then another Vocabulary Explanation event and so on. An event can also be inserted into another event as an optional component. Take the Vocabulary Explanation event as an example. Within a Vocabulary Explanation event, sometimes the teachers inserted a Drill Practice event in the middle of a Vocabulary Explanation event for the purpose of offering practice on the target lexical item.

Events were dynamic and constructed. The actual event the students experienced was sometimes not the one the teacher intended. For example, Miss Hou invited student pairs to present their prepared role-plays. However, no one had done their homework. Miss Hou ended up having dialogues with some designated students. The actual event

established was Duologue rather than Created Dialogue planned by the teacher. In other words, the events in my analysis were the ones which actually got “played-out”. However, the gap between the teacher’s intended event and the actual event was carefully documented as it shed important insights into the issues that shaped the teacher-student interaction.

The comparisons of the events between the two classes were made by a two step process: a) identification of all the events in Miss Qian’s class across sessions and b) application of the identified events in Miss Qian’s class to Miss Hou’s sessions.

The cycle, phase and event levels were all analyzed from teachers’ point of view. That is, they represented teachers’ perception of pedagogical issues, which might not be shared by the students as the students might have different learning goals or even a goal to simply get through the class session.

The cycle, phase and event structures all revealed the academic participation structures the teachers followed in their respective classes, that is, the teachers’ pedagogical goals and purposes, the nature of the academic content that the teachers did and in what order they did it.

After having identified events, I looked inside each of them, focusing on how each event was realized in terms of both the academic participation structures, and social participation structures (i.e. how the teachers regulated the ways students were expected to participate in the event). For instance, after identifying Miss Qian’s Vocabulary Explanation event in the Language Structures cycle based on the teacher’s pedagogic purpose, i.e. explaining vocabulary items, I first examined one aspect of the academic participation structures embedded in it, i.e. how the teacher structured her explanation of lexical items. I found that the teacher first provided their definitions, which occurred in the explanation of every target item. Afterwards she sometimes provided examples of the target items and sometimes she covered other properties of the target items such as synonyms, antonyms, parts of speech. In terms of the nature of academic content, what

the teacher was doing was as its title suggests, vocabulary. In terms of social participation structures, Miss Qian realized the Vocabulary Explanation event through the IRF exchange type in which she called for the definition of the item; the students supplied it and the teacher evaluated the student reply. The social participation structure also required that the class answer the teacher's elicitation together.

The participation structures level of analysis was important in providing evidence of routines: a) routines of academic content communicated, the way the teachers went about teaching academic content and b) routines of "norms and expectations, rights and obligations, and roles and relationships" (Green & Rogers, 1991:337) for members.

5.3.3 Sequence and exchange

In order to display the social participation structures established, i.e. how classroom participants negotiated their way through the interaction, the analysis had to go down to smaller levels: sequence and exchange. Not surprisingly, corresponding with many previous studies (see section 3.1.1), the data has shown a prevalent pattern of initiation-response-follow-up combinations. I have adopted Sinclair & Coulthard's (1975) term "exchange" for this level of analysis. Most exchange types they identified in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms in Britain occurred in the two classes this study investigated. Besides, their system showed the sequence management of classroom discourse, i.e. how classroom participants structured their talk in order to move through the curriculum, which aligned with the purpose of my analysis scheme.

Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) identified eleven teaching exchange types: six free exchanges, and five bound ones (which extend and depend on free exchanges). Of six free exchanges, Teacher Elicit occurred when the teachers elicited verbal contributions. Teacher Inform was employed by the teachers to pass on facts, ideas, opinions and information. Teacher Direct was located when the teachers made the students do but not say something. The Check exchange occurred when the teachers ascertained whether there were any problems preventing the smooth progress of a session. The Student Elicit exchange occurred when the students requested information from the teachers. The

crucial difference between teacher and student elicits was that the students never evaluated teacher responses. Very occasionally the students also offered new information. This is how the Student Inform exchange arose.

Of five bound exchanges, Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) captured two types of Re-initiation (R/I) exchange which occurred when the teachers obtained no response or an incorrect response to their elicitations. Both types occurred in my data as well. Through my data, I identified a further three types of R/I exchange, which were not present in Sinclair & Coulthard's (1975) system. The first occurred when the teachers asked for further information, e.g. exemplification, justification or clarification in a small number of cases. The second occurred after a correct student response in Miss Qian's class. The purpose of launching such R/I exchanges was either to require the students to translate their Chinese responses into English or to reformulate their responses in their own words when they answered comprehension questions by reading directly from the Student's Book (see section 7.2.3.1). The third is the student-launched R/I exchange. It occurred only in Miss Qian's class, when the students were asked to question each other at the teacher's request in the Student Comprehension Questions (see section 7.5.2.3) and Student Questioning (see section 9.2.2.2) events. At such times, the students asked for repetition, clarification or justification from their peers or shifted the same question to somebody else when the designated student failed to reply.

Both the teachers' and students' R/I exchanges were analysed for not only when they occurred (i.e. when the teacher received no answer, or an incorrect answer or a correct answer) but also how they occurred (i.e. the techniques the participants employed to launch them).

Like Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), I have also noted that there were instances when both teachers requested repetition from the previous student speaker. The resulting exchange was labelled the Repeat exchange.

Another two bound exchanges in Sinclair & Coulthard's (1975) system: Listing (which occurred when the teachers delayed evaluation until they obtained a couple of candidate answers) and Reinforce (which was designed for the teachers to reinforce directives issued to the students) did not occur in my data.

A sequence is comprised of a free exchange alone or a free exchange plus a number of bound exchanges which extend and depend on the original free exchange.

5.3.4 Move

An exchange is made up of moves, each of which represents the single actions of initiating (I move), responding (R move) and following up or feedback (F move). Both teacher and student utterances were coded for one of these three move types. Besides, student utterances in Miss Qian's class were coded for one additional move, the Initiation as Response move which came about when the students were asked to seek information either from their peers or from the teacher at the teacher's request in the Student Comprehension Questions (see section 7.5.2.3) and Student Questioning (see section 9.2.2.2) events. This move was singled out because it was interactionally significant. Where it occurred, the students were actually initiators of elicitations. It was they not the teacher who led the topic development.

5.3.4.1 I move

Elicitations in my data refer to utterances with the intention of seeking information, which can take a range of grammatical forms: interrogative, imperative and statement.

Four features of elicitations were evident in the data:

a) display or referential questions. When examining teacher elicitations, one prominent feature was the teachers' use of elicitations which they knew the answers to. These were referred to as "display questions". Occasionally the teachers provided elicitations whose answers they could not possibly know in advance, e.g. in the Opinion Questions event when they asked about students' experiences and personal opinions. This type of elicitation was classified as "referential questions". Referential questions also included

those where the teachers might have some idea about possible responses. For example, when Miss Hou asked what kind of bread we have in China, the teacher probably had already had some candidate answers in her mind.

The display questions identified were either language- or message-based. Language-based display questions were sub-categorised based on the specific language aspect involved, e.g. lexis (refers to any noun, adjective, verb, adverb, idiom, phrase or expression), grammar, pronunciation, spelling, function, sociolinguistics and discourse. Similarly, message-based display questions were sub-categorised according to what the students were engaged in, e.g. comprehension questions, topic sentence questions, etc.

One special group of elicitations was when the teachers asked the students to present something. If the teachers asked the students to present something predictable, e.g. Reciting (see section 9.1.1.1), the I move was coded as display-presentation. In contrast, if the teachers required the students to present information that was not easily anticipated, the I move was recorded as referential-presentation, e.g. Created Dialogue (see section 7.1.7.2).

b) open-ended or closed questions. I have noted that most frequently the teachers' elicitations allowed for only one right answer. These were referred to as "closed questions", e.g. "rehearsal means what". Very occasionally, the teacher's elicitations allowed for more than one right answer. These were coded as "open-ended questions", e.g., "who is the leader in your family". In a very small number of cases, both teachers intended closed questions to lead to the ensuing discussion. This type of closed questions was separately coded.

c) high-level or low-level questions. The teachers' elicitations were also defined according to their cognitive demands on the students. Two categories were developed to describe the cognitive level of the teachers' elicitations: low-level questions which required the students to recall or report factual information, and high-level questions which generated personal opinions (e.g. "what part of Chinese is so difficult for

foreigners”), imagination (e.g. “what would you do if you were given one week off”) or summation (e.g. “which is the topic sentence for the first paragraph”).

d) function. The teachers’ elicitation were also described in terms of the language function they sought to evoke. When the teachers elicited to obtain information from the students, the language function prospected by the teachers’ elicitation was recorded as “informing”. Very occasionally, the teachers elicited agreement, confirmation and clarification. They were classified accordingly.

The data has demonstrated that the students also initiated elicitation, which normally took place when the students requested the meaning of a new word in the teachers’ prior utterances or asked for the permission to use L1.

5.3.4.2 R Move

The data shows that most of the time it was the students who spoke in the response slot. When the students answered the teachers’ display questions raised to check how much they learnt, the students’ R moves were classified as giving predictable information. When the students answered the teachers’ questions whose answers the teachers could not possibly predict in advance or which allowed for a wide range of information, the students’ R moves were recorded as giving unpredictable information. Sometimes the students gave a response indicating ignorance such as “I don’t know”, “sorry”, which was also coded as giving unpredictable information. Occasionally teacher R moves occurred when they responded to elicitation initiated by the students.

5.3.4.3 F move

An examination of the data revealed two aspects of the follow-up move:

1) Form-incorporation or message-incorporation in terms of the content focus. I have noted that both teachers reacted to both linguistic form (i.e. form-incorporation) and message (message-incorporation) of what was previously said, although in varying degrees. Besides, in the SR and interview, Miss Hou mentioned her attitudes towards

error treatment: correcting student errors when they occurred to prevent them from being fossilized (IN-Hou-1&3; SR-Hou-W2). Her teaching practices also indicated that she often made formal corrections. Where formal corrections occurred, the teachers' F move was coded as "form-incorporation". Miss Qian tended to react to the message of the students' prior utterances. Where it occurred, it was described as "message-incorporation".

2) how participants reacted to previous utterances. Eleven categories of follow-up move were identified in the data (see Table 5.1 below).

It was very common that one F move was multiply coded as it contained more than one constituent, each of which had a different function.

Very occasionally, students in both classes launched an F move. In Miss Qian's class, students' F moves normally occurred when they supplied a more academically acceptable version of the teacher's prior utterance. In Miss Hou's class, students' F moves came about when they reacted to what the teacher said in the follow-up slot.

Table 5.1 Categories of follow-up

(Note: Examples of the relevant moves are underlined)

F move	Explanations and examples
Acknowledgement	Realized by a fixed set of items such as "aha", "ok", "oh I see", "good" or repetition of previous utterances. Its function is to show that the message has been understood.
Comment	Personal response to previous utterance(s). It could be positive or negative, message-related or form-related, e.g. <i>T: <u>what is a good job in your mind</u></i> <i>Sx: <u>good salary</u></i> <i>T: <u>you only dream about good salary and no work at all</u></i>
Correction	Correction of a previous utterance or indication of incorrectness, e.g. <i>Sx: <u>train tickets are bought and sold</u></i> <i>T: <u>train tickets are bought and sold</u></i>

	<p><i><u>sold not sold</u></i></p> <p><i><u>but sold ok</u></i></p> <p>Correction was recorded on whether it was made on form or message and how it was made.</p>
Elaboration Request	<p>Involving asking the same student for further information regarding the topic of the prior utterances, e.g.</p> <p><i>Zhang: we can have a rest and have a sleep wherever we go</i></p> <p><i>T: <u>in the open air/</u></i></p>
Expansion	<p>Extension of the content of the preceding utterance or the addition of information that is related to it. It involves the addition of new information relevant, e.g.</p> <p><i>Shang: it is possible that professor would come to our university</i></p> <p><i>T: yeah great</i></p> <p><i>it is possible that professor would come to our university</i></p> <p><i><u>and to deliver the speech right/</u></i></p>
Reformulation	<p>Rewording of previous utterances without adding new information, e.g.</p> <p><i>T: there are many man-made satellites</i></p> <p><i>for what purpose/</i></p> <p><i>Sx: for military</i></p> <p><i>T: <u>for military purpose</u></i></p>
Translation	<p>Involving the teacher giving a translated version of a student's L1 response, e.g.</p> <p><i>T: now in our country</i></p> <p><i>how can government raise money</i></p> <p><i>Sx: GUO KU JUAN (treasury bond)</i></p> <p><i>T: <u>treasury bond ok</u></i></p>
Provision	<p>Providing bits of language when a student got stuck, e.g.</p> <p><i>T: XIN DE GUI ZE NE DUI JIN KOU SHANG YOU LI (the new rules are in favour of importers)</i></p> <p><i>Ss: the new rules are in favour of ..</i></p> <p><i>T: <u>importers</u></i></p> <p><i><u>the new rules are in favour of the importers</u></i></p>

Own reply	Providing the teacher's own reply, e.g <i>T: remember extracurriculum activities/</i> <i>Ss: ((no reply))</i> <i>T: <u>KE WAI HUO DONG</u> (extracurriculum activities)</i>
Repetition	Partial or total repetition of the preceding utterances
Repetition Request	Involving asking the prior student speaker for a repetition
Uncodable	When previous utterances are indistinct

5.3.5 Turn-allocation

The social participation structures involve not only IRF exchange sequences but also turn-allocation. I have noted that both teachers employed three mechanisms described by Mehan (1979) to manage turns although in varying degrees: individual nominations, invitations to bid and invitations to reply (see section 3.1.3.1). Much of the time Miss Qian awarded the floor to specific speakers by name-calling, i.e. "individual nomination". Most frequently Miss Hou's students were free to respond, which was classified as "invitations to reply". Both teachers invited the students to bid for the floor as well. Miss Hou issued explicit directives, e.g. "who'd like to...", "anyone wants to ..." whereas most of Miss Qian's elicitations did not clearly indicate the turn-allocation technique used. Determining the type of turn-management required looking at who Miss Qian gave the floor to in the subsequent turn. If the teacher gave the floor only to the student who bid in some way, the teacher was employing the invitation to bid. However, if the teacher accepted the reply called out directly, the invitation to reply had occurred. Other than the turns allocated by the teachers, very occasionally, the students in both classes created turns for themselves, which are categorised as "self-selected turns".

5.3.6 Length of utterance and choice of language

The data shows that there was a marked difference in length between teacher and student utterances. Thus, coding length can give insight into the balance of teacher-student talk and the extent to which the students were provided opportunities to experiment with the

TL (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005) and engage with extended discourse. The measurement of length was based on a turn rather than a move as a turn is more clear-cut and straightforward. A turn is from where people start speaking until they stop speaking.

Most teacher turns were more than three clauses long (each clause contains one main verb), and are described as “extensive”. Only a small number of them were brief, comprising one or two words, e.g. when Miss Hou asked the students to repeat a word after her or when both teachers repeated students’ prior utterances. One or two word turns were described as “ultraminimal”.

Examination of student turns has shown different patterns. Most student turns were “ultraminimal”. Occasionally student turns were between three words and three clauses in length and were described as “minimal”. Only in a small number of cases did students produce “extensive” turns and most of those were not spontaneously produced. They occurred when students presented things they had prepared, e.g. stories, created dialogues, background information. These were described as “non-spontaneous” turns. Occasionally, students took spontaneous turns. These usually occurred in Opinion Questions events.

Both teacher and student utterances were also analyzed for their language choices. The data shows that although most of the time, both teachers and students used English, it was common for them to shift between English and Chinese. However, in their interviews, both teachers expressed their hope of establishing an English-only environment (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-1). Thus, I decided to code the occasions when the teachers and students used Chinese.

In the following chapter, I describe the context of the study in which the research topic is embedded, i.e. how the teachers interacted with their students in their respective classes.

CHAPTER 6: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter provides some background information regarding the university, the School, the English major program, the course and the participants. It also presents an overview of the structures of both classes in terms of cycles of activity.

6.1 The university and the School

The university is located in the capital city of the north-western province of China. Geographically the province is isolated from the rest of the country by a desert and a mountain range, and is economically less developed. Although the university is the best in the area, it is average compared with those universities in more economically developed areas. The university has difficulty in enrolling students from other provinces, thus most students recruited are local. The university is a comprehensive one, made up of different schools, one of which is the School of Foreign Languages. The School of Foreign Languages offers programs in three languages: English, Russian and Japanese. The English Department offers the courses both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The undergraduate English program is a four-year one.

6.2 The English major students

The research was carried out in English major classrooms. Before English majors enter the university, they have already been learning English for about six years. They have finished grammar education and are able to engage in basic daily conversation in English. Their English education prior to entering university is reading- and writing-oriented. So the university stage of education for them is to develop greater overall communicative competence based on their existing competence so that they will be able to engage in English-related careers after graduation.

Through the four-year undergraduate program, they have to sit two nation-wide standardized English proficiency tests: GEM4 (taken in the second year) and GEM8 (taken in the fourth year). Some universities place very stringent demands on their students so that students cannot graduate without passing GEM 4. However, as far as the students from my focus School are concerned, the results of these two tests will have

little effect on them. Other than these two tests, the students are assessed by regular end-of-semester examinations written by their teachers. A few hours per week is allocated to other English courses such as Speaking, Listening, Extensive Reading, Grammar and Press Reading.

There were three parallel first year English-major classes in the focus School at the time of the study. The two classes included in the study both consisted of 30 students, which is also the average size for English major classrooms in China. The teacher of the third class chose not to participate for personal reasons. The students from these three classes were all of the same English proficiency level. The ages of the students ranged from 18 to 20. About 90% of them were from the local province. The classes would remain intact throughout the four-year program. That is, the students from the same class would attend the same compulsory courses together.

6.3 The two case study teachers

The School normally assigns highly experienced and qualified teachers to instruct Integrated Reading to ensure that a solid foundation in language competence is laid for the students. The two teachers involved in the study were Miss Qian and Miss Hou. Like other teachers in the School, both teachers were offered a teaching position immediately after they finished their university education. Miss Qian had been teaching in the School for five years and held a BA degree in the English language and an MA degree in Tourism. Miss Hou had been teaching in the School for 20 years and had a BA degree in the English language. They had been with their respective classes for about a month when the data collection began (see section 4.6).

6.4 Physical arrangement of the classroom

The physical layout of both classrooms was uniform with fixed double desks and individual chairs. There were altogether ten rows, four desks in a row. The students sat in rows facing their teacher. Miss Qian normally stood behind the teacher's desk, which was on the right side of the classroom. Miss Hou usually positioned herself in the middle of the platform in the front of the class. The teachers in the School used blackboards.

While Miss Qian was absent, Miss Hou taught the combined classes for two weeks in a big lecture hall, three times as big as the normal classroom. There was a computer and a projector in the lecture hall, which were not in the normal classroom. In the Lead-in phase in two sessions, Miss Hou used the computer and the projector to display some pictures (see section 7.2.1.3).

6.5 The Integrated Reading course

For English majors in Chinese universities, “Integrated Reading” (which used to be called “Intensive Reading”) is a key course. Despite its name, it is not designed primarily for reading comprehension. It integrates four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to *the Curriculum for English Majors in Tertiary Institutions* (2000), speaking and listening are given priority in the first two years while the other two years are mainly devoted to the development of the other two skills. The course carries the most weight among all the courses offered in terms of importance and time. The focus School timetables eight periods (50 minutes per period) of the course per week for first years.

The School uses a textbook entitled “A New English Course” (Li & Mei, 1998), a course of five levels which are intended for English majors in most Chinese universities. Each level comprises a Student’s Book, a Workbook and a Teacher’s Book. There are altogether 18 teaching units in the Student’s Book. Each unit consists of seven sections: Language Structures, Dialogue I, Role-play, Dialogue II, Reading I, Reading II and Guided writing (See Appendix 9 for one teaching unit from the Student’s Book). There are altogether 18 units in the Workbook (see Appendix 10 for excerpts from the Workbook), corresponding to the 18 teaching units in the Student’s Book. Each case study teacher had a copy of the Teacher’s Book which provides teaching procedures. Other than mandatory textbooks, the two case study teachers also used a supplementary textbook called New Concept English (NCE) (Alexander, 1967) (see Appendix 11 for a lesson from NCE).

6.6 Cycles of activity (Cycles)

From this section onwards I am going to present the findings, beginning with cycle structure as it provides an overview of the program which I am going to address in greater detail in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

The nine cycles identified in the two classes across sessions were:

Language Structures

Dialogue I

Role-play

Dialogue II

Reading

Guided Writing

Workbook

Recitation

Oral Presentation

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below give an overview of the cycles in each observed session in Miss Qian's and Miss Hou's classes respectively. As can be seen in the tables, both teachers' sessions were dictated by the mandated textbooks and were highly ritualized and predictable. The teachers started most sessions with supplementary cycles which were not based on the mandatory textbooks, e.g. Recitation and/or Oral Presentation cycles. Afterwards, they treated the contents of the teaching unit in the Student's Book, moving through the sections: Language Structures; Dialogue I, Role-play; Dialogue II; Reading; Guided Writing except that Miss Qian did not address either Role-play or Guided Writing. Each section formed a cycle. After dealing with the Student's Book, the teachers moved to the same teaching unit in the Workbook. The routine was especially evident when seen across the four sessions which made up each observation week.

Due to Miss Qian's absence, Miss Hou had to teach both her class and Miss Qian's in S3/W2 and S4/W2 and all the sessions in Weeks 3 & 4. Towards the end of the

semester, another teacher who taught one of the three parallel classes was on leave and the School divided this teacher's class into two groups. Some students joined Miss Hou's class in S4/W5. Others joined Miss Qian's class in S1/W6 & S2/W6.

Table 6.1 Cycles of activity in Miss Qian's class

Note: "continuation" in the brackets means continuing on from another session.

Course Week	Sessions	Cycles
1 (Oct 9-Oct 13)	Session 1	Oral Presentation Recitation Reading of Unit 3 Workbook of Unit 3
	Session 2	Oral Presentation Language Structures of Unit 4 Dialogue I of Unit 4
	Session 3	Oral Presentation Recitation Dialogue I of Unit 4 (continuation) Reading of Unit 4
	Session 4	Reading of Unit 4 (continuation)
2 (Oct 23-Oct 27)	Session 1	Reading of Unit 5 Workbook of Unit 5
	Session 2	Recitation Language Structures of Unit 6
	Session 3	Recitation Oral Presentation Dialogue I of Unit 6 Dialogue II of Unit 6
	Session 4	Recitation Oral Presentation Reading of Unit 6
3 (Nov 20-Nov 24)	Session 1	Oral Presentation Recitation Reading of Unit 9 Workbook of Unit 9

	Session 2	Oral Presentation Recitation Language Structures of Unit 10
	Session 3	Oral Presentation Dialogue I of Unit 10
	Session 4	Recitation Oral Presentation Reading of Unit 10
4 (Nov 27-Dec 1)	Session 1	Recitation Oral Presentation Dialogue I of Unit 10 (continuation)
	Session 2	Oral Presentation Recitation Workbook of Unit 10
	Session 3	Oral Presentation Recitation Workbook of Unit 10
	Session 4	Oral Presentation Recitation Workbook of Unit 10
5 (Dec 11-Dec15)	Session 1	Oral Presentation Dialogue II of Unit 12 Dialogue I of Unit 12
	Session 2	Oral Presentation Dialogue I of Unit 12 (continuation) Reading of Unit 12
	Session 3	Oral Presentation Reading of Unit 12 (continuation)
	Session 4	Oral Presentation Language Structures of Unit 13
6 (Dec 18-Dec 19)	Session 1 (combined classes)	Oral Presentation Recitation Dialogue II of Unit 13 Dialogue I of Unit 13

	Session 2 (combined classes)	Oral Presentation Dialogue I of Unit 13 (continuation) Reading of Unit 13
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Table 6.2 Cycles of activity in Miss Hou's class

Course Week	Sessions	Cycles
1 (Oct 16-Oct 20)	Session 1	Recitation Workbook of Unit 5 Language Structures of Unit 6
	Session 2	Recitation Language Structures of Unit 6 (continuation) Workbook of Unit 6 Dialogue I of Unit 6
	Session 3	Dialogue I of Unit 6 (continuation) Role-play of Unit 6 Dialogue II of Unit 6 Reading of Unit 6
	Session 4	Recitation Role-play of Unit 6 (continuation) Oral Presentation Reading of Unit 6 (continuation) Guided Writing of Unit 6 Workbook of Unit 6 (continuation)
2 (Oct 30-Nov 3)	Session 1	Recitation Oral Presentation Reading of Unit 6
	Session 2	Recitation Oral Presentation Language Structure of Unit 7
	Session 3 (combined classes)	Dialogue I of Unit 7 Role-play of Unit 7 Dialogue II of Unit 7
	Session 4 (combined classes)	Recitation

	classes)	Role-play of Unit 7 (continuation) Reading of Unit 7 Guided Writing of Unit 7 Workbook of Unit 7
3 (Nov 6-Nov 10)	Session 1 (combined classes)	Recitation Role-play of Unit 7 (continuation) Workbook of Unit 7 (continuation)
	Session 2 (combined classes)	Recitation Language Structures of Unit 8
	Session 3 (combined classes)	Language Structures of Unit 8 (continuation) Dialogue I of Unit 8 Role-play of Unit 8
	Session 4 (combined classes)	Recitation Role-play of Unit 8 (continuation) Dialogue II of Unit 8 Reading of Unit 8
4 (Nov 13-Nov 17)	Session 1 (combined classes)	Reading of Unit 8 (continuation) Workbook of Unit 8
	Session 2 (combined classes)	Recitation Workbook of Unit 8 (continuation) Language Structures of Unit 9
	Session 3 (combined classes)	Dialogue 1 of Unit 9
	Session 4 (combined classes)	Recitation Role-play of Unit 9 Dialogue II of Unit 9 Reading of Unit 9
5 (Dec 4-Dec 8)	Session 1	Recitation Reading of Unit 11 Workbook of Unit 11 Guided Writing of Unit 11 Workbook of Unit 11 (continuation)
	Session 2	Oral Presentation

		Recitation Workbook of Unit 11 (continuation) Language Structures of Unit 12
	Session 3	Recitation Oral Presentation Language Structures of Unit 12 (continuation) Dialogue I of Unit 12
	Session 4 (combined classes)	Dialogue I of Unit 12 (continuation) Role-play of Unit 12 Dialogue II of Unit 12

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 focus on Miss Qian's and Miss Hou's interactions with their respective classes. Given that the mandated textbooks, especially the Student's Book, dictated the course to a large extent as shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 above, I deal with the cycles based on the Student's Book first in Chapter 7. The Workbook cycle is the subject of Chapter 8. Chapter 9 is devoted to supplementary activities which are not directed by the Student's Book, Workbook or Teacher's Book.

In each of these three chapters, I examine how opportunities to learn were constructed through the ways in which the two teachers organized and structured each cycle. Then I look inside each constituent phase within a particular cycle to see the event(s) implemented by the teachers. Finally each event is scrutinized in terms of academic and social participation structures to reveal the patterns of communication established and maintained.

CHAPTER 7: MISS QIAN'S AND MISS HOU'S INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CLASSES IN THE STUDENT'S BOOK CYCLES

This chapter addresses the cycles based on the Student's Book: Language Structures, Dialogue I, Role-play, Dialogue II, Reading and Guided Writing.

7.1 Language Structures cycle

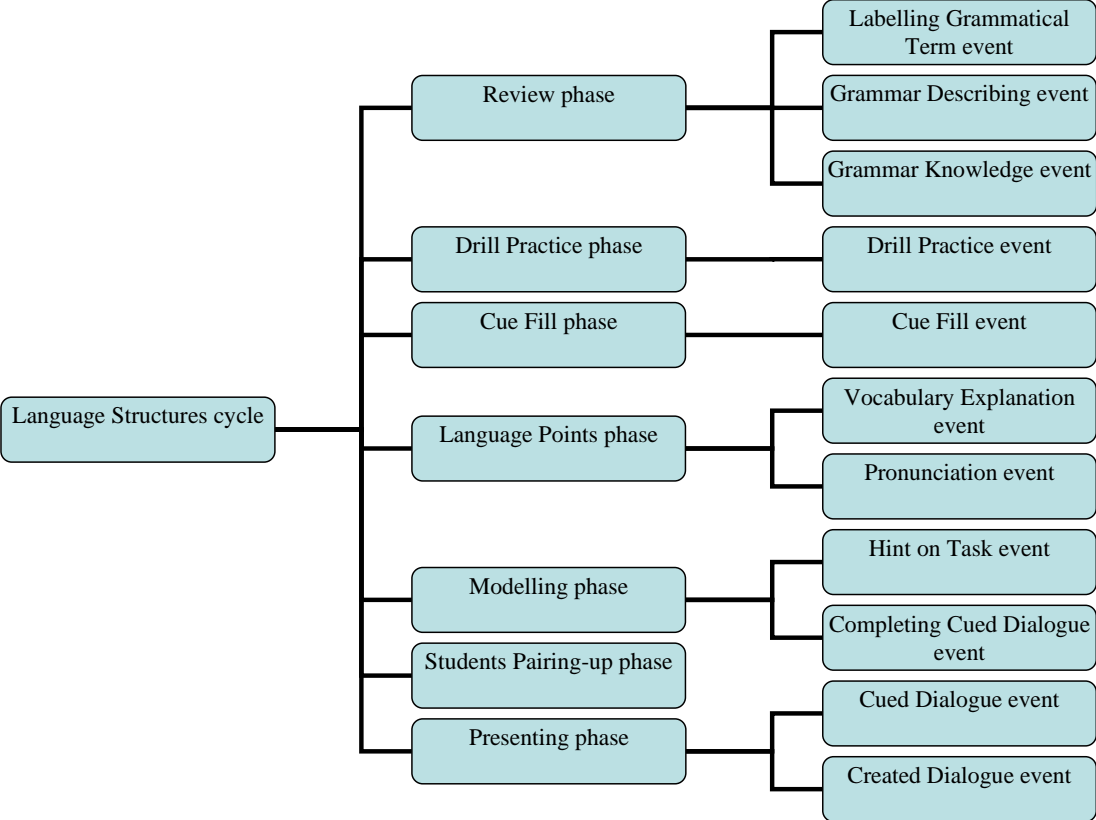
In the Language Structures section in each teaching unit in the Student's Book, the focus grammatical points are displayed in sentences. Following the main teaching points, cues for practice are given and examples of mini-dialogues are provided for each set of cues to show how the cues can be used. The examples are gapped as for a cloze sentence dictation.

The Language Structures cycle focused on language forms and accuracy. In the SR, the two teachers expressed their different views on this cycle. Miss Qian did not think it was worth spending much time on as she did not want to create the impression on the students that Integrated Reading was all about words, phrases and grammatical structures (SR-Qian-W1). In contrast, Miss Hou justified the importance of this cycle by a strong focus on accuracy. She believed that before the students entered the university, although they had already learnt all the grammar and structures, they only knew how to cope with written tests. When it came to TL use, students tended to make a lot of errors (SR-Hou-W1).

Miss Hou always entered this cycle by saying "now + unit number + focus grammatical category". Like Miss Hou, Miss Qian mentioned the unit number, but in most cases, she did not mention the focus grammar category. Instead she used a generic term, "language structures". Also, Miss Qian introduced one session totally differently. When future tenses were the focus, she started the cycle by saying "and here please answer some questions about your future". As Miss Qian had marked off the end of the previous cycle, the mere mention of "future" signalled to the class the beginning of the Language Structures cycle. The students had no difficulty in understanding the teacher's intent (SR-Qian Ss-W4).

Figure 7.1 below gives an overall picture of the phases and events within the Language Structures cycle in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 7.1 Phases and events within the Language Structures cycle



Tables 7.1 and 7.2 below provide a summary of the phases within the Language Structures cycle and demonstrate the overall differences between the teachers in this cycle.

Table 7.1 Language Structures cycle for Miss Qian

Session (S)/Week(W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases	
S2/ W1	Unit 4	Review	
		Cues I	Cue Fill Presenting
		Cues II	Language Points Cue Fill Presenting
		Cues III	Language Points Cue Fill Presenting
S3/W3	Unit 10	Review	
		Cues I	Cue Fill Language Points Presenting
		Cues II	Language Points Cue Fill Presenting
		Cues III	Cue Fill Presenting
S3/W4	Unit 11	Review	
		Drill Practice	
		Cues I, II & III	Cue Fill Presenting
S4/W5	Unit 13	Review	
		Cues I	Language Points Cue Fill Presenting
		Cues II	Cue Fill Presenting

		Cues III	Cue Fill Language Points Presenting
		Cues IV	Cue Fill Presenting

Table 7.2 Language Structures cycle for Miss Hou

Session (S)/Week (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases	
S1&S2/W1	Unit 6	Review	
		Drill Practice	
		Cues I	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues II	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
S2/W2	Unit 7	Review	
		Drill Practice	
		Cues I	Cue Fill Language Points Students Pairing-up
		Cues II	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up
		Cues III	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues IV	Cue Fill Students Pairing-up

S2 & S3/W3	Unit 8	Review	
		Drill Practice	
		Cues I	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues II	Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues III	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
S2/W4	Unit 9	Cues IV	Cue Fill Language Points Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Review	
		Drill Practice	
		Cues I	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues II	Cue Fill Language Points Modelling Students Pairing-up Presenting
S2 & S3/W5	Unit 12	Cues III	Language Points Cue Fill Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Review	
		Drill Practice	

		Cues I	Cue Fill Language Points Students Pairing-up Presenting
		Cues II	Modelling Students Pairing-up
		Cues III	Language Points Modelling Students Pairing-up Presenting

Examination of the tables above shows that the two teachers were similar in that once they finished reviewing focus language structures (Review phase), they began to work on substitution practices in the Student's Book, which are presented in sections such as Cues I, Cues II, Cues III and Cues IV. The teachers were also similar in the routine way they dealt with substitution practices: going through language points (Language Points phase) if there were any; filling in the gaps in the model mini-dialogues (Cue Fill phase), and then asking the students to demonstrate substitution practices (Presenting phase). In spite of overwhelming similarities, the two teachers differed in three ways. First, after reviewing, Miss Hou provided drill work (Drill Practice phase) while Miss Qian did it only once during my observations. Second, unlike Miss Hou who gave the students time to prepare in pairs (Students Pairing-up phase), Miss Qian required the students to demonstrate substitution practices straight away. Lastly, on three occasions, Miss Hou did one substitution practice with the class before getting them working in pairs. This was how the Modelling phase arose.

In sum, Miss Qian's cycle had a five-phase structure (Review, Drill Practice, Language Points, Cue Fill and Presenting), while Miss Hou's had a seven-phase one (Review, Drill Practice, Language Points, Cue Fill, Modelling, Students Pairing-up and Presenting), which further supported that Miss Hou paid more attention to this cycle than Miss Qian.

7.1.1 Review phase

Both teachers started the Language Structures cycle with a Review phase, i.e. going over the main grammatical teaching points involved in each unit. Once the teachers signalled the beginning of the Language Structures cycle, the class knew that the Review phase was started. The students had learnt all the grammatical structures covered in the Student's Book in middle schools. What the teachers wanted to achieve in this phase was primarily to help students brush up what they had previously learnt (OR-Qian-S2/W1; IN-Hou-2).

Based on my observations, both teachers were trying to systematize what the students had learnt regarding a particular grammatical category by covering more than what each teaching unit includes. Take Miss Hou as an example. When the target language structures in a teaching unit were the infinitive preceded by a *wh*-word used as the object (e.g. do you know what to say) and the bare infinitive used as the object complement (e.g. we can see buses come and go), Miss Hou went over the entire category of infinitives.

The structure of the Review phase across sessions was different for Miss Qian and Miss Hou. Miss Qian first dealt with the grammar terminology of the focus structure (Labelling Grammatical Term event). She then proceeded with the Grammar Describing event, which consisted of description of meanings of a grammar phenomenon in the example sentences presented by the teacher. In Miss Hou's class, there was only one event in this phase, i.e. Grammar Knowledge which involved knowledge of the language system.

The difference between Miss Qian's Grammar Describing and Miss Hou's Grammar Knowledge was that the former required the students to work out a particular grammar phenomenon in a given context, i.e. in the sentences provided while the latter was decontextualised.

7.1.1.1 *Labelling Grammatical Term event (Miss Qian only)*

The Labelling Grammatical Term event involved the academic participation structure of dealing with the technical term of the focus grammatical category. Miss Qian attached great importance to grammatical labels as she maintained that English majors were expected to learn how to describe grammar in specialized terms (IN-Qian-2). The following example is an illustration of this event.

TR7.1-Qian-S2/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>Well</i>
	2 <i>because you have learned it in your middle school</i>
	3 <i>now be able to and can</i>
	4 <i>and also have to must</i>
	5 <i>what's it</i>
	6 <i>may had better right/((pointing at example sentences on board))</i>
	7 <i>now those verbs we call what</i>
8 <i>Ss:QING TAI DONG CI (modal auxiliary verbs)</i>	
	9 <i>modal auxiliary ((writing on board))</i>
	10 <i>yes</i>
	11 <i>modal auxiliary verbs right</i>
	12 <i>means what/</i>
	13 <i>QING TAI DONG CI (modal auxiliary verbs)</i>
	14 <i>yes QING TAI DONG CI (modal auxiliary verbs)</i>
	15 <i>if this word without modal</i>
	16 <i>auxiliary verb refers to ZHU DONG CI (auxiliary verbs)</i>
	17 <i>now do or be</i>
	18 <i>WO MEN JIAO ZHU DONG CI (they are called auxiliary verbs)</i>

19 *now modal auxiliary verb*

20 *now we know it's what/*

21 *QING TAI DONG CI (modal auxiliary verbs)*

In terms of the social participation structures, the teacher-student interaction was framed by question-answer (or IRF) sequences followed by teacher explanation. In the Teacher Elicit exchange, the teacher initiated by asking the students a display question designed to elicit the technical term for “be able to”, “can”, “have to” and “must” (1-7). The students replied in Chinese (8) as they normally did, and the teacher evaluated that response by providing its English gloss both in spoken and written forms (9-14). The Teacher Elicit exchange was followed by a Teacher Inform exchange when the teacher explained one component of the expression “modal auxiliary verbs”, i.e. “auxiliary verbs” and gave such words as “do”, “be” as examples (15-18). The Teacher Elicit exchange followed by the Teacher Inform exchange was found to be the second most prevalent pattern in Miss Qian’s class in the entire data set for Miss Qian.

The social participation structures also required that whoever knew the answer respond directly, which was the turn-allocation mechanism Miss Qian was more inclined to use when her elicitation were easy and the anticipated answers were short. Although invitations to reply were the norm in this event, it was not the turn-management mechanism Miss Qian used often in most events.

In this event, the teacher exerted total control over both the structure and content of patterns of communication.

7.1.1.2 Grammar Describing event (Miss Qian only)

The Grammar Describing event involved describing meanings of grammar in example sentences. Miss Qian believed that illustrating grammar through example sentences was the fastest way to help the students review as she did not want to spend much time on it (IN-Qian-2).

The following example displays what happened in this event, which occurred when Miss Qian was dealing with modal auxiliary verbs.

TR7.2-Qian-S2/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now for example</i>
	2 <i>two sentences</i>
	3 <i>Tom has to shave every morning</i>
	4 <i>and Tom must shave every morning</i>
	5 <i>now what's difference in two sentences</i>
	6 <i>Tom has to shave every morning ((looking around to pick a student))</i>
7 <i>Zhang: ((looking at the teacher))</i>	
	8 <i>um Zhang</i>
9 <i>Zhang: DI YI GE SHI BIAO XIAN DE SHI NA GE KE GUAN DE (the first implies objectivity)</i>	
10 <i>KE GUAN QING KUANG XU YAO DE (implies objectivity)</i>	
	11 <i>have to SHI YI GE KE GUAN DE BIAO XIAN (implies objectivity)</i>
	12 <i>SHI YI GE (it's an) objective condition right</i>
	13 <i>now somebody should do something right</i>
14 <i>Zhang: must BIAO SHI ZHU GUAN DE (expresses subjectivity)</i>	
	15 <i>must BIAO SHI ZHU GUAN DE (expresses subjectivity)</i>
	16 <i>that's right</i>

- 17 ((the teacher continuing her turn to give a lengthy explanation in Chinese of subjectivity and objectivity))
- 18 NA HAO (well)
- 19 WO MEN must YONG ZAI ZHE JU HUA ZHONG NI MEN LAI PAN DUAN YI XIA, YOU BIAO MING LE YI ZHONG SHEN ME YANG DE QING TAI (let's look at what must implies in this sentence)
- 20 you must go to the manager's office
- 21 or you must go to the manager's at once
- 22 or you will be dismissed
- 23 Ma: xx
- 24 um Ma
- 25 Ma: I think SHI JIAN YI (it means suggestion)
- 26 um JIAN YI (suggestion)
- 27 HAO (well)
- 28 NA WO MEN ZAI ZHU YI TING YI XIA WO MEN WO ZHE JU HUA SUO YONG DE YU QI (pay attention to the intonation I'm using while reading this sentence)
- 29 you must go to the manager's office at once
- 30 or you will be dismissed
- 31 Ma: TI XING (remind)
- 32 aha TI XING (remind)
- 33 Li: MING LING (order)
- 34 LAI (come on) Li
- 35 Li: MING LING (order)
- 36 MING LING (order)
- 37 NA ME ZAI WO SHUO DE ZHE JU HUA DE YU QI ZHONG NI YOU MEI YOU GAN SHOU DAO YI ZHONG YU QI DE JING PO GAN (do you feel urgency in the sentence I read)

- 39 *NI JIU BI XU ZHE YANG QU ZUO (you must do)*
- 40 *QING JI ZHI XIA NI BI XU ZHE YANG QU ZUO (you must do it as it is urgent)*
- 41 *BIAO MING LE YI ZHONG JING PO GAN (to express urgency)*
- 42 *RU GUO NI BU ZHE YANG QU ZUO (if you don't do that)*
- 43 *NI JIU YAO BEI KAI CHU LE, SHI ZHE YANG MA (you will be dismissed right) ((the teacher continuing to repeat the idea of urgency in Chinese))*

First, let us look at the development of the academic participation structures. Usually the teacher presented a pair of grammatical items in the same sentence, e.g. “Tom has to shave every morning” and “Tom must shave every morning” and addressed their differences (1-17). At times, no comparison was made, for instance, when she dealt with the implied meaning of “must” in the sentence, “you must go to the manager’s office at once or you will be dismissed” (18-43).

In terms of the social participation structures, most of the teacher-student interaction in this event followed the IRF structure in which Miss Qian posed a display question, e.g. “what’s difference in two sentences” (5), followed by a student response, and then the teacher’s evaluation of that response in the form of acceptance (e.g. “that’s right” (16)), repetition (11), translation (12-13) and/or elaboration (17). It is interesting to note that, despite Zhang’s correct reply, the teacher elaborated on the difference between “have to” and “must” in Chinese extensively (17).

However, embedded in these interactional sequences were options, signalled by the teacher to alter the pattern (Johnson, 1995) which came about when the students answered incorrectly or no reply was forthcoming. At such times, Miss Qian would not normally supply her own reply immediately in the subsequent turn as an F move. Rather,

she would launch R/I exchanges in order to bring out the correct reply from the students themselves. The resulting sequence took the form of an IR R/I RF pattern instead. This occurred when Ma gave “I think SHI JIAN YI (it means suggestion)” (25) as the reply to Miss Qian’s initiation, “you must go to the manager’s office at once or you will be dismissed”. This answer did not appear to be correct because the teacher simply echoed it (26) without accepting it with such terms as “right”, “that’s right” as she normally did. More importantly, the teacher hinted to her to pay attention to the intonation she was using while reading this sentence (28), serving as an indication for the students to continue to make attempts.

No matter what technique the teacher chose to signal something was amiss, the students had no difficulty in picking it up and rectified their answer accordingly (e.g. 31, 33), which provided strong evidence of their familiarity with the social and interactional norms of appropriate participation. There were two likely explanations which worked together for the students’ successful participation. One was that the routines had already been set up by the time the study began. The other was that the instruction offered by the case study teachers was not radically different from what they had been accustomed to in middle schools as at several points in the SR sessions the students suggested some similarities by the wording they chose such as “like our middle school teachers”, “same as when we were in middle school” (SR-Qian Ss-W2&W4; SR-Hou Ss-W1&W4).

The turn-regulation norm required that the students wait for a direct nomination from Miss Qian before answering. In TR7.2, the teacher was looking around in order to pick a student. Before the teacher’s nomination, Zhang volunteered by having eye contact with the teacher (7). The teacher gave him the floor by name-calling (8). Other than by eye contact, the students could also signal their eagerness by raising hand or by vocalizing part of the reply as Ma did (23) and Li did (33). Normally when a nominated student spoke, others would remain silent. However, after a nominated student answered incorrectly or declined a turn, the floor was open once again.

In the interview, Miss Qian mentioned that it was her job to explain and what students were expected to do was to listen and think (IN-Qian-2). However, the data showed a lot of interactivity featured by the IRF. There is an apparent contradiction between what Miss Qian claimed she did and what she actually did. However, a close examination of the data shows that first, student interaction was constrained by display questions as the students did not have opportunities to do anything but to produce what the teacher desired to hear; second, interactivity between her and the students stayed at a very surface level, somehow just gluing together what she wanted to state regarding a topic and the question and answer sequences did not have any effect on what was following. The best evidence was that despite Zhang's correct reply, the teacher expanded in considerable detail on the differences between "have to" and "must" (17). That is, the teacher gave the same amount of explanation regardless of what the students answered. The interview with the teacher suggested that eliciting was just one of her strategies to keep the students alert and focused (IN-Qian-2). Seen in these two ways, what Miss Qian did was not far from what she said.

In this event, knowledge was not co-constructed but handed down from the teacher to the students. When the students could not function independently, as reflected in their failing to produce a desired reply, they were led to the correct answer through guessing what was in the teacher's mind. Miss Qian did provide timely help. However, "help" meant getting another student to supply the correct answer. It was not aimed at supporting the students to tackle likely problems in their future independent operating. Judging from the weak voice (38), most students probably still had trouble understanding. However, nobody pursued it further probably because they did not want to trouble the teacher with silly questions or questions which only belonged to themselves as they mentioned to me in the SR (SR-Qian Ss-W3).

A considerable amount of Chinese was used in this event both by Miss Qian and by the students. Miss Qian allowed use of Chinese because it ensured clarity of explanation (SR-Qian-W1). The statements from the students revealed their unanimous agreement on Chinese use in ensuring understanding of some difficult concepts (SR-Qian Ss-W3).

This finding was consistent with that of Chen (2004), Luo & Qiang (2006) and Wang (2003). However, it is also noticeable that the students were not accustomed to the English-only environment both teachers were trying to achieve (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-1). Chinese was often the first thing to pop in their minds even when they were quite capable of expressing what they meant in English (e.g. 25, 31 & 35). This finding was also evident in many other events in both classes.

7.1.1.3 Grammar Knowledge event (Miss Hou only)

The Grammar Knowledge event was the only event in Miss Hou's Review phase. It involved the academic participation structure of addressing knowledge of the language system.

Miss Hou focused on a different grammatical category in each session. No matter what grammatical category was the focus, Miss Hou would cover the entire set of grammatical rules regarding that category, including either the form or the function or both. For instance, in the session with the passive voice as the focus, the teacher addressed the basic form, "to be done" and different forms it takes in different tenses such as in the present tense, in the simple past tense, and in the present continuous tense. For another example, when infinitives were the focus, the teacher addressed its basic form, "to do" and proceeded with various functions infinitives can perform, e.g. functioning as subject, object, adverbial and post modifier.

The social participation structures followed an alternation of Teacher Inform and Teacher Elicit exchanges. In the Teacher Inform exchange, the teacher gave an extended monologue in an I move. The following example displays a series of Teacher Elicit exchanges when the teacher was engaging the class in reviewing the basic formulae (or form) for English conditional sentences.

TR7.3-Hou-S2/W4

Student

Teacher

1 *well/*

2 *we have real conditions*

- 3 *and/*
- 4 *we also have unreal conditions ok*
- 5 *and then/*
- 6 *when the conditions*
- 7 *when the conditions are real*
- 8 *and what kind of tense do we use*
- 9 *suppose you're talking about present and future*
- 10 *so in the conditional clause*
- 11 *you use simple present tense*
- 12 *and in the main clause*
- 13 *ZAI ZHU JU LI YONG SHEN ME (what about in the main clause)*

14 *Sx: future*

- 15 *future tense*
- 16 *yes very good*
- 17 *and if it's unreal condition*
- 18 *and you're talking about present and future*
- 19 *in the conditional clause you use/*

20 *Ss: past tense*

- 21 *past tense*
- 22 *and then/*
- 23 *in the main clause what tense you use/*

24 *Sx: present*

- 25 *past future*
- 26 *Past*
- 27 *past future*
- 28 *Present*
- 29 *future ok*
- 30 *and then/*
- 31 *if it's the unreal condition in the past*
- 32 *unreal condition in the past*

- 33 *then in the conditional clause you use/*
- 34 *Sx: past perfect*
- 35 *past perfect*
- 36 *past perfect tense*
- 37 *and then in the main clause/....*
- 38 *Sx: future*
- 39 *past future perfect ok*

In the example above, the teacher's I moves were elicitation in the form of display questions (e.g. 13, 19); the students gave one or two-word replies together, followed by the teacher's evaluation. The evaluation could take a variety of forms, for example, reformulation when the teacher reformulated one student's reply "future" (14) to "future tense" (15) to make it more academically appropriate; repetition (21) and correction (25). Notice that at the beginning of the segment (10-11), the teacher supplied the tense in the conditional clause herself. This practice on the part of the teacher seemed to indicate to the class what they were expected to do. This seemed to be effective as evidenced by the appropriate student replies in the remainder of this segment.

Despite the teacher's "generous" turn management, with turns opened up to everybody to respond to directly, most of the responses were given by individual students (14, 24, 34, 38). Most students did not respond. The video footage showed that most of the students were looking down, whispering to the peers sitting next to them or taking notes. The students seemed to be less actively engaged compared with in most other events where there were more instances of overlapping speech and multiple contributions to the same elicitation.

TR7.3 above also demonstrates an important feature of Miss Hou's code-switching. Miss Hou used English most of the time. When she switched to Chinese (13), she had already produced the English version (12). Miss Hou tried her best to use English most of the time in class for three reasons. First, she wanted to create a good English atmosphere. Second, she desired to set a good example for her students to follow. Third,

through her talk, she supplied language input for her students to imitate (IN-Hou-1). She usually supplied the Chinese equivalents immediately after the English utterances which she assumed the students might have difficulty with (SR-Hou-W2).

In this event, classroom discourse was highly structured and formulaic in that who talked, to whom, when and about what was pre-determined. The teacher controlled the content and direction of the discourse by initiating all the questions and evaluating all students' responses, which was consistent with the dominant role that Miss Hou believed she was supposed to take up in this event (IN-Hou-1).

Like Miss Qian's students in the Grammar Describing event, Miss Hou's students could participate in the event appropriately with ease as well. However, their responses were equally predictable and brief. The function of student replies prospected by the teachers' elicitations was to provide predictable information. That is, the range of language functions the students in both classes encountered was limited to supplying evidence of how much they knew. This finding is evident in most events in both classes.

7.1.2 Drill Practice phase

The Drill Practice phase consisted of fixed patterns of teacher prompting and student responding on a grammatical structure or a sentence pattern, typically with no focus on meaning (Spada & Frohlich, 1995).

The Drill Practice phase was a much more important one for Miss Hou than for Miss Qian as indicated by the frequency with which it occurred in Miss Hou's class. The importance Miss Hou attached to this phase was consistent with her great attention to practice. In an interview Miss Hou used a metaphor to highlight the importance of practice on students' output:

If people stand on muddy ground, they make very light impression.
However, if they try to jump and then the impression will get deeper so
their jump is like output and standing there is like input (IN-Hou-1).

For both teachers, this phase involved only one event. For single-event phases like this one, I have given the phase and event the same name, in this case, Drill Practice.

7.1.2.1 Drill Practice event

With regards to the academic participation structures, the two teachers differed in that Miss Hou engaged the students in a bigger range of practice than Miss Qian did. The only type of practice Miss Qian offered was sentence-making (i.e. asking the students to make sentences with the focus structure) whereas Miss Hou used three types of practice:

- a) translation, where the teacher supplied a Chinese sentence (1-2) for the students to translate into English such as in the following example:

TR7.4-Hou-S2/W4

Student	Teacher
	1 NI YAO SHI ER LE (<i>if you're hungry</i>)
	2 KE YI DAO XUE XIAO SHI TANG QU CHI FAN (<i>you can go to the school cafeteria</i>)
3 <i>Ss: if you are hungry</i>	
4 <i>you can go to the school cafeteria</i>	
	5 <i>if you're hungry</i>
	6 <i>you can go to the school cafeteria ok</i>

Of all types of practice, translation practice was the most frequently used. My observations indicated that the teacher only needed to say Chinese sentences for the students to know what was expected of them. My own experience and previous research (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 1996) confirm that translation practice was the most common technique Chinese English teachers deployed to provide practice on discrete forms in English classrooms at all levels, which accounted for the students' familiarity with it.

- b) situational questions, which offered practice on two aspects of language: grammar as the primary focus and sociolinguistics as the secondary focus. Below is an example:

TR7.5-Hou-S2/W2

Student

Teacher

- 1 *so now*
- 2 *I'm a stranger here*
- 3 *and/*
- 4 *I want to find way to the school cafeteria*
- 5 *and could you tell me what to say*
- 6 *what to say*
- 7 *how to ask the way*
- 8 *Ss: would you mind telling
me the way to the cafeteria*
- 9 *would you mind telling me the way to the school cafeteria*

In the above example, Miss Hou provided a context (i.e. occasion on which an expression might be used) (1-4) in order to elicit the expression under discussion, “would you mind doing” (8). The elicitation (5-7) was designed to offer the students practice on “would you mind” structure. At the same time, the students were supposed to supply spoken forms appropriate to the context provided.

c) transformation, where the teacher supplied direct speech for the students to change into indirect speech, e.g.

TR7.6-Hou-S1/W1

Student

Teacher

- 1 *the customer says*
- 2 *I'd like to have a pair of rubber shoes*
- 3 *and then in reporting ..*
- 4 *the original sentence*
- 5 *the customer says*
- 6 *and then you use quotation mark ok*
- 7 *I'd like to have a pair of rubber shoes ..*
- 8 *and then/*

- 9 *you change this into reporting*
- 10 *change this sentence into indirect speech*
- 11 *Ss: xx ((all speaking at the same time))*
- 12 *the customer says*
- 13 *he or she would like to have a pair of rubber shoes ok*

In the above example, Miss Hou required the students to transform her sentence (1-2) from direct speech to indirect speech.

In terms of the social participation structures, IRF was the prevalent discourse structure used throughout this event in both classes, where the teachers prompted, the students responded to the prompts, followed by the teachers' evaluations. After receiving a correct reply, both teachers echoed it for confirmation and acceptance. Of all incorporations in the F move (see section 5.3.4.3), the technique of repetition was the most frequently used by both teachers in most events.

The two teachers mainly differed in the way they treated errors. There were no instances of Miss Qian making corrections although my observations showed that there were errors in students' sentences. Given what Miss Qian said in the interview about great attention to accuracy of utterances (IN-Qian-1), a plausible explanation for Miss Qian to ignore errors was that she did not detect them or she was unsure about the accuracy of some sentences. For instance, one student made a sentence, which was correct. However, Miss Qian was uncertain whether it was a correct one or not as she indicated, "maybe it's a sentence" (TR-Qian-S3/W4). By contrast, Miss Hou corrected student errors as much as possible. As to how to make corrections, Miss Hou normally re-started in the I move. The following example presents an R/I exchange.

TR7.7-Hou-S1/W1

Student

Teacher

1 *next one*

- 2 *can you follow me*
- 3 *the teacher says to us*
- 4 *Ss: the teacher says to us if we can
follow her*
- 5 *this is a question right*
- 6 *so in reporting*
- 7 *you should change says to/*
- 8 *Ss: asks*
- 9 *the teacher asks [if we can follow her*
- 10 *Ss: [if we can follow her*

In the example, hearing the students' error (4), Miss Hou re-initiated by pausing before the trouble source (7) and waiting for the students to complete her sentence. This utterance was referred to as "designedly incomplete utterance" by Koshik (2002:279) and it is a common way for language teachers to initiate students' self-correction. After the students' self-repair (8), the teacher then repeated the correct version (9). The Drill Practice event was where the R/I exchange appeared most frequently in the entire data set for Miss Hou. Miss Hou's interview comments suggested that those erroneous utterances the students produced regarding language structures under discussion were where she definitely made corrections as is clear in the above example when the focus structure was reporting language. The use of R/I exchange was probably for the purpose of highlighting the errors and helping the students notice them. The biggest motivation for Miss Hou to correct was to make sure that her students learned correct things from the beginning on (IN-Hou-1).

As in the Grammar Describing event (see section 7.1.1.2), turn-allocation was most often achieved in this event by Miss Qian nominating the speaker. Once designated, the students became only responsible for one elicitation unless they answered incorrectly. However, those who wanted to contribute could volunteer for turn in some way, e.g. raising hand, vocalizing part of the reply before the teacher awarded it to somebody else. By contrast, in Miss Hou's class, all of her elicitations were open to the whole class to

respond to. The invitations to reply were responded to by choral responses, consecutively or in overlap. The overwhelming use of this turn management could be accounted for by Miss Hou's preoccupation with the belief that her students were too shy to speak English in front of the others (SR-Hou-W1). She did not want to either make the students feel nervous or embarrassed by nominating individuals (SR-Hou-W1). Another concern was that a lot of time would be wasted when an individual student struggled to give a reply (IN-Hou-1). Miss Hou's students did not mind answering in chorus in events like this one where answers were unambiguously right or wrong. They listed three advantages of choral answers. First, everybody, especially reticent students, got equal opportunities to talk. Second, they were less worried about making mistakes than being singled out to answer as their incorrect replies were not easily identified among all the voices. Third, the students were able to get indirect help from each other by hearing their neighbours' replies (SR-Hou Ss-W1).

In both classes, this event was conducted in a smooth and orderly manner. The students seemed to have no difficulty in fitting their answers into the established participation structures, since "their responses were given in the appropriate form and at the appropriate time" (Johnson, 1995:99). In this event, the students were offered opportunities to practice discrete language forms. However, the teachers prescribed the content and/or language form the students could use, and the student responses were either taken from the prompts given by the teachers or restricted in form.

7.1.3 Cue Fill phase

In the Cue Fill phase, students filled in gaps in model mini-dialogues. Miss Qian always started it by mentioning the relevant number of the cues, e.g. "cues 1", as did Miss Hou, except that she started the first set of cues by directing the class' attention to the Student's Book by saying: "now look at our exercise" or "look at the example" or "now take out your book". This is a single-event phase in both classes.

7.1.3.1 Cue Fill event

The two teachers had very similar ways to deal with this event. How the teacher went

about gap fillings seemed to depend on whether or not the missing parts could be worked out from the context (i.e. what was there in the cues). If it was possible for the students to work out the missing parts from the context, the teachers tended to elicit them from the students as shown in the example below.

TR7.8-Hou-S2/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now look here</i>
	2 <i>practise one</i>
	3 <i>asking for information about what to do</i>
	4 <i>do you know or could you tell me what to say to a person on his birthday in English</i>
	5 <i>Yes</i>
	6 <i>KAN HOU MIAN SHUO (look at the answer column)</i>
	7 <i>you say</i>
	8 <i>HOU MIAN SHI SHEN ME (what's in the answer column)</i>
9 <i>Ss: happy birthday [and many happy returns of the day</i>	
	10 <i>[happy birthday and many happy returns of the day ok</i>
	11 <i>happy birthday and many happy returns of the day</i>
	12 <i>I am so glad to know the right thing to say</i>
	13 <i>thank you for telling me</i>
	14 <i>HUI DA NE (how to reply)</i>
15 <i>Ss: not at all</i>	
	16 <i>not at all</i>
	17 <i>HUO ZHE (or)/</i>
18 <i>Ss: my pleasure</i>	
	19 <i>my pleasure</i>
	20 <i>or you are welcome</i>
	21 <i>very good</i>

The teacher first read through what was already in the text (4-5). She then indicated where to find the answer to fill in the first gap (6). The students got this hint and located the answer (9). Before the students finished the reply, the teacher began repeating it. She repeated twice and also slowed down her rate of speech (10-11), signalling to the students to write it down. The teacher then moved on by reading through the next line (12-13). Immediately afterwards, she provided a sociolinguistic elicitation, “HUI DA NE (how to reply)” (14), which was used to evoke spoken forms appropriate to the context provided. The students responded, “not at all” (15), which was the key to the blank. The teacher reiterated that response as an affirmation (16) and then she tried to elicit an alternative expression of “not at all”, signalled by “HUO ZHE (or)” (17).

If the context was not informative, the teacher would read through the example dialogues and dictate the gaps to the students for them to write down. Both teachers signalled the shift from one social participation structure to the other in some ways. Normally Miss Qian repeated the gaps twice to signal dictation. Miss Hou sometimes did the same thing and sometimes she repeated the gaps only once but at a noticeably slower rate of speech. The teachers used dictation especially when time was running out as Miss Qian signalled to the students in S3/W4 that they “don’t have time” and that she wanted to change the social participation structure and simply dictated all the gaps to them. Sometimes both teachers issued an explicit direction, “write it down”.

Most of the time in Miss Qian’s class, students could reply directly. Miss Qian switched to individual nominations only when she saw great eagerness in some students to contribute. Miss Hou’s turn-allocation mechanism remained stable, i.e. invitations to reply.

7.1.4 Language Points phase

In the Language Points phase, the teachers addressed discrete teaching points in relation to vocabulary and pronunciation. Miss Qian normally introduced this phase with a framing word and then immediately moved onto the first item on her agenda. Miss Hou introduced this phase sometimes in the same fashion. Sometimes she did it by

announcing, “there are some words I would like to explain”. The variations for “some words” could be “something”, “expressions” or “words and expressions” or “vocabulary”.

In this phase, Miss Qian devoted time exclusively to vocabulary items (Vocabulary Explanation event) whereas Miss Hou dealt with vocabulary items and pronunciation (Pronunciation event) with most of the time allocated to the former. The two events recurred in a series.

To both teachers, vocabulary teaching was a principal teaching goal as both held that the students had learnt basic grammar rules in middle schools and what they needed most at the university level was to enlarge the extent of vocabulary (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-1).

7.1.4.1 Vocabulary Explanation event

The Vocabulary Explanation event contributed to the explanation of lexical items. A lexical item here refers to any word, idiom, phrase or expression. It is interchangeably used with a vocabulary item.

Vocabulary explanation events began with optional elements, Frame and Focus. A frame is an indication of shift in topic (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Where it occurred, the frame was realized by a closed set of utterances such as “now”, “ok”, “then”, “all right”, “here”, “and here”, “next one” by both teachers.

A focus is a statement, the purpose of which is to draw attention to the target vocabulary item. The focusing move had two manifestations:

a) teacher solicit. The teachers elicited the meaning of the target lexical item by using the structure of “the target form + means what” (e.g. “revise” means what”). Miss Hou also used the structure of “you know + the target form” (e.g. “you know genuine leather”). Miss Qian used teacher solicits only, and Miss Hou used them sometimes.

b) identifying the topic item. The teacher read out the context (i.e. the sentence or phrase in the Student's Book where the target vocabulary appeared) and identified the target item. Look at the following example in which "load" was targeted:

TR7.9-Hou-S2/W5

Student

Teacher

- 1 *and then*
- 2 *load mailbags onto mailcars*
- 3 *Load*

Miss Hou used "identifying the topic item" more frequently than "teacher solicit" while Miss Qian did not use it at all.

Explanation was the only obligatory element of vocabulary explanation events. There were two sources of explanation. One was from the teachers. The other was from the students when the teachers tried to elicit vocabulary meanings from them. Miss Qian called for the definitions of all the target words from the students while Miss Hou supplied most definitions herself.

The teachers implemented explanation in two ways. One was Explicit Definition, normally realized by such utterances as "A means B", "A refers to B" and "A is B", mostly followed by Chinese equivalents. The provision of both English and Chinese definitions was to ensure a better grasp and a more accurate use of the target items on the student's part as the Chinese equivalents the students tended to memorise vocabulary by were misleading sometimes (SR-Hou-W2). Take a simple example, the synonyms such as "attain", "acquire", "obtain" all share the same Chinese equivalent despite their different English definitions and usages.

When the students were involved in providing the definitions, in the vast majority of cases the student(s) from both classes supplied them in Chinese. The students' replies were followed by the teachers' translation or on some occasions by the teachers'

repetition when it came to some lexis such as *cassette recorder*, *tyre*, etc. whose Chinese definitions were clearer, more straightforward and less lengthy, thus more efficient and economical. This finding was in line with the findings of some other researchers (e.g. Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Nation, 2003). The teachers' practice of supplying English renderings themselves seemed to indicate to the students that they could get away with offering Chinese responses, which did not contribute to an English-only environment both teachers aimed to build up (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-1). Besides, it was likely to lead to students' dependence on the teacher and reduce their opportunities to circumvent, to negotiate in the TL.

Miss Hou's other implementation of the explanation was Example without Definition. It involved the teacher putting the target vocabulary to use in a sentence. In such instances, the meaning of the target item had to be inferred. Only one instance was identified:

TR7.10-Hou-S1/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>and then/</i>
	2 <i>look here</i>
	3 <i>our practice</i>
	4 <i>notice board</i>
	5 <i>what is a notice board</i>
	6 <i>do we have a notice board in our college/</i>
7 <i>Ss: yes</i>	
	8 <i>Yes</i>
	9 <i>where is the notice board</i>
10 <i>Ss: on the third floor</i>	
	11 <i>it is on the third floor ok</i>

In the above example, rather than dealing with the definition of “notice board”, Miss Hou supplied the examples of the item (6, 9) from which the students had to figure out its meaning. Although this was the only instance identified, it is significant in that it reveals that Miss Hou could move away from teacher-directed didactic teaching and it

provides some insight that Miss Hou could run this event differently. Rather than giving out the content information directly, she was capable of gauging where the students were and building from there. The overwhelming use of Explicit Definition in preference to Example without Definition revealed the teachers' deductive approach to vocabulary explanation.

Example Following Definition was another optional element in the Vocabulary Explanation event. It occurred when the target item was put to use in phrases or sentences. Only one type of example was identified: pseudo example. A pseudo example was one which had no connection with a specific context. Look at some pseudo examples the teacher gave in the example below.

TR7.11-Hou-S2/W5

Student

Teacher

- 1** *and then/*
- 2** *load mailbags onto mailcars*
- 3** *Load*
- 4** *load means to put something onto a vehicle ok*
- 5** *so you can load bags onto car*
- 6** *onto train ok*
- 7** *or onto a ship*
- 8** *so you can load the ship*
- 9** *load the car*

Miss Hou supplied some pseudo examples such as “load bags onto car” (5), “onto train” (6), “or onto a ship” (7) to illustrate the use of the target item “load”.

In both classes, whenever the teachers supplied examples of the target items, they largely did it after finishing dealing with their definitions. This sequential order from Explanation to Example Following Definition further supports the teachers' deductive approach.

Other than in the Language Points phase of the Language Structures cycle, Vocabulary Explanation events also occurred in the Language Points phase of the Dialogue I (see section 7.2), Dialogue II (see section 7.3) and Reading (see section 7.5) cycles which will be addressed later on. It also occurred in the Preparing phase of the Role-play cycle (see section 7.4) in Miss Hou's class. Although only pseudo examples occurred here in the Language Points phase of the Language Structures cycle, other kinds of examples were used in Vocabulary Explanation events in the Language Points phase of the Dialogue I and Reading cycles.

Elaboration was another optional element in the Vocabulary Explanation event. It involved the treatment of other properties of a target item such as spelling, parts of speech, semantic relations to other words and collocations. For Miss Qian, Elaboration was the component which occurred the second most frequently after Explanation. Below is an illustration of it.

TR7.12-Qian-S2/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>be excused from the lecture and the rehearsal</i>
	2 <i>now here rehearsal means what</i>
3 <i>Sx: PAI LIAN (rehearsal)</i>	
	4 <i>Yes</i>
	5 <i>it's noun form</i>
	6 <i>and verb form is rehearse</i>
	7 <i>the verb form is rehearse</i>
	8 <i>you can omit -al but plus -e</i>
	9 <i>Rehearse</i>
	10 <i>r-e-h-e-a-r-s-e</i>
	11 <i>rehearse is a verb form</i>
	12 <i>means to learn and practice for the later performance right/</i>
	13 <i>and noun form is rehearsal</i>

In the above example, the target item was “rehearsal”. However, after finishing dealing with it, the teacher proceeded with its verb form together with its spelling and meaning (6-12). This was most likely a vocabulary-enlargement technique used by the teacher. Sometimes Repetition followed Elaboration. Towards the end of a Vocabulary Explanation event, both teachers sometimes totally or partially repeated the definition of the target item, which was sometimes signalled by the sentence structure led by “so”, as shown in the example below:

TR7.13-Hou-S1/W1

Student

Teacher

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 | <i>collapsible umbrella</i> |
| 2 | <i>Well</i> |
| 3 | <i>collapsible umbrella is the one that you can fold into a small one</i> |
| 4 | <i>WO MEN JIAO ZHE DIE SAN (we call it ZHE DIE SAN) in Chinese</i> |
| 5 | <i>ZHE DIE SAN</i> |
| 6 | <i>Collapsible</i> |
| | <i>((a few turns later))</i> |
| 13 | <i>so collapsible means you can fold it ok</i> |
| 14 | <i>you can fold it</i> |
| 15 | <i>JIU SHI BA TA ZHENG GE YA ZAI YI QI (meaning you can fold it)</i> |

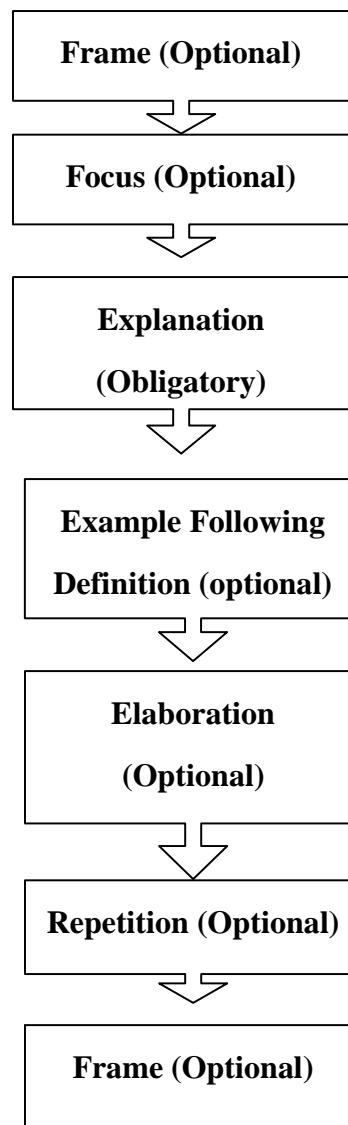
In the above segment, the teacher restated the definition of the target word “collapsible” (13-15).

The last optional component was Frame again, which marked off the end of a Vocabulary Explanation event. Miss Qian tended to repeat the target item itself to signal its termination. Miss Hou normally terminated it by saying “all right” or “so + the target lexis”.

Overall, Vocabulary Explanation events followed the sequential order as illustrated in Figure 7.2 below in both classes. The most frequent pattern in both classes was

Focus-Explanation. That is to say, Vocabulary Explanation events were brief in the Language Structures cycle.

Figure 7.2 Structure of Vocabulary Explanation Events in the Language Structures cycle



In this event both teachers were in control of both the content and the direction of the discourse. Both teachers initiated and addressed almost every single vocabulary item they assumed might be new to the students, be it important or unimportant. Some researchers (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; He, 2001) contended that this practice was in keeping with the Chinese conception of the teacher's role. The students see a knowledgeable and

capable teacher as anticipating every possible student question and an unsuccessful teacher as one who fails to notice potential queries. The teachers' comments suggested that if they did not bring up a language point, the students would ignore it and conclude that it was not worth learning (SR-Qian-W2; IN-Hou-2). As the teachers had anticipated the likely difficulties the students might have and covered them all in class, the students probably did not feel any need to raise queries in class. The supporting evidence was that at several points of the SR sessions, the students described the teachers' explanation of language points as clear and/or thorough (SR-Qian Ss-W1&W3; SR-Hou Ss-W2 &W3).

Miss Qian implemented her agenda by using the Teacher Elicit exchange followed by the Teacher Inform exchange which provided further information. The interaction invariably flowed from the teacher to the students and then back to the teacher again. Miss Qian's students were constrained to a responding role, answering the teacher's call for vocabulary meaning. Miss Hou delivered this event largely by informing, thus her students were limited to a listening role, receiving what Miss Hou conveyed.

7.1.4.2 Pronunciation event (Miss Hou only)

In terms of the academic participation structures, the Pronunciation event was devoted to the pronunciation of a word.

With regards to the social participation structures, Miss Hou employed two ways to involve the students' participation: a) reading the target word aloud and then pausing for the class to follow; and b) issuing explicit directions such as "say this with me", "read after me". The students read the target item after the teacher as many times as the teacher initiated. Sometimes in her F move, the teacher offered specific suggestions as to how to improve the pronunciation of a certain sound, e.g. "stress is on the second syllable".

In this event, the whole class followed the teacher's modelled script mechanically. This was the most restricted event in terms of both form and content.

7.1.5 Modelling phase (Miss Hou only)

The Modelling phase occurred before Miss Hou asked the students to work in pairs on substitution practices. Miss Hou normally marked off the beginning of this phase by saying, “this time you can use...” or “so you need to use...”. Given what Miss Hou mentioned in the SR (SR-Hou-W1) that she tried to avoid frustrating the students with difficult tasks, the purpose of instigating this phase was most likely to facilitate the task the students were about to engage in, in this case, Cued Dialogue.

This phase was observed three times. Every time, before guiding the students through one substitution practice (Completing Cued Dialogue event), Miss Hou supplied some information as to the event at hand, e.g. what content to include; what tense and/or grammatical structure to use (Hint on Task event).

7.1.5.1 Hint on Task event

Below is an example showing how Miss Hou offered a hint. The example took place before Miss Hou dealt with substitution practices on unreal conditions.

TR7.14-Hou-S2/W4

Student

Teacher

- 1** *now this time*
- 2** *you can use unreal condition*
- 3** *now*
- 4** *first*
- 5** *you have something ok*
- 6** *and then/*
- 7** *you suggest it's something else*
- 8** *XIAN SHI YONG YI ZHONG CAI LIAO (first you choose one material)*
- 9** *RAN HOU NE (then)*
- 10** *NI ZAI JIA SHE TA SHI YONG LING YI ZHONG CAI LIAO ZUO DE (suppose it's made of another material)*
- 11** *BI RU DI YI GE SHI (for example)*

- 12 *you choose genuine leather first*
- 13 *RAN HOU NE (then)*
- 14 *SHI YI GE SHEN ME NE (suppose it's made of) imitation leather ok*

In the example, Miss Hou offered some information regarding the conditions to be used, “this time you can use unreal condition” (1-2) and the way to go about it, “first you have something ok and then you suggest it’s something else” (3-7), followed by an example from the Student’s Book (8-14).

In terms of the social participation structures, most frequently, the teacher gave out the information directly herself in the form of an extended monologue as shown in the above example. At times, the teacher involved the students’ participation in answering some easy questions probably to keep them focused (SR-Hou-W1). Where it occurred, teacher-student interaction followed the IRF structure.

7.1.5.2 *Completing Cued Dialogue event*

After providing a hint on the event, Miss Hou guided the students through one substitution practice before asking them to work in pairs. At such times, the teacher asked the class to provide the mini-dialogue line by line as is clear in the following example when the teacher was taking the class through Cues II:

Genuine leather shoes cost at least \$220.00 pair; but these shoes are not genuine leather, they are imitation leather. (how much?)

TR7.15-Hou-S2/W4

Student

Teacher

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 <i>Ss: how much [xx</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <i>cues II</i> 2 <i>QIAN MIAN WEN DE SHI HOU ZHE GE
ZEN ME WEN (how to ask the question
here)</i> |
|---|--|

- 4 *[are these shoes*
- 5 *are these shoes genuine leather ones*
- 6 *NI YING GAI SHUO SHEN ME NE (how should you reply)*
- 7 *Ss: no they aren't*
- 8 *no they aren't*
- 9 *Ss: they are imitation leather shoes*
- 10 *they are imitation leather shoes*
- 11 *they are imitation leather shoes*
- 12 *Ss: how much would these genuine leather shoes cost*
- 13 *yes*
- 14 *how much would the genuine leather shoes cost*
- 15 *HUO ZHE (or)*
- 16 *how much would they cost if they were genuine leather*
- 17 *RAN HOU NE (then)*
- 18 *[they would*
- 19 *Sx: [if they were=*
- 20 *=if they were genuine leather*
- 21 *[they would cost at least two hundred and twenty yuan a pair*
- 22 *Ss: [they would cost at least two hundred and twenty yuan a pair*
- 23 *now you know how to do it/*
- 24 *Ss: yes*

The teacher directed the students' attention to Cues II and started with the first elicitation (2). The students formed a question by using the bracketed "how much" (3), which was not intended by the teacher. Having realized that, Miss Hou provided the first line of the

mini-dialogue (4-5), signalling to the students that they were supposed to start from the first line of the mini-dialogue. This small segment was singled out for comment as it was typical of Miss Hou's way of rectifying the students' misinterpretation of the academic participation structure engendered by her own ambiguity in issuing directions.

After offering the first line of the dialogue to put the students on the right track (4-5), the teacher then called for the next line (6). Alternatively the teacher used "RAN HOU NE (then)" (17) to elicit the next line. This kind of elicitation focused on the discourse aspect of language as they involved the formation of a dialogue based on the context. After the students' reply, the teacher repeated it (e.g. 8, 10). The only variation in Miss Hou's use of language was that she withdrew the cueing and allowed the students to move directly to the next line. For example, when the students correctly responded, "no they aren't" (7), the teacher repeated it (8). The students contributed the next line immediately after the teacher's repetition of the previous line without the teacher's calling for it (12).

In this event, Miss Hou modelled the way to handle the task in order to give the students an example to follow. I have called this modelling rather than scaffolding, which is help offered when students cannot complete a task unaided (see section 2.2.3). The apparent competence the students exhibited in tackling the task above led me to believe that the teacher's help might have been redundant. In terms of TL use, the students were offered the opportunity to complete one substitution practice collaboratively with the teacher. The invitations to reply mechanism remained stable.

7.1.6 Students Pairing-up phase (Miss Hou only)

In the Students Pairing-up phase, Miss Hou directed the students to pair up with their desk mates and work on substitution practices. She normally marked it off by directing the students to work in pairs. This phase is not included in my analysis and discussion as it is not teacher-fronted.

7.1.7 Presenting phase

In the Presenting phase in this cycle, the students were required to demonstrate the substitution practices. Miss Hou had a clear purpose of asking the students to demonstrate them, i.e. “making sure that the students do the right thing” (IN-Hou-2). Furthermore, the students who got the chance to demonstrate could act as representatives so that the teacher did not need to check everybody (IN-Hou-2).

Miss Qian shifted to this phase from the Cue Fill phase by saying, “let’s do it” while Miss Hou shifted to this phase from the Students Pairing-up phase. Miss Qian did not give the students time to prepare for substitution practice as did Miss Hou. After giving the students some time to work in pairs, Miss Hou would call them back together by saying “shall I ask somebody to do the demonstration?”.

Both teachers asked the students to demonstrate their substitution practices (Cued Dialogue event). To ensure that her students engaged more deeply in the target language structures (OR-Qian-S3/W4), in S3/W4, Miss Qian also required the students to form their own dialogues (Created Dialogue event), which became the most challenging event experienced by her students in this cycle.

7.1.7.1 Cued Dialogue event

The Cued Dialogue event involved the academic participation structure of getting the students to demonstrate a dialogue they built up based on cues.

The IRF structure was still the dominant social participation structures in both classes. In the I move, Miss Qian indicated to a pair (normally one student and his/her desk mates, nominated by name-calling) which set of cues they were expected to work on by reading out some words in the cues or announcing the order of the set. By not following the order presented in the Student’s Book, Miss Qian meant to keep the students mentally awake (OR-Qian-S2/W3). By contrast, most of the time Miss Hou invited the students to bid for the opportunity to demonstrate especially when she was teaching her students only. When the students from the other class joined in, Miss Hou tended to nominate the

student pairs as many students seemed to be lazier and less active in combined classes (OR-Hou-S2/W3), which was also supported by my observations. I noticed some students chose to sit either at the side or the back of the lecture hall so as to be outside the teacher's surveillance zone. Fully aware of it, Miss Hou sometimes specifically stated that she was going to name the students at the back. Miss Hou required student volunteers or designated students to follow the order of the cues.

During the demonstration in both classes, two students took turns contributing the lines of the mini-dialogue until they completed composing it. After the students' demonstration in the R move, Miss Qian normally made a positive evaluation in her F move. She rarely treated any errors. By contrast, Miss Hou often attended to forms during or after the demonstrations. Sometimes Miss Hou interrupted the students' demonstration to correct an error, especially when it came to pronunciation errors and misuse of the grammatical structures focused on in that particular unit. For less "important" mistakes, Miss Hou normally waited until the students finished their productions before correcting as she did not want to "frighten" them (IN-Hou-2). She employed three correction techniques: explicit correction, recast and correction initiation. Overall in this event, as in the entire data set for Miss Hou, explicit correction was the most frequent corrective feedback employed. This finding is different from that of previous research (see section 3.3.1.2) that recast was the most frequently used. Interview comments from Miss Hou implied that she did not trust her students' abilities to detect errors, let alone correct them (SR-Hou-S4). The scant use of feedback techniques of the negotiation type can be accounted for in the teacher's dominance in classroom discourse especially reflected in the IRF discourse pattern. The finding here corresponds to that obtained from the rest of the data set for Miss Hou, i.e. Miss Hou's discourse practices did not encourage any form of negotiation, be it negotiation of form or meaning.

Miss Qian varied the social participation structures in her class by sometimes choosing to pair herself up with a nominated student, especially when the mini-dialogues could be related to student life. She did this to find out more about her students' life

(OR-Qian-S2/W1). Where it occurred, Miss Qian skipped the evaluation and carried on with the mini-dialogue unless the students produced an unsatisfactory reply and the teacher stepped in before resuming the IR pattern again. Miss Qian flagged the variation by first calling out a name and then reading out the first line. She constructed the mini-dialogue with this nominated student by posing as his/her partner. Rather than sticking to the original script, i.e. the model mini-dialogue or the cues as the student pairs did, from time to time, Miss Qian made small changes to them by rewording her turn with an alternative expression or replacing the fictitious name in the cues by her student's name. The student partner had to respond to the changes accordingly. In addition, the student partner was encouraged to initiate changes in his/her turns as well. By not sticking rigidly to the example dialogue, Miss Qian was trying to make the mechanical practice more meaningful and at the same time encouraging the students to move away from mere imitation and produce their own words (OR-Qian-S2/W1).

This was a form-focused event where the students were involved in restricted language use both in content and form. The students were controlled by the teachers and the Student's Book to produce particular language forms and content.

7.1.7.2 Created Dialogue event (Miss Qian only)

The Created Dialogue event consisted of students acting out a dialogue they formed themselves with or without specified situations, roles or functions (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). It is commonly known as "role-play". The reason why I elected to use "Created Dialogue" rather than "Role-play" was to distinguish it from the Role-play cycle (see section 7.3). The Role-play cycle is a pedagogical unit in the teacher's planning of each teaching unit while the Created Dialogue event is a specific task that the students were required to perform.

In S3/W4, after giving the students some preparation time, Miss Qian invited the student pairs to come to the front to perform new dialogues of their own by making use of as many cues and modal auxiliaries as possible from that particular Language Structures section. They were not allowed to have their books or notes with them.

This event moved fast and the social participation structure was usually IR rather than IRF. When the teacher did follow up the students' performances occasionally, she picked up for comment something funny either regarding the content or the delivery of the made-up dialogue.

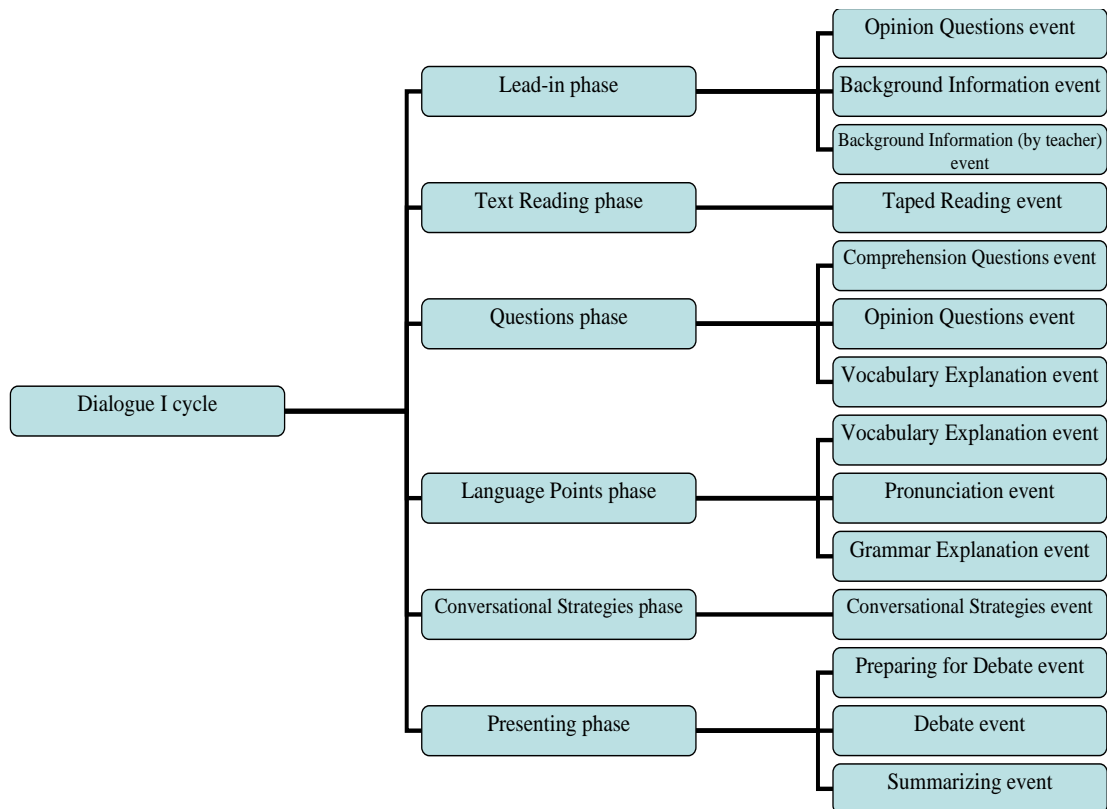
As in aforementioned Grammar Describing and Drill Practice events, Miss Qian tended to allocate turns by nominating specific speakers. However, active students could volunteer to be nominated. In this event, the student pairs got the opportunity to put the focus language structures to creative and meaningful use.

7.2 Dialogue I cycle

Dialogue I is a full-length dialogue in the Student's Book with a focus on the language structures addressed in the Language Structures section. The Teacher's Book states that the aim of Dialogue I is to contextualize the language structures and provide situations for their use. The students were required to prepare the text of Dialogue I in each unit themselves before class (TR-Qian-S1/W1; TR-Hou-S1/W1). One student told me in the SR that she had made such full preparations that she could even memorise the text (SR-Qian Ss-W3). Some students mentioned that they consulted new words in dictionaries while previewing (SR-Qian Ss-W1; SR-Hou Ss-W3).

Miss Qian and Miss Hou marked the beginning of the Dialogue I cycle by saying "ok let's start dialogue I." or "today we come to dialogue I". Occasionally Miss Qian entered the cycle by raising questions related to the topic of the Dialogue I text. For example, Miss Qian initiated "what's an interview" to start a Dialogue I text entitled "An Interview with an Amateur Actor". Figure 7.3 below provides an overall picture of the phases and events within this cycle in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 7.3 Phases and events within the Dialogue I cycle



The routine phases both teachers followed were: talking about some topics to introduce the Dialogue I text (Lead-in phase); playing the tape of the text (Text Reading phase), asking questions regarding the text (Questions phase) and dealing with language points in the text (Language Points phase), as Tables 7.3 and 7.4 below indicate. The only phase that the teachers did not have in common was Presenting in Miss Qian’s class.

Table 7.3 Dialogue I cycle for Miss Qian

Sessions (S)/Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S2 & S3/W1	Unit 4	Lead-in Text Reading Questions Language Points
S3/W2	Unit 6	Lead-in Text Reading Questions Language Points
S3/W3 & S1/W4	Unit 10	Lead-in Questions Presenting Language Points
S1&S2 /W5	Unit 12	Lead-in Text Reading Questions Language Points
S1& S2/W6 (combined)	Unit 13	Lead-in Questions Language Points

Table 7.4 Dialogue I cycle for Miss Hou

Sessions(S) /Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S2 & S3/W1	Unit 6	Text Reading Lead-in Questions Language Points
S3/W2	Unit 7	Lead-in Text Reading Questions

		Language Points
S3/W3	Unit 8	Lead-in Text Reading Questions Language Points
S3/W4	Unit 9	Lead-in Text Reading Questions Language Points
S3 & S4/W5	Unit 12	Lead-in Text Reading Language Points

7.2.1 Lead-in phase

In both classes, the Dialogue I cycle usually began with a Lead-in phase, though occasionally the teachers started directly with a Text Reading phase. In the Lead-in phase, the teachers prepared the class for the text to be read. Both teachers included the Opinion Questions event in their Lead-in phase, and it was the most frequent event for both. In addition, Miss Hou also asked the students to present the background information they had gathered after class (Background Information event) and expounded on background information related to the text herself (Background Information (by teacher) event). Miss Hou not only carried out more events in this phase but also apportioned more time to this phase than Miss Qian did.

This phase was not specified either by the Student's Book or Teacher's Book. The topics that were addressed in both classes were more or less related to the theme of the text under discussion.

7.2.1.1 Opinion Questions event

In terms of the academic participation structures, in the Opinion Questions event, the teachers brought up issues for the students to discuss so as to generate their personal

experiences, knowledge or opinions about them. However, some students' perception of this event was different. Comments from the students regarding this event, e.g. "anyway it's a kind of knowledge for us in our daily life" (SR-Qian Ss-W3), "it can broaden our scope of knowledge" (SR-Hou Ss-W3) revealed that some students from both classes did not see this event as valuable opportunities for communicative language use. They deemed it more an occasion to broaden their horizon and enrich their range of knowledge.

This is a meaning-focused event, but that did not necessarily mean the students could freely express their viewpoints. Both teachers controlled student contributions to the content of the academic participation structures. First, across sessions, it was the teacher who initiated all the topics for the students to consider or contribute opinions to. Other ways of controlling student contributions related to how the teachers followed up on student replies. Miss Qian did this in three ways, which are illustrated in the following interaction which occurred when Miss Qian engaged the students in talking about a discussion topic, "who is the leader in your family" to prepare the students to read a text entitled "Chinese Women-Yesterday and Today".

TR7.16-Qian-S3/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>and ..</i>
	2 <i>now please tell me</i>
	3 <i>and I also want to know</i>
	4 <i>in your family</i>
	5 <i>who is the leader</i>
6 <i>Sx: father</i>	
7 <i>Sx: mother</i>	
8 <i>Xie: me</i>	
	9 <i><u>you</u>/</i>
	10 <i>Xie please tell me in your family who is the leader</i>
11 <i>Xie: WO (me)</i>	
	12 <i>now sit down please ((laughing))</i>

- 13 *because*
- 14 *because your answer is far from my imagination/*
- 15 *and also expectation*
- 16 *Xie: because my father and my
mother are BI JIAO WEN
HE(quite indecisive)*
- 17 *YI BAN QING KUANG XIA JIA
LE DE SHI QING WO ZHUO
ZHU (usually I'm in charge of
family affairs)*
- 18 *Oh*
- 19 *so you mean*
- 20 *you have the extreme and complete authority*
- 21 *over everything in your family*
- 22 *Xie: not everything*
- 23 *but some important thing*
- 24 *such as my sister's universities*
- 25 *and um*
- 26 *my brother*
- 27 *which school my brother will go*
- 28 *and ..*
- 29 *anything like this*
- 30 *oh I see*
- 31 *because you have this kind of knowledge right*
- 32 *now relevant to*
- 33 *to make a decision right/*
- 34 *Xie: yeah*
- 35 *Wang: ((hand up))*
- 36 *and now Wang*
- 37 *Wang: there are two leaders in
my family*

38 *my mother and my father*

39 *who is the chief leader*

40 *Wang: generally if*

41 *if they need something ...*

42 *TA MEN SHANG LIANG ZHE*

*BAN (they make a joint
decision)*

43 *generally speaking or in general*

44 *in your family there are two leaders*

45 *and*

46 *all the time*

47 *they can make a good discussion with each other*

48 *about your family affairs right/*

49 *such as your family business*

50 *or the property*

51 *or which university you*

52 *you choose right/*

53 *which city you will settle down right/*

54 *so your parents*

55 *make a good decision*

56 *or discussion*

57 *Wang: yeah*

Miss Qian favoured student replies which conformed to the content of the text, thus facilitating her smooth entry into the text (SR-Qian-W3), and she rejected replies which did not do so. The teacher heard Xie answering “me” (8) and felt surprised (SR-Qian-W3). She called out her name and repeated the question for her to reconsider (10). Xie reiterated her reply (11) and the teacher laughed, asked her to sit down and explicitly signalled that her reply was undesired (13-15). In her SR, the teacher commented that she was expecting a reply along the line that mothers were in more charge nowadays. Such a reply would match up with what was mentioned in the text

about the changed status of women nowadays, i.e. in the past the society was dominated by men and now women hold up half of the sky (SR-Qian-W3).

Miss Qian also paraphrased student replies to indicate to them to reconsider and adjust them. Although the teacher dismissed Xie's reply as unacceptable by asking her to sit down (12), Xie retained the floor and justified her idea (16-17). In response to Xie's justification, the teacher offered a revised version of Xie's statement (18-21) and said "everything" emphatically with the purpose of giving Xie another chance to modify her reply, whereby the teacher implied, "Is it true? Are you sure you can control everything?" (SR-Qian-W3).

Finally, Miss Qian controlled the content by expanding student replies. For example, Wang's contributions did not mention anything regarding what her parents make joint decisions about (40-42); however, Miss Qian elaborated on Wang's contributions and included such additional ideas as "such as your family business" (49), "or the property" (50), "which city you will settle down" (53).

Miss Hou controlled the content of the academic participation structures in four ways in her follow-up moves. TR7.17 occurred when Miss Hou was involving the class in talking about the means of transportation in China and those in the U.S.

TR7.17-Hou-S3/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>by the way</i>
	2 <i>can we still call China kingdom of bicycles today =</i>
3 <i>Sx: =yeah</i>	
	4 <i>since in many cities people don't ride bicycles any more</i>
5 <i>Sx: no we can't=</i>	
	6 <i>=in many cities people don't ride bicycles</i>
7 <i>Ss: yeah</i>	
	8 <i>and then/</i>

- 9 *can we still call our country a kingdom of bicycle*
- 10 *Sx: yeah*
- 11 *Li: in large cities it's
also xx*
- 12 *Sx: in the countryside
xx*
- 13 *you mean in the countryside people still ride bicycles*
- 14 *as far as I know*
- 15 *a lot of farmers they have their own cars*
- 16 *they buy cars for transportation ok
((several turns later))*
- 25 *so do Americans travel like Chinese people*
- 26 *Ss: yeah*
- 27 *Ss: no*
- 28 *we know that Americans have more private cars right/*
- 29 *Ss: yes*
- 30 *do you envy their private cars*
- 31 *Ss: yes*
- 32 *Sx: no*
- 33 *some say yes*
- 34 *some say no ok
((several turns later))*
- 44 *and why do Americans*
- 45 *why do Americans buy their own cars instead of
travelling in buses*
- 46 *Sx: the buses are too
busy*
- 47 *the buses are too busy in the U.S. ok*
- 48 *well this is one of the opinion*
- 49 *Hasi: their house is far
from the city centre*

- 50 *um the distance*
- 51 *yes they live far from the city centre ok*
- 52 *so they need a car ok*
- 53 *to go to work ok*
((several turns later))
- 64 *and what about the bus system in China*
- 65 *Sx: system*
- 66 *System*
- 67 *JIAO TONG (transportation)*
- 68 *GONG JIAO CHE DE NA GE XI TONG (the bus system)*
- 69 *Sx: complicated*
- 70 *complicated/*
- 71 *Convenient*
- 72 *Ss: yes*
- 73 *Hasi: yes convenient than America*
- 74 *Yes*
- 75 *so wherever you go*
- 76 *you can take buses right*
- 77 *Ss: yeah*
((several turns later))
- 88 *and then*
- 89 *why do more and more people like to ride bicycle instead of driving their cars*
- 90 *Sx: save money*
- 91 *to save money*
- 92 *right yeah*
- 93 *to save money on gas ok*
- 94 *or petrol*
- 95 *SHENG NA GE YOU QIAN (save money on gas)*

- 96 *very good*
- 97 *and what is another*
- 98 *Ss: xx ((students all saying at the same time))*
- 99 *Sx: make their body strong and health*
- 100 *right yeah*
- 101 *for health concern if you ride bicycle*
- 102 *and then it's good for your health ok*
- 103 *Ss: yeah*
- 104 *Yes*
- 105 *and then/*
- 106 *what other suggestions*
- 107 *Sx: for fun*
- 108 *for fun/*
- 109 *to ride bicycle=*
- 110 *Sx: =for the environment*
- 111 *for protecting the environment*
- 112 *Ss: yeah*
- 113 *yeah very important*
- 114 *so if you drive your car*
- 115 *and then you need to spend money on gas ok*
- 116 *and then if you often sit behind the wheel*
- 117 *and then you will not have enough exercise right/*
- 118 *Ss: yeah*
- 119 *so besides*
- 120 *when the car is moving*
- 121 *what will come out from the exhaust pipe/*
- 122 *Ss: WEI QI (fume)*

- 123 *Fume*
- 124 *f-u-m-e*
- 125 *Fume*
- 126 *see the waste gas ok*
- 127 *JIU SHI NA GE FEI QI (that is waste gas)*
- 128 *and that fume will pollute our air*
- 129 *and what about cars*
- 130 *a lot of cars in the streets*
- 131 *and then/*
- 132 *the drivers honk the horns “di di di di”=*
- 133 *Sx: =noise*
- 134 *and then [noise pollution]*
- 135 *Ss: [noise pollution]*
- 136 *ok/*
- 137 *it would cause noise pollution ok*

First, Miss Hou pushed her agenda at the students' expense. She raised a question (2) which had supposedly an obvious reply according to the strong cues, e.g. “still”, “since” contained in the question. One student gave an affirmative answer before the teacher finished her question (3). After the teacher finished her sentence, another student successfully read between the lines of the question and gave a negative answer, which was what the teacher expected to hear (5). The teacher then re-started the original elicitation (9). There were quite a few instances of Miss Hou's re-initiations when student perspectives contradicted hers. The purpose of launching such re-initiations may be for Miss Hou to indicate to the students her disagreement and to give them another chance to come round to her own thoughts and perspectives. However, some students still did not do so as shown in their responses, “yeah” (10), “in large cities it's also xx” (11) and “in the countryside xx” (12). As a last resort, the teacher took up one student response, “you mean in the countryside people still ride bicycles” (13) and used it to make explicit her standpoint (14-16). Half of the students in the class were from the countryside, and could be expected to know more about the life there than the teacher

who had been living in a big city for 20 years or so. Miss Hou insistently pursued the students' confirmation of her assertion but some students made an effort to hold onto their position firmly. We see evidence here that these students do not always accept what their teacher says. On occasion, they challenge her institutional authority.

Second, when the students provided divergent candidate items, Miss Hou closed off discussion by providing her own answer to the issue. This occurred when the students disagreed among themselves on the teacher's elicitation as to whether Americans travel like Chinese (25). Some gave "yeah" as a reply (26) while others answered "no" (27). In response, the teacher gave her own answer (28) although she made it sound like seeking agreement, marked by "right" at the end of the question. Alternatively, Miss Hou settled down disagreement by moving away from it. For example, the teacher asked for the students' personal opinions about private cars (30) and received different responses. Again, some students said "yes", some said "no". The teacher stated their responses matter-of-factly (33-34) and moved away from the disagreement.

Third, there was a big gap between the nature of Miss Hou's elicitations and her way of handling them. Although some of her elicitations appeared to be open-ended, sometimes she only accepted one reply, the most obvious one. This occurred where the teacher sought reasons why Americans buy their own cars instead of travelling in buses (45). The elicitation sounded like an open-ended one. However, the teacher only accepted one candidate item, i.e. "Americans live far from the city" as was signalled by her positive evaluation (51). As for another student's perspective (46), the teacher showed her disapproval in an implicit way, "well this is one of the opinion" (48). At times, the teacher accepted multiple replies as long as they were within her range of perspectives. That is, she accepted some replies but evaluated others against her own viewpoints. For example, as to why more and more people like to ride bicycles rather than drive cars (89), the teacher only accepted such replies as "save money" (90), "make their body strong and health" (99), "for the environment" (110). She rejected such replies as "for fun" (107) probably as it was not a common practice for most Chinese. "For fun" was not accepted as first of all, the teacher repeated it in a rising intonation. The extended

data indicated that it was the usual way for the teacher to express her disapproval. Second, the teacher disposed of this idea in her recap (114-117).

Fourthly, the teacher hijacked the students' contributions. The above example demonstrates how she did that. After one student brought up the idea of riding bicycles for protecting the environment (110), the teacher merely reformulated it for acceptance (111) and moved on without encouraging the same student to say more. A couple of turns later, the teacher went back to the idea and took over its ownership by moving it onto her own agenda (119-137).

Although both teachers controlled the content in Opinion Questions events, they relaxed the social participation structures in that they allowed for variations to the IRF structure which dominated this event with the teacher initiating, students responding and the teacher followed up student replies on the content. Look back at TR7.16. When Miss Qian rejected Xie's reply as it did not correspond to her agenda (12-15), Xie did not give up. She self-selected and justified her contributions (16-17). The teacher accepted this variation as reflected in the fact that she continued the exchange with Xie (18-21) although she had a strong intention to lead Xie to what was in her mind (SR-Qian-W3). These confirmatory utterances from the teacher created a couple of additional turns for Xie to defend her position. This small segment also revealed that by being persistent in their lines of inquiry, the students could impose some local control over classroom discourse and sustain interaction with the teacher. But for Xie's persistence, the interaction would have been closed earlier.

Like in Miss Qian's class, variations to the IRF structure in Miss Hou's class also occurred when the students broke the IRF pattern and involved themselves, that is, they got a turn to talk without being invited. They achieved this in two ways as shown in TR7.17. One was to ask for the meaning of a new word. For example, a student requested the meaning of the word "system" (65), followed by the teacher's explanation (66-68). This is when student initiations occurred the most frequently in both classes. A second way was to respond to the teacher's message in her F move. After the teacher's

denial of a student's idea about the bus system in China being complicated (70) and interjection of her own view about it being convenient (71), some students concurred, "yes" (72) and "yes convenient than America" (73). This is when the students' F moves appeared most often in Miss Hou's class. Although these student utterances were not long, they were interactionally significant as Sunderland (2001:14) succinctly put, "the ability to 'continue' after the teacher response can be seen as a form of student empowerment". These instances supported the findings of Sunderland (2001) that students do initiate academic questions and even follow up the teacher's follow-ups although very occasionally.

Overall in this event, the teachers' elicitations were message-based. Most of them were referential and open-ended. Many were high-order in terms of cognitive level. The resulting student responses were spontaneous, unpredictable, meaning-focused and relatively extended compared with in form-focused events. The students were allowed to generate language to express their thoughts rather than supplying answers which were subject to the teacher's evaluations.

In spite of the similar nature of elicitations provided by both teachers much of the time, the student responses stimulated by Miss Hou's elicitations were shorter. I offer three reasons. First, Miss Qian gave the student contributors legitimate space to air their opinions. By contrast, it was hard for Miss Hou's students to contribute the same amount of talk without feeling disruptive due to the way she managed speaking turns, i.e. inviting the students to answer together. Li, the student identified in the TR7.17 told me in an SR:

I try to give long replies as it is good for me to practice my English. However, I often find that in the end, only my voice is hanging out there because everybody has finished talking before I have. Sometimes in order for the teacher to hear me, I have to raise my voice. I don't feel right sometimes (SR-Hou Ss-W2).

Second, Miss Hou shifted from one topic to another frequently and fast. By contrast, Miss Qian normally stayed with one topic and tried to generate as many perspectives as possible, thus giving the students more time to think and process. Third, although both teachers controlled the content of student contributions, Miss Hou exerted a tighter control than Miss Qian.

In the F move, both teachers picked up on student replies in various ways, e.g. repetition (e.g. “save money” (91, TR7.17)), expansion (e.g. “save money on gas or petrol” (93-94, TR7.17)), reformulation (e.g. “generally speaking or in general” (43, TR7.16), comment (e.g. “very important” (113, TR7.17)) and translation (e.g. “fume” (123, TR7.17)). Both teachers used repetition most often for confirmation and acceptance. Miss Hou mainly employed reformulation in order to reshape student contributions in a more acceptable form. In addition, Miss Qian also deployed reformulation to serve two other purposes: a) to signal to the students to reconsider and adjust their replies and b) to offer alternative language input. Miss Qian’s students believed that by frequently listening to the teacher using alternative expressions, they should be able to produce them themselves one day (SR-Qian Ss-W3). The interview data with Miss Qian also revealed some information as to when she tended to pick up student replies for expansion. Look at the following excerpt, which took place when Miss Qian was calling for the students’ ideas about the advantages of nuclear energy.

TR7.18-Qian-S1/W6

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>and the next</i>
	2 <i>the second advantage</i>
3 <i>Wang: no pollution</i>	
	4 <i>yes that’s right</i>
	5 <i>the nuclear power doesn’t produce smoke</i>
	6 <i>nuclear power doesn’t produce smoke</i>
	7 <i>or carbon dioxide</i>
	8 <i>carbon dioxide</i>
	9 <i>means nuclear power doesn’t contribute to the green</i>

house effect

((several turns later))

18 *and anything else*

19 *Sx: effective*

20 *Effective*

21 *and anything else/ ((shifting her look to the rest of the class))*

In TR7.18, Wang advanced the idea of “no pollution” (3), which the teacher agreed with and elaborated upon by explaining why it was pollution-free (5-9). By contrast, the teacher simply repeated another student’s idea “effective” (20) and then moved away from it. When asked to comment on this part, Miss Qian said that she had prepared for the advantage of no pollution, thus she was capable of expanding on this reply whereas she had no idea of nuclear energy being effective, and thus she had nothing to say about it (SR-Qian-W3). When asked to comment upon it, Wang, the student involved, expressed her wish that the teacher could make some public space for her ideas as she knew quite a lot about that topic (SR-Qian Ss-W3). That is, by expanding, sometimes the teacher deprived the student contributors of the opportunity to develop the ideas put forward by themselves.

Faced with brief student replies, other than closing them down with elaboration, reformulation, etc, neither teacher thought of seeking further information by handing the floor back to the student contributors (SR-Qian-W5; In-Hou-2).

To manage turns, Miss Qian used invitations to bid most often. She usually read signs of willingness to volunteer and called on a student who was already vocalizing the answer or gesturing in such ways as raising hand or maintaining eye contact. Miss Qian typically directed the questions to active, willing and more proficient students as the questions were not much based on the text. According to Miss Qian, fluent and smooth answers could stimulate her thinking. She admitted that both her train of thought and

language production tended to be negatively affected by disjointed student replies (SR-Qian-W1).

As usual, Miss Hou employed invitations to reply to manage turns. The Opinion Questions event was where Miss Hou's invitations to reply were badly-received. Her students pointed out that first, this procedure did not help the students express the ideas that were different from others; second, it did not help the students contribute extensive turns (SR-Hou Ss-W1).

While this event was conducted in Miss Hou's class, most of the students were very actively chatting with those around them in Chinese, which was also confirmed by what the students said in the SR session, "I'm listening to the teacher. At the same time I'm discussing with my desk mate about the topic" (SR-Hou Ss-W3). The students' statements showed that they were on task as a lot of relevant thoughts were going on in their minds. As the teacher did not give them legitimate space to talk, they shared their ideas with their neighbours, largely in Chinese.

7.2.1.2 Background Information event (Miss Hou only)

The Background Information event consisted of students presenting their prepared background information regarding a specified topic. The purpose of this event was to develop students' ability in research, in searching for information from various sources (OR-Hou-S4/W4).

Every time it turned out that there were only a few students who had done this homework. Miss Hou invited those who had done the homework to present. The students read from their Chinese notes. L1 was allowed by Miss Hou as she prioritised the ability to search for things (OR-Hou-S4/W4). After the students finished sharing their information, Miss Hou praised and thanked them. Thus, the social participation structure was again the IRF exchange.

7.2.1.3 *Background Information (by teacher) event (Miss Hou only)*

In this event, Miss Hou provided information regarding the topic(s) under discussion. For example, Dialogue I of Unit 8 talked about changes in the lives of Chinese farmers. Huaxi Village was used as an example to illustrate the changes in the text. The teacher began with displaying some pictures of the village on the computer projector. Then she started an extended monologue in English about the village: who the leader was, what he had done to make the village so prosperous and how well-off the villagers were.

7.2.2 Text Reading phase

The Text Reading phase involved reading a text aloud by playing a tape or by the teacher. Miss Qian started this phase by saying “now listen to the tape”. Miss Hou introduced this phase by framing words such as “now” and then played the tape or began to read the text herself when the tape-recorder was unavailable. In a couple of sessions, she started reading it without marking it off at all. Some students did not realize what the teacher was doing until the teacher had read a few sentences into the text, which was supported by the observational data of the students turning to each other to ask. There was only one event within this phase: Text Reading.

7.2.2.1 *Text Reading event*

Text Reading involved students listening to a tape or to the teacher reading aloud.

Miss Qian typically played the tape of the text and asked the class to think about the questions she had written on the board while they were listening. She would normally play the tape twice in succession. The students were not allowed to open their books while listening. Miss Hou played the tape or read the text herself when the tape-recorder was unavailable. Unlike Miss Qian, she did not assign while-listening tasks nor did she require her students to close their books.

7.2.3 Questions phase

In the Questions phase, the teachers raised questions in relation to the text. Miss Qian paid more attention to this phase than Miss Hou as she devoted far more time and asked far more questions than Miss Hou.

Miss Qian had several ways to signal the beginning of this phase: a) saying things like “let’s turn to several questions you are asked to answer”, or simply saying “now several questions for you to answer”; b) directly launching the first question; c) saying “let’s do these structure and framework” when the teacher was going to raise comprehension questions around the overall structure. Most often Miss Hou entered the phase by using the conjunction “so”, followed by the first comprehension question. In two sessions she marked it off more explicitly by saying “now questions” and “can you answer the questions” respectively.

Most of the teachers’ questions checked the students’ comprehension of the text and the answers were based on the text (Comprehension Questions event). Miss Qian sometimes hinted to the class in which paragraph of the text they could find the answer. From time to time, both teachers posed questions which were developed from comprehension questions or the text and which were beyond factual or related to students’ personal opinions or experiences (Opinion Questions event). Miss Hou normally signalled the shift to the Opinion Questions event by saying, “by the way” and “so”. Different from comprehension questions which required the students to recall from memory, the answers to those questions could not be found in the text. To answer them, the students had to marshal what they had learnt. In Miss Qian’s class, the Opinion Questions and Comprehension Questions events were in sequence. In Miss Hou’s class, the two events recurred in a series.

The biggest difference between the two classes in this phase was that while taking the class through the text by comprehension questions, Miss Qian also paused from time to time to deal with vocabulary items (Vocabulary Explanation event). As a result,

Vocabulary Explanation events and Comprehension Questions events were in a repeating pattern.

7.2.3.1 Comprehension Questions event

Miss Qian spent much more time on this event across sessions than Miss Hou.

In terms of the academic participation structures, Miss Qian and Miss Hou differed in two ways in how they presented comprehension questions. One way was that when raising comprehension questions, Miss Qian usually started with general questions in order to help the students build up a framework of the text. That is, comprehension questions were organized around the overall structure of the text. For instance, while teaching Dialogue I entitled “An Interview with an Amateur Actress”, Miss Qian organized the questions around how the girl in the text developed her interest in acting at different stages of her life although the text did not explicitly present itself this way. However, Miss Hou always delivered comprehension questions in the text order. It was this different way to set out the questions that made Miss Qian’s questions much harder to approach than Miss Hou’s.

Both teachers accounted for the rationales behind their practices. Miss Qian approached the text in a macro-way with the intention of developing the logical thinking ability of her students and teaching them how to master the overall structure of a reading text (SR-Qian-W1). Asking easy questions was one strategy Miss Hou employed to engage the students’ participation as she noticed that her students seemed to be more active while answering easy questions (SR-Hou-W1). It was also mainly due to this consideration that Miss Hou did not use the questions suggested in the Teacher’s Book as she held that some of them were beyond her students’ language abilities (SR-Hou-W1).

The second difference was that, very often, Miss Qian wrote the numbered questions on the blackboard in advance while Miss Hou always asked them orally.

Overall, the underlying social participation structures in this event was still IRF, in which the teachers provided a “did you read” message-based elicitation, the students responded and the teachers evaluated student responses.

Miss Qian’s I move was characterized by the following two features:

1) Miss Qian repeated her question a couple of times sometimes without change, sometimes with a bit of change. Look at the following example:

TR7.19-Qian-S3/W1

Student

Teacher

- 1 *how about the resources under the sea*
- 2 *can you list/*
- 3 *now sit down please ((speaking to the previous speaker))*
- 4 *can you illustrate resources under the sea*
- 5 *can you list resources under the sea*
- 6 *now Wang*

In the example, Miss Qian repeated the same elicitation three times, “how about ...” (1), “can you illustrate...” (4) and “can you list ...” (5). The teacher explained that she filled up the time for the students to think with her repetitions. Otherwise the long silence made her embarrassed (SR-Qian-W1).

2) Miss Qian provided multiple elicitations in the same turn such as in the following example:

TR7.20-Qian-S4/W2

Student

Teacher

- 1 *and another feature of the stamps*
- 2 *where are they used*
- 3 *and used for what/*
- 4 *where are they used and what’s the purpose*
- 5 *what’s the purpose*
- 6 *they are/*

7 *Ss: used for a variety of official purposes*

8 *they are affixed to parcel matters*

9 *Now*

10 *what's the purpose of using stamps*

11 *Ss: used for a variety of official purposes*

In the example above, in the same turn (1-5) the teacher supplied two different elicitations: where stamps are used and what the purpose of using stamps is. The students responded to the elicitation (7) they heard the last regarding the purpose, as they normally did. However, in the turn that followed, the teacher ignored it and supplied the answer to the first elicitation instead (8). She then repeated the second elicitation (10) although the students had already answered it earlier (7).

In the F move, both Miss Qian and Miss Hou used very similar techniques to follow up the student replies, e.g. repeating, paraphrasing, and/or expanding by providing reasons or adding more content information. Here are some excerpts to present the teachers' techniques:

TR7.21-Hou-S4/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>what kind of food they need</i>
2 <i>Sx: to live</i>	
3 <i>Sx: just for survival</i>	
	4 <i>Yeah</i>
	5 <i>so they have the food for survival ok</i>
	6 <i>so they eat enough to live to survive</i>

In the above example, Miss Hou connected the two replies she had heard in the form of paraphrasing (5-6), signalling that both replies were correct (SR-Hou-W3).

TR7.22-Hou-S4/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>and then/</i>
	2 <i>what about people today</i>
3 <i>Ss: they need the nutrition</i>	
	4 <i>they need nutritious food</i>
	5 <i>Nutrition</i>

In the example above, the teacher provided “need nutritious food” (4) as an alternative to the students’ reply, “need the nutrition” (3). By supplying alternative expressions, Miss Hou intended not only to offer more language input but to convey the message that the same idea could be expressed in various ways (SR-Hou-W4). In addition, the teacher also expanded on student replies as in the following example:

TR7.23-Hou-S4/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>do you think that those children could look away</i>
	2 <i>avoid looking at him when he was on the blackboard</i>
3 <i>Ss: no</i>	
	4 <i>no ok</i>
	5 <i>just like standing in front of you</i>
	6 <i>I cannot ask you to turn back ok</i>
	7 <i>and look away</i>
	8 <i>not to look at me</i>
	9 <i>no I can't do that right</i>

Immediately after repeating the student reply (4), the teacher justified it by explaining why those children could not avoid looking at him while he was writing on the board (5-9).

In Miss Hou’s class, the social participation structures followed the IRF interactional sequences throughout the event. By contrast, in Miss Qian’s class, there were variations to the IRF structure, which occurred in the following three circumstances:

a) When she received no reply or an incorrect reply, Miss Qian would re-initiate in four ways: i) offering a hint, which was normally the location of the answer, e.g. “look at the first paragraph”; ii) directing the elicitation to another student, nominated or volunteering; iii) repeating the original elicitation and iv) signalling her rejection of the reply by repeating it, simply acknowledging it by saying “I see” or using negation. These ways seemed to suggest that the teacher only valued a correct answer. She restarted with the hope that the students could get around to the answer she was seeking. No useful hints were offered to help the students arrive at the correct answer, thus transforming their understanding. Nor was any effort made to try to make sense of the students’ replies and find out where they stood or the root of their mistakes. The ‘default’ mode in Miss Qian’s class was that an answer to an elicitation was correct unless the teacher restarted it. In the SR session, the students commented that as the teacher seldom told the rationale behind a correct answer, sometimes they were still kept in the dark about why their answer was wrong (SR-Qian Ss-W1).

b) Even if the student reply was correct in content, Miss Qian might not accept it if it did not coincide with her agenda. The following example is an illustration of this point.

TR7.24-Qian-S4/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now the second stamps</i>
	2 <i>what’s it/</i>
	3 <i>Mu</i>
	4 <i>the second stamps</i>
	5 <i>what’s it/</i>
	6 <i>second type of stamp ((writing “govt” on the board))</i>
7 <i>Mu: ration stamps</i>	
	8 <i>um/</i>

9 *Mu: ration stamps*

10 *the second type of*

11 *now please read*

12 *please read sentence by sentence*

13 *now don't jump*

14 *Mu: ((no reply))*

15 *the second type of the stamps*

16 *don't jump*

17 *just read sentence by sentence*

18 *paragraph by paragraph*

19 *in the third paragraph we can find/*

20 *now in the second paragraph you can find/*

((writing "government stamps" on board))

21 *Ss: government stamps*

22 *now here government stamps right/*

Here the teacher nominated Mu to list the type of stamps mentioned in the text (1-2). Before Mu gave her reply, the teacher had already written part of the reply on the board (6). Failing to get a clue from that, Mu gave the reply "ration stamps" (7) which was correct in terms of the content but not in terms of its order in the text. In the text "government stamps" was mentioned earlier than "ration stamps". The teacher did not accept "ration stamps" as correct and asked her to make another attempt by following the order of the text (10-13). Unable to obtain the information requested, the teacher supplied it herself by writing the rest of "government stamps" on the board (20). In the SR session, Miss Qian mentioned that she preferred to keep to her well-organized plan (SR-Qian-W2). However, Mu argued that as her reply was correct even if it was out of order, the teacher should have given her credit rather than totally rebuffing it (SR-Qian Ss-W2).

The teacher did not give any wait-time to Mu before asking her to reply (3). The argument put forward by Miss Qian was that if the students previewed the text well

enough, they should be able to come up with the answers very quickly. Moreover the deprivation of wait-time could train their ability to react fast (SR-Qian-W2). However, Mu commented that she felt nervous when the teacher called on her as she did not have time to plan her reply at all (SR-Qian Ss-W2).

c) when she received a lengthy reply from the student who simply read from the text. Miss Qian preferred that the students answer comprehension questions in their own words rather than repeating the text. One strategy the teacher used was to direct the class to close the Student's Book. The other one was to reprimand when someone "violated" the rule such as in the following example.

TR7.25-Qian-S3/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now Sun</i>
2 <i>Sun: the material is made of the trees and plants that cover it</i>	
3 <i>and the animals that have lived on it since its beginning</i>	
4 <i>we can learn about the activities of man</i>	
5 <i>his story and development and his accomplishment in arts and crafts</i>	
	6 <i>anything else/</i>
	7 <i>now Sun</i>
	8 <i>do you decide to read the whole passage</i>
	9 <i>or/</i>
	10 <i>do you want to organize the sentences and tell us the main idea of this question</i>

The nominated student, Sun gave an extended reply by reading from the text, which was not the desired way to formulate an answer. The teacher asked her to make another attempt by re-organizing her language (7-10).

There were no instances of the teachers' probing further for clarification, justification or reasoning in either class. The message conveyed seemed to be that all that the teachers wanted was a correct answer. It did not matter how the students arrived at it, through true understanding or through overhearing from others or through guessing.

To manage speaking turns, Miss Hou opened up the questions to the entire class as usual. Whoever knew the answers could call them out. Turn-allocation was a more complicated story in Miss Qian's class.

Normally Miss Qian employed individual nominations in this event. The individual nominations gave her students a lot of pressure. The students who knew the answer welcomed pressure as they admitted that they needed to be "forced" to speak English. After having been pushed enough times, they had gained confidence to speak up in front of the class (SR-Qian Ss-W2). However, the students did not want to face the embarrassment of being unable to produce a desired reply. To cope with the teacher's nominations, most students, especially those less confident were mentally preparing for the next question on the board when somebody else was answering the previous question (SR-Qian Ss-W2).

Sometimes Miss Qian nominated some student not to answer a question, but to penalize him/her for doing something that was not approved. Here is an example:

TR7.26-Qian-S1/W6

Student

Teacher

- 1 *to understand what while somebody takes passage dictation*
- 2 *understand what*
- 3 *now Zhu*

4 *Zhu: ((standing up))=*

The students were supposed to answer questions with the Student's Book closed. In the example above, the teacher nominated Zhu (3) because Zhu was peeking at her book which was not desired (SR-Qian-W1). The teacher gave the answer herself before Zhu opened her mouth as she did not mean to ask Zhu to reply. Instead her intention was to warn Zhu against her inappropriate behaviour. This practice of using questions to tackle matters of discipline and order was also documented by Tan (2007) and Tsui (1995).

As in most events in Miss Qian's class, individual nominations were the norm. However, some active students could bid to reply before the teacher's nomination. The active student could also obtain the floor after a nominated student replied incorrectly or gave no reply. Miss Qian's practice of encouraging volunteers took precedence over individual nominations for two reasons. First, she did not want to discourage those willing and active students (SR-Qian-W1). Second, by enlisting peers' help rather than correcting the student's reply herself, the teacher intended to blur inequality between herself and the students (SR-Qian-W1). However, by moving directly to student volunteers, Miss Qian sent two subtle messages to the class. One was that the teacher was only concerned about a correct answer. The other was that "help" meant help by providing the correct answer, not help by developing each other's new understanding. The consequence was that the mistaken students were still kept in the dark about the root of the mistake (SR-Qian Ss-W1). If the students were provided with more prompts and enough time to think about their answers, they might be able to work out the correct answer. The students themselves were torn on the issue, simultaneously accepting the practice as they did not want to hold up other students while also desiring the opportunities to work out the correct answer themselves (SR-Qian Ss-W4).

In both classes, student answers to comprehension questions were taken directly from the Student's Book. The difference was that Miss Qian's students had to answer from their memory while Miss Hou's could read from the Student's Book directly. Another difference is that quite a lot of student utterances in Miss Qian's class were extensive

although non-spontaneous while all the student utterances in Miss Hou’s students were minimal or ultraminimal (see section 5.3.6). In addition, Miss Qian’s students faced greater pressure as they might be called on at any time, which motivated them to spend more time previewing. By contrast, Miss Hou’s students seemed to be insufficiently motivated as they could get away with little previewing or no previewing at all. As they reported in the SR, “Even if we preview, we just consult new words in the dictionary. We don’t know the passage very well” (SR-Hou Ss-W3).

7.2.3.2 *Opinion Questions event*

The Opinion Questions event has already been discussed in the Lead-in phase (see section 7.2.1). In the following part, I am going to focus on features that were not evident in the Lead-in phase.

In terms of the academic participation structures, in the Lead-in phase, Miss Qian had a hidden agenda, i.e. making a smooth transition to the text (SR-Qian-W3). However, in this Questions phase, the purpose was more for the students to put to use what they had learnt and to engage the students deeply in the text (SR-Qian-W4).

This event in the Questions phase demonstrates another way Miss Qian exerted control over the content of the academic participation structures, i.e. implementing her agenda at the students’ expense. TR7.27 occurred when the teacher was engaging the class to discuss a topic entitled “how do you learn English in the university”.

TR7.27-Qian-S4/W4

Student

Teacher

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | <i>now the last question</i> |
| 2 | <i>it’s a broad one ...</i> |
| 3 | <i>and you can combine the different elements and factor</i> |
| 4 | <i>and factor</i> |
| 5 | <i>you have been studying in Xinjiang University for more than three months right/</i> |

- 6 *for more than three months*
- 7 *so what do you think about your studying*
- 8 *what do you think about the way ..*
- 9 *to study the foreign language*
- 10 *so how do you learn English in the
university*
- 11 *come on*
- 12 *please speak out as much as you can*
- 13 *and as much as possible*
- 14 *Gu: ((raising hand))*
- 15 *((pointing her arm at Gu))*
- 16 *Gu: I think first*
- 17 *we should make a*
- 18 *a English environment*
- 19 *and speak as much as you
can*
- 20 *because I think um*
- 21 *practice ..*
- 22 *practice makes perfection*
- 23 *you mean here*
- 24 *the better way is to create an English-only
environment right/*
- 25 *Gu: yeah*
- 26 *second thing is umm*
- 27 *speak more and*
- 28 *more communicate with others*
- 29 *like foreigners*
- 30 *and learn how to learn the
ways to speak*
- 31 *to ..*
- 32 *MO FANG (imitate)*

- 36 *Gu: and ...*
- 37 *read more books*
- 38 *which are proper to read um=*
- 33 *Oh*
- 34 *imitate*
- 35 *to imitate yeah ((writing on board))*
- 39 *=yeah*
- 40 *it's an effective way to learn foreign language as
our second language*
- 41 *why to imitate is very important*
- 42 *why*
- 43 *to imitate what*
- 44 *to imitate what*
- 45 *please tell me ((shifting her look at the class))*
- 46 *Ss: pronunciation*
- 47 *Um*
- 48 *and do you think you can imitate everyone's
pronunciation*
- 49 *everyone's ways of speaking*
- 50 *and everyone's pitch*
- 51 *or speech*
- 52 *yes or no*
- 53 *Ss: no*
- 54 *you have to focus on someone's pronunciation*
- 55 *or pitch*
- 56 *or speech*
- 57 *you prefer*
- 58 *and you like very much right/*
- 59 *to imitate his or her pronunciation/*
- 60 *and her and his way of speaking*
- 61 *so you can find the great progress*

- 62 *you would take*
- 63 *and you would make right/*
- 64 *Great*
- 65 *to imitate ((directing her look back at Gu))*
- 66 *Gu: and to develop a good habit of learning*
- 67 *Um*
- 68 *to develop the good habit right/*
- 69 *the first to form the good habit*
- 70 *then to keep it right/*
- 71 *keep the habit*
- 72 *and develop the good habit to learn English*
- 73 *go on/*
- 74 *Gu: and..*
- 75 *to*
- 76 *so far that's it*
- 77 *Hen: ((raising hand))*
- 78 *um ((looking at Hen))*
- 79 *Hen: to take part in the English corner*
- 80 *to take part in English corner*
- 81 *and English speaking contest*
- 82 *and also now*
- 83 *if you have a chance*
- 84 *please cherish those chances to attend the English lecture*
- 85 *or the lecture related to American*
- 86 *or European country's culture and background*
- 87 *and history right/*
- 88 *and also related to Chinese/*
- 89 *history and culture right/*

- 90 *we couldn't remember our hometown and our
motherland right/*
- 91 *no we couldn't forget*
- 92 *not couldn't remember sorry ((all laughing))*
- 93 *we couldn't forget right/*
- 94 *Hen: and to take every
opportunity to talk with
foreigners*
- 95 *even if he or she is a stranger
to you*
- 96 *you can talk with him or her*
- 97 *to*
- 98 *to*
- 99 *to improve your English
speaking*
- 100 *um I see*
- 101 *good*
- 102 *sit down please*
- 103 *to catch any chance or*
- 104 *to catch any chance or opportunity
to practice our English right/*
- 105 *no matter where they are from right/*
- 106 *from America/*
- 107 *from Canada/*
- 108 *as well as from India/*
- 109 *or from Pakistan right/*
- 110 *and also from South Africa*

In the segment above, Gu mentioned imitation as part of the answer to the ways to learn English (32). Gu continued to contribute (36-38) and then paused to think. While Gu was planning what to say next, the teacher interrupted and picked up the topic about

imitation as she saw it as a good opportunity to highlight the importance of imitation and inform the students of what to imitate and how to imitate (SR-Qian-W4). That was how the interaction arose between her and the whole class about imitation (41-65). When the teacher came back to Gu (65), Gu reported to me in the SR session:

I forgot my last sentence and I don't know what to say next. She thought I've said what I wanted to say, but actually I had a lot to say. When Hen later on mentioned about taking part in the English corner, I was thinking I wanted to say that as well (SR-Qian Ss-W4).

That explained why when the teacher asked her to go on (73), Gu had got nothing to say as her train of thoughts was disturbed by the teacher's interruption (SR-Qian Ss-W4). The same thing resulted after Hen's contribution about taking part in English corners (79). The teacher first repeated it and then added a lot of content, e.g. "(to take part in) English speaking contest" (81), "to attend the English lecture" (84). Here the teacher was communicating to the class the importance of those activities in learning English (SR-Qian-W4). In effect, according to Hen, most of what the teacher said was what she was about to say if given the chance and she had more to add as well (SR-Qian Ss-W4). That is to say, the teacher said what the students could have said if given the chance, thus preventing the students from "pushing" themselves.

The data demonstrates that the bulk of spontaneous extensive student turns occurred in this event in the Questions phase. There are three plausible explanations. First, the teacher's questions were more open-ended than in the Lead-in phase in that she accepted all student contributions, which encouraged the students to generate their own understandings rather than answers the teacher desired to hear. Second, the teacher gave them some wait-time to think and organize their language as the question (10) was general and unprepared by the class (SR-Qian-W4). This left me wondering why she did not allow for wait-time in the same event in the Lead-in phase. Third, she also encouraged them to say as much as they could think of, which was spelt out in her utterances (12-13).

Miss Qian often engaged in self-repair of her ill-formed utterances. For instance, she changed “couldn’t remember” (90) to “couldn’t forget” (91). Miss Qian’s students were very understanding of the teacher’s self-repairs. They deemed them unavoidable in a non-native English teacher. Besides they thought that they could learn from the teacher’s mistakes and avoid repeating the same mistakes in their own production (SR-Qian Ss-W2).

On most occasions when there were Chinese utterances in the student reply, the teacher provided English glosses. However, when faced with a Chinese reply, Miss Qian at times treated it in other ways as well. Compare the three excerpts below: TR7.28, TR7.29 and TR7.30. Both TR7.28 and TR7.29 took place when the teacher’s elicitation called for the problems involved in exploring the food, minerals, and energy sources of the sea.

TR7.28-Qian-S4/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>anything else/</i>
	2 <i>anything else/</i>
3 <i>He: ((raising hand))</i>	
	4 <i>((pointing at He))</i>
5 <i>He: the equipment LUO HOU (lags behind) ((both the teacher and the students are laughing))</i>	
6 <i>x x study because ..</i>	
	7 <i>oh equipment</i>
	8 <i>ZHE GE equipment WO MEN QUE QIE DE JIANG JIU SHI technology DUI MA (to be more exact, equipment here refers to technology right)</i>
	<i>((continuing talking in Chinese about her interpretation of equipment))</i>

In the example, one student, He, gave a reply which was half English and half Chinese (5). Obviously He did not know how to say “lag behind”. Hearing that, everybody laughed, the teacher included.

In TR7.29 below, one student, Mei has replied in Chinese (1).

TR7.29-Qian-S4/W1

Student	Teacher
<p>1 <i>Mei: JIU SHI KAI FA HE BEI KAI FA HOU DE YI XIE WU RAN (that is the pollution as a result of exploiting)</i></p>	
<p>2 <i>DUI SHENG WU DAI LAI DE YI XIE SHUI TU LIU SHI YA SHENME DE (it has an effect on different creatures)</i></p>	
	<p>3 <i>Um</i></p>
	<p>4 <i>NA HAO (well)</i></p>
	<p>5 <i>NI BA NI ZI JI DE HUA NENG BU NENG YONG YING YU MAN MAN DE SHUO SUO CHU LAI (tell me in English what you want to say)</i></p>
	<p>6 <i>WO XIAN ZAI ZHI DAO NI XIANG SHUO SHEN ME (now I know what you want to say)</i></p>
	<p>7 <i>LAI (come on)</i></p>
	<p>8 <i>NA ME NI XIAN ZAI SUO TI DAO DE WEN TI ZHU YAO SHI SHEN ME TI (what’s the main point you were trying to make)</i></p>

Rather than supplying the English rendering herself, the teacher asked Mei to have another try at the reply in English (5-8). By requiring the students to translate their correct L1 responses into L2, Miss Qian encouraged the students to find a way of

expressing what they wanted to say in English and if possible, helping them out. No instance of the same type of re-initiation was captured in Miss Hou's class in the entire data. However, contrary to what she encouraged the students to do, Miss Qian herself went for the easier option, i.e. she made that request in Chinese.

TR7.30 below occurred when the teacher was asking the class to sum up the personalities of the main character in Dialogue I.

TR7.30-Qian-S4/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>anything else/</i>
2 <i>Ma: ((raising hand))</i>	
	3 <i>((pointing at Ma))</i>
4 <i>Ma: she is WAI XIANG DE (extrovert)</i>	
	5 <i>WAI XIANG DE (extrovert)</i>
	6 <i>WAI XIANG (extrovert) how to say ((looking at the class))</i>
7 <i>Ss: outgoing</i>	
8 <i>Sx: HAI YOU YI GE (there is another word)</i>	
	9 <i>outgoing or/</i>
10 <i>Gu: extra/</i>	
	11 <i>extra/</i>
12 <i>Ss: extravert</i>	
13 <i>Sx: WAI XIANG DE (extrovert)</i>	
	14 <i>how to spell it ((facing the board))</i>
15 <i>Sx: e-x-t-r-o-v-e-r-t</i>	
	16 <i>e-x-t-r-o-v-e-r-t. ((writing on board))</i>
	17 <i>oh extrovert</i>
	18 <i>and she is open</i>
19 <i>Zhang: ((raising hand))</i>	
	20 <i>anything else/</i>

21 Zhang: SHANG JIN DE (*enterprising*)

22 ((*gesturing to give the floor*))

23 SHANG JIN DE ZEN ME SHU (*how to say
SHANG JIN DE*)

24 *Enterprising*

25 *enterprising* ((*writing on board*))

The teacher called for the English equivalent from the class (6) for what Ma suggested in Chinese, “WAI XIANG DE (extrovert)” (4). Some students gave the word, “outgoing” (7). In response to it, one student suggested there was another word which meant the same (8). After this student’s suggestion, the teacher began to seek this word (9). Gu came up with the beginning part of the word (10), which triggered some students’ memory. They successfully produced the word, “extrovert” (12). The teacher then asked for its spelling (14) so that she could write it on the board.

The comparison of the above three excerpts showed that Miss Qian dealt with the same situation differently, seemingly depending on whether she could come up with the English gloss or not. If she could, mostly she would provide it herself. Occasionally she re-initiated in order to give the reformulating opportunity back to the original contributor. If she did not know the English rendering herself, she opted to ignore it, e.g. laughing it away so that she did not have to face the embarrassment of admitting her ignorance as shown in TR7.28. However, sometimes she could not easily get away with doing nothing such as in TR7.30. At such times, she had to resort to her students’ help.

TR7.30 was also significant in that it displayed how student peers co-constructed knowledge, in this case, producing the word “extrovert”. This finding is in line with those of Adair-Hauck & Donato (1994) and Donato (1994), i.e. if allowed to happen, peer collaboration played an important role in scaffolding students’ language use. It also revealed one of the ways that the students could become the source of knowledge when one student taught the teacher how to spell “extrovert” (15) although in this classroom it often occurred at the expense of the teacher’s lack of expertise.

Contrary to what it has been claimed in previous studies (e.g. Brock, 1986), TR7.30 indicated, disappointingly, that referential and open-ended questions did not necessarily stimulate longer and syntactically more complex student contributions if the teacher failed to probe more when faced with brief replies such as simple sentences consisting of “she is + an adjective” or simply an adjective.

The Opinion Questions event in Miss Hou’s class also reveals features that were not evident in the Lead-in phase. Through examining these features, I attempt to make the point that Miss Hou imposed tighter control over the content of the academic participation structures than she did the social participation norms. The teacher was willing to relinquish the IRF pattern and allow her students to initiate ideas. However, the criteria of relevance of student-initiated ideas were determined by the teacher. The following segment occurred when Miss Hou posed a discussion question regarding a sentence from the Dialogue I text.

TR7.31-Hou-S2/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>look here</i>
	2 <i>I suggest you take advantage of living in China</i>
	3 <i>and go to lectures</i>
	4 <i>Movies</i>
	5 <i>and plays</i>
	6 <i>8,888 times</i>
	7 <i>does she really mean that he should practise eight thousand eight</i>
	<i>8,888 [times]</i>
8 <i>Li: [no just made a joke]</i>	9 <i>well/</i>
	10 <i>it’s a kind of exaggeration</i>
	11 <i>but why 8,888</i>
12 <i>Li: just mean that they are so many</i>	

- 13 *why not 9,999*
- 14 *but why eight*
- 15 *Li: eight is a good number*
- 16 *eight is a good number*
- 17 *or we say a lucky number ok*
- 18 *Hasi: six is also lucky*
- 19 *Six*
- 20 *well/*
- 21 *in Chinese*
- 22 *six eight and nine*
- 23 *they are all lucky numbers ok*
- 24 *Hasi: fish is also lucky*
- 25 *NIAN NIAN YOU YU (there is a surplus every year)*
- 26 *Um*
- 27 *but it has nothing to do with figures*

First, the above segment exhibits another way for the students to self-select, i.e. to provide additional information regarding the subject matter under discussion. This occurred when Hasi initiated the idea, “six is also lucky” (18) and it recurred when the same student brought up another idea, “fish is also lucky” (24). In Miss Hou’s class, normally student-initiations of new information or ideas were made by several active students such as Hasi, which was, as Sunderland (2001:14) noted, “a salutary reminder of the importance of individuals in the classroom”.

Second, the segment provides another piece of evidence regarding how Miss Hou controlled the content of the discussion. The students could bring up new information, but it had to be topically related to what was under discussion. For example, when Hasi initiated the idea of “six is also lucky”, the teacher acknowledged it by showing agreement and expanding on it (19-23). However, when Hasi advanced another idea about fish being lucky, the teacher did not accept it as “it has nothing to do with figures”

(27). When asked to comment on this episode, Hasi argued that good luck was not only associated with numbers but with other things as well. Hasi wished that the teacher could have given the class the opportunity to talk about this good luck topic in a more extended way as it was very interesting (SR-Hou Ss-W1).

7.2.3.3 Vocabulary Explanation event (Miss Qian only)

In Miss Qian's class, the Vocabulary Explanation event normally occurred in the Language Points phase. Here it occurred in the Questions phase. The teacher offered two reasons to run the Vocabulary Explanation event here. One was that she could address those lexical items which were not worth "rich" instruction, e.g. "curriculum", "thyroid" in the Questions phase, thus in the Language Points phase which followed, she only needed to focus on more important words. The other was to mention important items in passing here so that the students could hopefully underline them and know the contexts when they were used. Thus it was easier for the students to locate them when she came back to them for further instruction in the Language Points phase which followed (OR-Qian-S3/W3). Due to these two considerations, Miss Qian treated target items here very briefly. See the Vocabulary Explanation event in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1) for a detailed account of this event.

7.2.4 Language Points phase

In the Language Points phase in this Dialogue I cycle, Miss Qian only covered vocabulary items (Vocabulary Explanation event). Miss Hou dealt with vocabulary items (Vocabulary Explanation event), pronunciation (Pronunciation event) and grammar (Grammar Explanation event). Both teachers allocated most time to Vocabulary Explanation events as they did in the same phase in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1).

7.2.4.1 Vocabulary Explanation event

The Vocabulary Explanation event has been described in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1). As in the Language Structures cycle, Vocabulary Explanation events have moved through seven components: Frame; Focus; Explanation; Example Following

Definition; Elaboration; Repetition; Frame (see section 7.1.4.1). However, here in the Dialogue I cycle, they demonstrated two new features:

1) Like in the Language Structures cycle, both teachers offered pseudo-examples for the items. However, in the Dialogue I cycle, both also provided real examples which the teachers used to relate to a specific context. For example:

TR7.32-Hou-S3/W5

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>XIA YI GE (next one)</i>
	2 <i>don't be biased against nuclear technology</i>
	3 <i>Here</i>
	4 <i>be biased against ..</i>
	5 <i>that means to be prejudiced against</i>
6 <i>Ss: PIAN JIAN (prejudice)</i>	7 <i>BU YAO DUI SHEN ME XHI PIAN NIAN. BU YAO DUI YOU SE REN ZHONG CHI YOU PIAN JIAN (don't be biased against coloured people)</i>
8 <i>Ss: don't be biased against xx ((students translating all at the same time))</i>	9 <i>don't be biased against coloured people</i>
	10 <i>is that good [to be biased against anybody or anything/</i>
11 <i>Ss: [no</i>	
	12 <i>no</i>

After repeating the sentence the students translated (9), Miss Hou shifted to a real example, “is that good to be biased against anybody or anything?” (10).

While offering real examples, Miss Hou referred to broad knowledge, to her personal experience and to moral value whenever possible in order to achieve both academic and

affective purposes. Academically the teacher was creating situations to help students retain the words better. Affectively the teacher was teaching the students right attitudes, right behaviours and enriching their range of knowledge (IN-Hou-2). TR7.32 above is an illustration of how Miss Hou used the occasion of vocabulary explanation to instil moral values that it was not good to be biased against anybody or anything. In Vocabulary Explanation events, Miss Hou quite often posed referential questions as shown in TR7.32. However, as Miss Hou's main intent in posing these questions was not to ignite discussion but to clarify, illustrate or reinforce vocabulary items and/or to achieve affective purposes, she normally shut down students' contributions.

Most of Miss Qian's examples were prepared and pedantic which she copied from the references while many of Miss Hou's were impromptu and grounded on daily realities, which accounted for the students' preference for Miss Hou's examples. They held that Miss Hou's examples aroused their interest and left a deeper impression on them (SR-Hou Ss-W5).

2) The Drill Practice event was sometimes inserted into the Vocabulary Explanation event as an optional component in this cycle. An event with another event inserted as an optional component was named after the required component, in this case, Vocabulary Explanation. Normally Drill Practice followed Example Following Definition (see section 7.1.4.1). Drill Practice events did not occur in the Language Structures cycle. The reason may well be that the students had opportunities to practice lexis in substitution exercises, which rendered additional practice unnecessary. Most frequently, the students in both classes were required to translate the phrases or sentences supplied from Chinese to English. The second type of practice Miss Qian's students were made to do was to make sentences with the target items. The second type of practice offered by Miss Hou was situational questions when the students were expected to supply the target lexical items in response to the context provided by the teacher (see section 7.1.2).

Compared with in the Language structures cycle with **Focus-Explanation** as the dominant pattern in both classes, Vocabulary Explanation events in the Dialogue I cycle

were more complicated in that most lexis underwent richer instruction. Specifically in Miss Qian's class, most lexical items have gone through either Example Following Definition or Elaboration or both. That is to say, three patterns dominated: **Focus–Explanation–Elaboration**, **Focus–Explanation–Example Following Definition–Elaboration** and **Focus–Explanation–Example Following Definition**. The frequent use of elaboration was a strategy Miss Qian used to enlarge the students' vocabulary and help the students establish links between what was new and what had already been learnt (OR-Qian-S2/W2).

In Miss Hou's class, most Vocabulary Explanation events have followed either Example Following Definition or Drill Practice. The three predominant resulting patterns were: **Focus–Explanation**, **Focus–Explanation–Example Following Definition Drill Practice** and **Focus–Explanation–Drill Practice**. These three patterns were consistent with what Miss Hou remarked in the interview:

...so I give them some explanation of the phrases and sentence structures but I would not just stop there. After giving them explanations and telling them the usage and then I want them to practice. I give them some Chinese and want them to turn them into English (IN-Hou-1).

The patterns in Miss Hou's class indicated that Miss Hou gave differential attention to lexical items. The words which she gave rich instruction, namely, she allocated time for practice on and supplied more examples for were verbs, idioms and phrases and words with multiple meanings. When it came to infrequently used lexical items or unimportant ones which did not have multiple meanings or special meanings in the textbook contexts, the teacher simply provided English and/or Chinese definitions (SR-Hou-W3).

Miss Hou provided a lot of practice for the students, believing that by doing so, she was maximizing students' opportunity to talk (IN-Hou-1). The mechanical nature of the

practice led me to believe that to Miss Hou, opportunity to talk means opportunity to talk in a controlled way rather than in a meaningful way.

The students from both classes were usually limited to a responding role. Most frequently, Miss Qian's students responded to the teacher's calling for the definition of a word. Sometimes they were asked to translate the teacher's sentences or to make their own sentences. It was the other way round in Miss Hou's class. Most often, Miss Hou's students responded to the teacher's stimuli as in translation practices. Sometimes they responded to the teacher's calling for the definition of an item. Less frequently they gave brief answers to real questions posed by the teacher to reinforce her teaching points.

7.2.4.2 *Pronunciation event (Miss Hou only)*

The pronunciation event which occurred in this cycle in Miss Hou's class is the same as the Pronunciation event in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1.4.2).

7.2.4.3 *Grammar Explanation event (Miss Hou only)*

Grammar Explanation events followed very similar academic participation structures to Vocabulary Explanation events in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2.4.1).

Here is a typical Grammar Explanation event from Miss Hou's class:

TR7.33-Hou-S1/W4

Student

Teacher

- 1** *now move on*
- 2** *without it we would starve to death*
- 3** *look here*
- 4** *without it is a subjunctive mood ok*
- 5** *ZHE GE NE SHI ZUO YI ZHONG XU NI DE (it's subjunctive mood)*
- 6** *YOU MIAN NI KE YI KAN DAO (you can tell from) we would starve to death*
- 7** *KAN DAO MEI YOU (see)*

8 *ZHE SHI YI GE XU NI YU QI (it's the subjunctive mood)*

9 *RU GUO MEI YOU TA DE HUA (without it)*

10 *WO MEN JIU HUI ER SI DE (we would starve to death)*

11 *BI RU SHUO NE (for instance)*

12 *RU GUO MEI YOU KONG QI (without air)*

13 *WO MEN JIU MEI YOU BAN FA HUO (we could not live)*

14 *Ss: without air we could not live*

15 *Yeah*

16 *without air we couldn't live*

First, Miss Hou framed and focused Grammar Explanation events as she did for Vocabulary Explanation events. For example, Miss Hou framed the sequence by saying “now move on” (1). She then launched a focusing device by announcing the topic item, “without it we would starve to death” (2). Next, Miss Hou supplied grammar explanation. Miss Hou used a wider array of sentence structures to realize explicit rules in Grammar Explanation events than in Vocabulary Explanation events (see section 7.1.4.1). They were:

It has to be ...;

You can use ..., but you cannot use ...;

When you mention ..., you don't need; but when you put ..., you need ...;

When you use ..., that means ...;

When you..., you have to use (you use);

...is often used when ...;

If you use..., it has to be ...;

...is ..., and it is used as... (e.g. “improved” is a past participle and it is used as an adjective).

This observation is in line with Yee & Wagner's (1985) observation. The reason they offered was that in Grammar Explanation events it is rules that are described rather than meanings or definitions. In the example, the teacher offered grammar explanation herself by using the structure of "...is..." (4), followed by the Chinese translation (5). After having given the explicit definition, the teacher inserted a Drill Practice event, signalled by "BI RU SHUO NE (for instance)" (11). The drill work involved was a translation practice (12-13).

The pattern of **Focus–Explanation–Drill Practice** dominated. In most cases, Miss Hou provided the explanations herself as she doubted the students' ability to explain the rules, "they don't know how to explain grammar, so I'd better do it myself" (SR-Hou-W3). This suggests that the teacher believed her role was to do whatever she believed the students were incapable of doing. This view of the role of teachers contrasts with the sociocultural view of teachers as supporting students to do what they find difficult. As in Vocabulary Explanation events, all the grammatical points were initiated by the teacher. What the students were required to do was to respond to the mechanical practice. Miss Hou controlled the pace, direction and content of classroom discourse through display questions and teacher exposition.

7.2.5 Presenting phase (Miss Qian only)

The Presenting phase occurred in the Language Structures cycle where Miss Qian's students were required to present either a dialogue they built up based on cues (see section 7.1.7.1) or a dialogue they formed themselves (see section 7.1.7.2). Here what the students were required to present was debate. Miss Qian herself designed the topics and the specifications of the debate. In the session prior to the students' debate (Debate event), the teacher allocated the topics and issued directions (Preparing for Debate event). In S3/W4 when the last round of debate took place, the teacher summarised information about debate (Summarising event).

7.2.5.1 Preparing for Debate event

The Preparing for Debate event involved the academic participation structure of setting

up the topics and specifications for the debate. At the end of the S2/W3, the teacher wrote three topics on the board. Three group leaders took turns drawing a paper from the teacher's hand to decide which topic they were going to work on. Afterwards they decided among themselves in class who were on the pro side and who were on the con side. The teacher specified the number of the debaters each side should have and the role each debater should take up.

7.2.5.2 *Debate event*

The beginning of the debate was signalled by the teacher's announcing "next let's do our debate". The teacher then announced the topic and invited the group responsible for the topic to come to the front. In the earliest session, the teacher stepped in from time to time during the debate. For example, once she asked the students to pause in order to point out their problem of jumping into the debating without presenting their main lines of argument first. At another point, one debater got stuck and could not continue. Silence fell. The teacher took the floor over by pointing out another problem in their debate: the other debaters failed to join in to assist the one who was presenting arguments. The teacher also stepped in on another occasion to present her disagreement with one debater in argument. In the later two sessions, the teacher did not interrupt. At the completion of the debate, the teacher gave some comment, most of which was negative regarding the content of the debate, for example, the debaters were restricted to one line of reasoning which they debated at great lengths, therefore the arguments never graduated past the surface level.

In this event, the debaters had to listen to each other carefully and organize the TL within limited time. While it did not occur often, this event was the most communicative and challenging event offered to the students in both classes. It provided opportunities for the students to put the language to active use, to communicate in an authentic way.

7.2.5.3 *Summarising event*

When it came to the last round of the debate, before Miss Qian set the debate going, she thought it was time to wrap up the debate by summing it up (SR-Qian-W4). The teacher

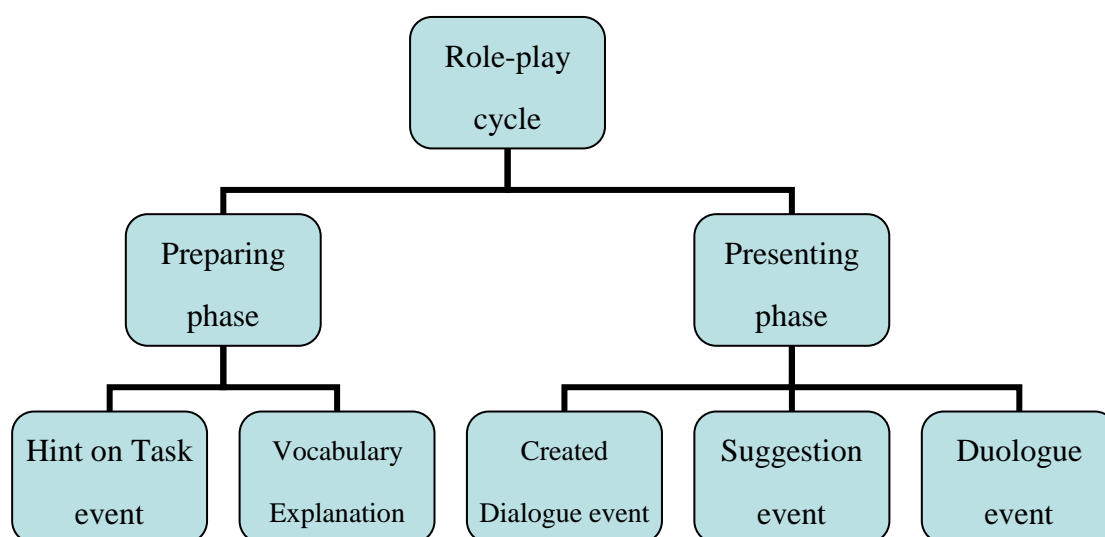
prepared some English information she downloaded online regarding the characteristics, the purposes of the debate and the basic way to organize it. She delivered it to the class in the form of an extended monologue. During the exposition, she paused from time to time to check whether or not the students were following her. Miss Qian reported (OR-Qian-S3/W4) that she was not interested in the students' thoughts here. What she wanted to achieve was simply to present the main points for the students to listen to and reflect upon. The students told me in the SR session that they could not follow the teacher especially when the teacher referred to such abstract ideas as "debating creates the skill you need for success", "debating is a sport of your mind and your voice" (SR-Qian Ss-W4). However, nobody brought up their puzzlement to the teacher. Some students said that they simply noted down those points so that they could reflect upon them after class (SR-Qian Ss-W4).

By the time this event was conducted, the students had already debated twice. We can assume that they must have gathered some ideas about debating. However, rather than seeking the students' experience as a possible source of knowledge, the teacher approached books and references as authorities instead.

7.3 Role-play cycle (Miss Hou only)

In the Role-play section of the Student's Book, a topic, a situation, specific roles and some expressions are provided. Its purpose, according to the Teacher's Book, is to offer students opportunities to use the language freely. This cycle occurred only in Miss Hou's class. Figure 7.4 below gives an overall picture of the phases and events within the Role-play cycle in Miss Hou's class across sessions.

Figure 7.4 Phases and events within the Role-play cycle



Miss Hou went through two phases in this cycle: Preparing and Presenting. These two phases occurred in separate sessions. Before asking the students to prepare for the role-play in their own time, the teacher usually spent some time helping them prepare in the session prior (Preparing phase). And the students then acted out their dialogues before the whole class in the session that followed (Presenting phase). Sometimes the Presenting phase spanned two sessions. The reason was that the teacher had to abort it as her invitations to performance were met with collective silence when it was first dealt with and she tried to get volunteers again in the session that followed. Although Miss Hou did not signal clearly the continuance of the same role-play into the following session, my observations showed that the teacher carried on with the same topic.

When this cycle started with the Preparing phase, Miss Hou marked off its beginning by mentioning the word “role-play” and the topic of the role-play or she would explicitly signal it by saying “I give you assignment for role-play”. When the teacher started the cycle with the Presenting phase, she restated the assignment or invited the students to bid to reply.

7.3.1 Preparing phase

The Preparing phase occurred when Miss Hou prepared the students for the role-play in the Student’s Book. It comprised two events: Hint on Task and Vocabulary Explanation.

7.3.1.1 *Hint on Task event*

See section 7.1.5.1 for an example of the Hint on Task event from the Language Structures cycle.

7.3.1.2 *Vocabulary Explanation event*

The Vocabulary Explanation event most often occurred in the Language Points phase. Here it occurred in the Preparing phase. It followed the same process as Vocabulary Explanation events in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1), i.e. they were brief and did not include the insertion of the Drill Practice event.

7.3.2 Presenting phase

In this phase, every time the teacher invited volunteers to demonstrate their prepared dialogue, her invitation was met with silence, which made her really frustrated (IN-Hou-2; OR-Hou-S3/W1). On one occasion, Miss Hou could not take it any more. She asked the pair who did not do the assigned role-play to get out of the classroom. They were not allowed to come back until they were ready for the presentation. However, although the teacher's invitations for the role-play received no reply, it did not necessarily mean that the students did not prepare for it. In the SR, some students told me that they had prepared for it. However, they needed some courage to volunteer (SR-Hou Ss-W3). Besides, the performances from the nominated students proved that most of them did prepare for them.

Other than calling on a student pair at random to present their role-plays (Created Dialogue), the teacher sometimes decided to cancel the Created Dialogue event. Instead she made suggestions to the students (Suggestion) or engaged the designated students to answer some elicitations provided by her (Duologue).

7.3.2.1 *Created Dialogue event*

The Created Dialogue event occurred in Miss Qian's class, but not in Miss Hou's class in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1.7.2). Here in the Role-play cycle, it

occurred in Miss Hou's class, but not in Miss Qian's. Miss Hou followed the same academic participation structures as Miss Qian in this event.

However, there was a difference between the two teachers in the social participation structures. Miss Qian tended to use individual nominations whereas Miss Hou started with invitations to bid and resorted to individual nominations only when there were no bidders.

7.3.2.2 *Suggestion event*

In the Suggestion event, the teacher made suggestions regarding learning strategies, study habits or highlighted the importance or purpose of a particular event.

In S3/W1, when Miss Hou's invitations to present a role-play received no reply, she shifted to suggesting making a "role card" (i.e. cue card) with the purpose of getting rid of students' bad habit of reciting everything written beforehand on a piece of paper during the presentation (OR-Hou-S3/W1). In S4/W4, starting with the function of language, Miss Hou developed an extended talk on the importance of interacting with others in picking up a new language.

Whenever Miss Hou spotted some bad habits in her students, she would bring them up as she considered it very important to help the students cultivate good study habits from the very beginning (IN-Hou-1). As to how to bring them up, she simply pointed them out by sounding like she was making suggestions, which was evident in the wording she chose, for example, "try to do...", "if you do.... you will...". My observations showed that there were hardly any instances of Miss Hou severely telling her students off for undesired behaviours. The most likely explanation could be found in the teacher's belief that the most important quality of effective teacher talk was to make sure that it was acceptable to students. Criticism could only trigger rejection (IN-Hou-1).

This event was usually realized by Miss Hou in the form of an extended monologue. What the students needed to do was to listen and think about what the teacher said and to take the advice. Here the teacher told from her own experiences what she believed led to

language learning. Different from other events which were concerned with the way the teacher controlled what content to do, this event was one where the teacher exerted control over what was the best way to learn the content or over “the “meta-content” cues toward steps and strategies for completing the task” (Erickson, 1982:155).

7.3.2.3 *Duologue event*

The Duologue event involved the academic participation structure of requiring the designated students to have an interaction with the teacher. This was a strategy the teacher used to counteract students’ laziness or inactiveness (OR-Hou-S3/W3), i.e. forcing the students to talk by working on a dialogue with them herself. TR7.34 took place when the teacher was inviting the students to bid for an opportunity to talk about a trip to a city in the province many students come from.

TR7.34-Hou-S3/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>anybody from ((Chinese name of a local city))</i>
	2 <i>anyone here who is from ((Chinese name of a local city)) ((teacher raising her arm high))</i>
3 <i>Ss: ((no reply))</i>	
	4 <i>ok Li</i>
	5 <i>if I go to ((Chinese name of a local city))</i>
	6 <i>can you tell me how to go there/</i>
7 <i>Li: there are two kinds of transportation you can go there</i>	
8 <i>first you can by bus</i>	
	9 <i>go there by bus</i>
10 <i>Li: yes</i>	
11 <i>and by train</i>	
	12 <i>aha</i>
	13 <i>can I walk there/</i>
14 <i>Li: not exactly</i>	
	15 <i>ok/</i>

- 16 *can you tell me what to see in ((Chinese name of a local city))*
- 17 *I want to know what to see in ((Chinese name of a local city)) ((the teacher continuing raising questions to li))*

The teacher-student interaction in this event was typified by the social participation structure of the IRF. The teacher asked all the questions, the nominated student responded and the teacher followed up the student reply in terms of content. For instance, the teacher started with an elicitation (1-2), which was meant probably more to invite the students to bid for the opportunity to talk about that Chinese city than to seek information as to who was from that city. First of all, as the head teacher, Miss Hou probably knew where most of her students were from. Second, the students probably interpreted it as invitation to bid as nobody answered although, as far as I know, there were at least three students from that city. The teacher's invitation received no reply (3). The teacher had to call on somebody. She nominated Li (4) who was probably from that city. The teacher then initiated a series of elicitations (6, 13 & 16), to which she knew the answers as at one stage of this event she mentioned to the class that she had been to most of the cities in the province. Li answered, in response to which, the teacher acknowledged by either repeating or giving listening responses. Sometimes rather than reiterating a student reply, the teacher supplied the English names of the tourist spots that the students mentioned and/or added more information regarding what she herself knew about those places. In this event as in the Created Dialogue event, Miss Hou attended more to content than to form. Even when she did correct occasionally, she used recast. Given the nature of this event, the reason was probably that she did not want to disturb students' train of thought when meaning was focused on (IN-Hou-3).

7.4 Dialogue II cycle

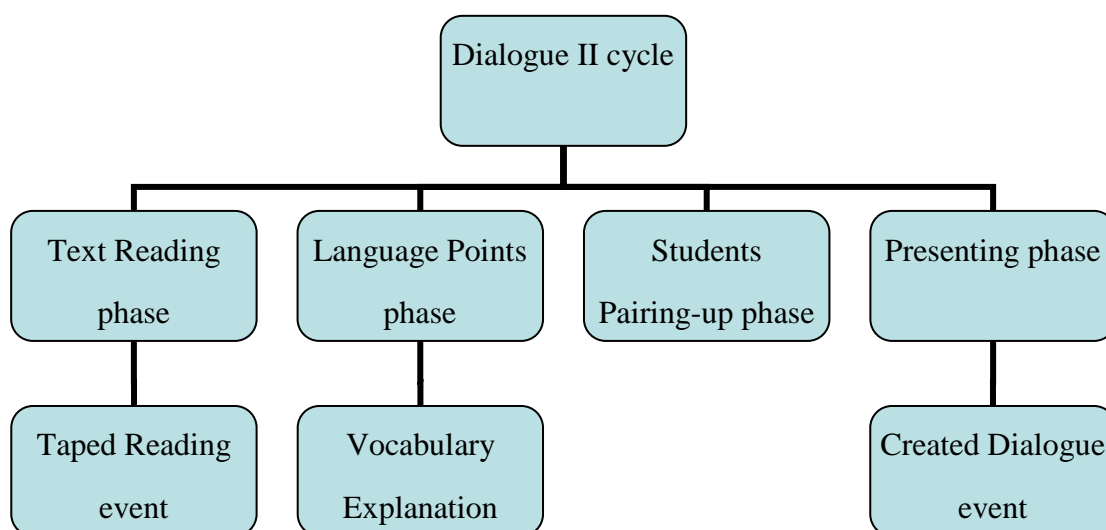
Dialogue II focuses on language functions. It is divided into three parts in terms of its layout in the Student's Book: a) a list of phrases and expressions grouped together by a particular communicative function of the language, e.g. introductions, advice and

suggestions; b) a conversation which demonstrates how the listed expressions are used in communication and c) practices with a range of situations given.

Both teachers believed that the Dialogue II cycle was for student practice rather than for teacher explanation as the text itself was very simple (IN-Qian-2; IN-Hou-2).

Miss Qian opened up this cycle by mentioning “dialogue II” or the relevant page number. Alternatively if she had already assigned the students to prepare for practices in Dialogue II, she would ask the students whether they had prepared for them. Miss Hou introduced this cycle by either mentioning “dialogue II” or the target communicative function, e.g. “now try to describe objects”. Figure 7.5 below provides a summary of the phases and events within this cycle in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 7.5 Phases and events within the Dialogue II cycle



The way in which this cycle was enacted in Miss Hou’s class was more complicated than in Miss Qian’s class as shown in Tables 7.5 and 7.6 below. For Miss Qian, this cycle was normally a two-part one, consisting of Language Points and Presenting phases while for Miss Hou, it was a four-part one, comprising Text Reading, Language Points, Students Pairing-up and Presenting phases. Of all the phases that both teachers went through, only the Presenting phase was determined by the Student’s Book.

Table 7.5 Dialogue II cycle for Miss Qian

Sessions(S)/Weeks(W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S3/W2	Unit 6	Presenting Language Points
S1/W5	Unit 12	Presenting
S1& S2/W6	Unit 13	Language Points Presenting

Table 7.6 Dialogue II cycle for Miss Hou

Note: "Not complete" means that a particular session was continued into the following session which I was unable to observe as I had to observe the other class in the following session.

Sessions(S)/Weeks(W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S3/W1	Unit 6	Text Reading Language Points Students Pairing-up Presenting
S3/W2	Unit 7	Language Points Students Pairing-up
S4/W3	Unit 8	Text Reading Language Points Students Pairing-up Presenting
S4/W4 (not complete)	Unit 9	Language Points Text Reading Students Pairing-up
S4/W5 (not complete)	Unit 12	Language Points Text Reading

7.4.1 Text Reading phase (Miss Hou only)

The Text Reading phase which occurred in the Dialogue I cycle in both classes (see section 7.2) recurred in the Dialogue II cycle in Miss Hou's class only. As in the

Dialogue I cycle, this phase is a single-event one: Text Reading. Miss Hou ran this event the same way as she did in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2).

7.4.2 Language Points phase

The Language Points phase occurred in all the cycles I have dealt with so far in both classes. Here in the Dialogue II cycle, both teachers dealt with new vocabulary (Vocabulary Explanation event).

7.4.2.1 Vocabulary Explanation event

The Vocabulary Explanation event which occurred in the Dialogue II cycle is the same as the Vocabulary Explanation event in the Language Structures (see section 7.1) and Role-play cycles (see section 7.3). That is, the most frequent pattern was **Focus-Explanation**.

7.4.3 Students Pairing-up phase

The Students Pairing-up phase in this cycle followed the same process as in the same phase in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1.6).

7.4.4 Presenting phase

So far, the Presenting phase occurred in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1) in both classes. It also occurred in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2) in Miss Qian's class and Role-play cycle (see section 7.3) in Miss Hou's class. Here the same phase recurred in both classes in the Dialogue II cycle.

The Presenting phase in this cycle consisted of one event in both classes: Created Dialogue.

7.4.4.1 Created Dialogue event

In Miss Qian's class, the Created Dialogue event in the Dialogue II cycle followed the same process as in the Created Dialogue event in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1). In Miss Hou's class, the Created Dialogue event in the Dialogue II cycle

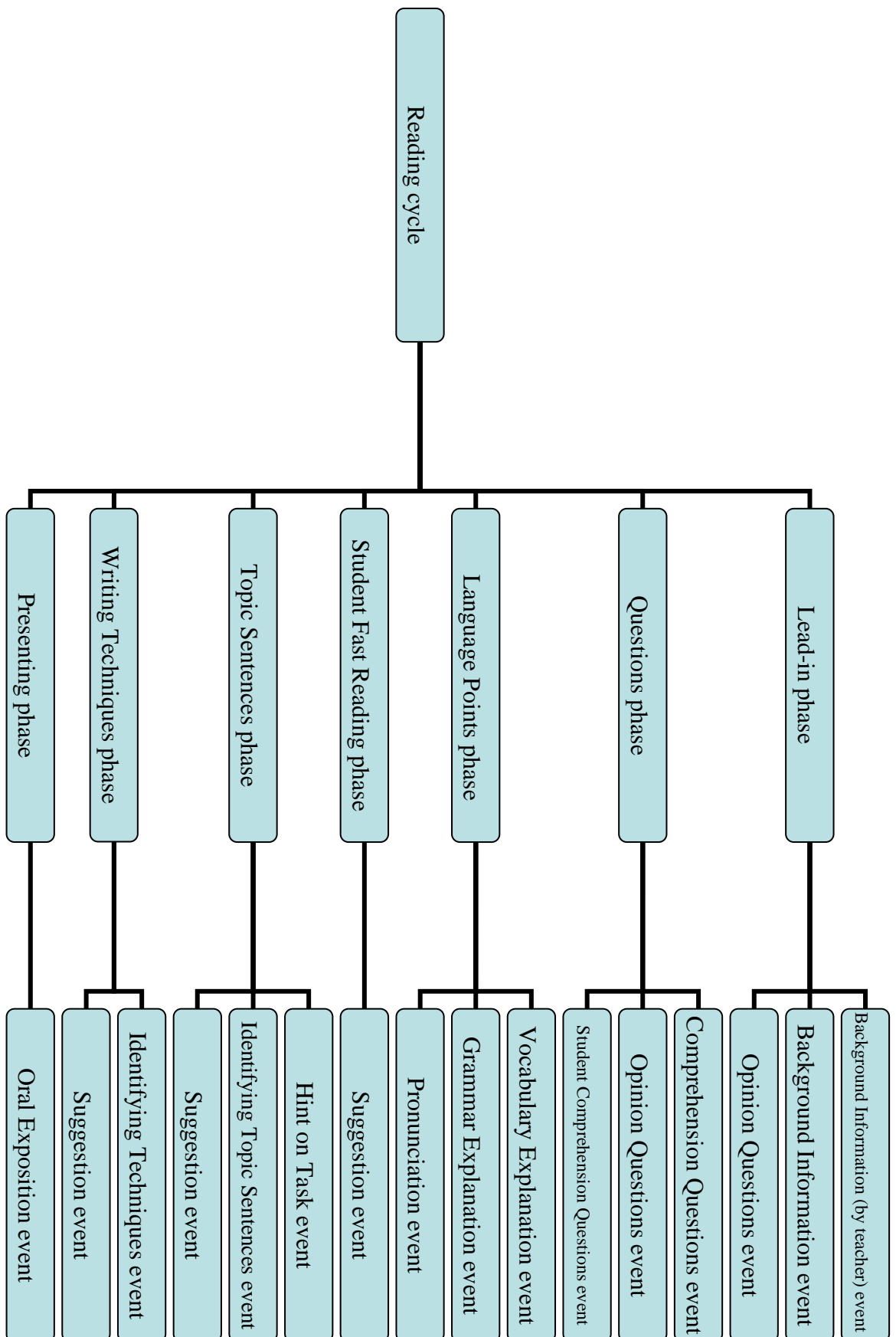
followed the same process as in the Created Dialogue event in the Role-play cycle (see section 7.3).

7.5 Reading cycle

There are two reading texts in each teaching unit: Reading I and Reading II. According to the Teacher's Book, they serve the same purpose: to improve students' reading ability. The teachers dealt with the two texts in the same way, so I identified just one cycle: Reading.

Miss Qian introduced this cycle by using the structure "let's see" or "let's move to", followed by the title of the reading text, except for in S4/W2 when she was dealing with a text about stamps and postage stamps. She marked off the beginning of this cycle by using a transitional sentence, "and we know, a lot of people have the hobby to collect stamps" and then proceeded immediately to the first comprehension question. Miss Hou entered this cycle in two ways: a) saying "now reading" and then announcing the title of the reading text; b) using "by the way" to signal the shift of cycle, followed by a lead-in question. Figure 7.6 below provides a summary of the phases and events in this cycle in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 7.6 Phases and events within the Reading cycle



Tables 7.7 and 7.8 below show the routine phases the teachers implemented in this cycle respectively.

Table 7.7 Reading cycle for Miss Qian

Sessions (S)/ Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Reading I or Reading II	Phases
S1/W1	Unit 3	Reading I (not complete)	Questions Writing Techniques
		Reading II	Questions
S3&S4/W1	Unit 4	Reading I	Questions Language Points
		Reading II	Questions Language Points
S4/W2	Unit 7	Reading 1	Questions Language Points
S4/W3	Unit 10	Reading I	Lead-in Questions
		Reading II	Questions Language Points
S2&S3/W5	Unit 12	Reading I	Lead-in
		Reading II	Questions Language Points
S2/W6	Unit 13	Reading I	Questions
		Reading II (not complete)	Questions

Table 7.8 Reading cycle for Miss Hou

Sessions (S)/ Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Reading I or Reading II	Phases
S3&S4/W1	Unit 5	Reading I	Lead-in Questions Text Reading
		Reading II	Text Reading Language Points
S1/W2	Unit 6	Reading I <i>(not complete)</i>	Language Points
		Reading II	Lead-in Language Points Topic Sentences
S4/W2	Unit 7	Reading I	Lead-in Text Reading Questions
		Reading II	Text Reading Questions Language Points
S1/W4	Unit 8	Reading I <i>(not complete)</i>	Language Points
		Reading II	Lead-in Topic Sentences Language Points Presenting
S4/W4	Unit 9	Reading I	Questions
		Reading II	Questions Language Points
S1/W5	Unit 11	Reading II	Questions Language Points

For both teachers, Questions and Language Points were the two key phases in this cycle. As well as the shared phases, Miss Qian dealt with writing techniques (Writing

Techniques phase) and Miss Hou engaged the students in working out topic sentences (Topic Sentences phase) and required the students to present something they had prepared in their own time (Presenting phase).

7.5.1 Lead-in phase

In this phase, both teachers provided background information themselves (Background Information (by teacher) event). Besides, Miss Qian asked the students to demonstrate background information (Background Information event). Most frequently Miss Hou engaged the students in the Opinion Questions event. Miss Hou allocated much more time to this phase than Miss Qian did.

7.5.1.1 Background Information (by teacher) event

The Background Information (by teacher) event involved the teachers supplying background information in relation to the topics of reading texts themselves. Both teachers presented the information in the form of an extended monologue. The only difference between them was that Miss Qian used Chinese while Miss Hou used English. In her SR, Miss Qian admitted that it was hard for her to produce long stretches of talk in English without preparation (SR-Qian-W1), which was probably why Miss Qian delivered this event in Chinese.

7.5.1.2 Background Information event (Miss Qian only)

Miss Qian's purpose in running this event here is the same as Miss Hou's in the same phase in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2.1.3), i.e. to develop the students' ability to explore and at the same time to enrich their scope of knowledge (OR-Qian-S3/W1). The students unanimously agreed on the benefits of this event in cultivating their self-discovering ability (SR-Qian Ss-W2&W3).

The social participation structures in this event followed the IRF pattern. In the I move, the teacher invited the students to present their information they had prepared. After the

students' presentation in English, normally just reading through their notes, the teacher picked up interesting points for comment in the F move.

7.5.1.3 *Opinion Questions event (Miss Hou only)*

Miss Hou ran the Opinion Questions event in both the Lead-in and Questions phases in the Dialogue I cycle. Here in the Reading cycle, Miss Hou ran the Opinion Questions again in the Lead-in phase. See section 7.2.1.1 for a detailed account of the way Miss Hou ran this event.

7.5.2 Questions phase

The Questions phase in this cycle was conducted the same way as in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2) in both classes except for one additional event in Miss Qian's class, Student Comprehension Questions.

7.5.2.1 *Comprehension Questions event*

The two teachers ran the Comprehension Questions event in the Reading cycle the same way as the Comprehension Questions event in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2) except for one minor difference regarding the source of comprehension questions. Other than using comprehension questions she devised herself as in the Dialogue I cycle, Miss Qian also used comprehension exercises in the Workbook as supplementary comprehension questions.

7.5.2.2 *Opinion Questions event*

Both Miss Qian and Miss Hou ran the Opinion Questions event in the Lead-in and Questions phases in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2). Here in the Reading cycle, Miss Qian did not instigate this event in the Lead-in phase as did Miss Hou. However, both conducted this event in the Questions phase in the Reading cycle. See section 7.2.3.2 for a detailed account of the way Miss Qian ran the Opinion Questions event and section 7.2.1.1 for a detailed account of the way Miss Hou implemented this event.

7.5.2.3 *Student Comprehension Questions event (Miss Qian only)*

The Student Comprehension Questions event occurred when the students were made to raise comprehension questions to each other at Miss Qian's request. It was only enacted once in S2/W6 in Miss Qian's class. The students were made to prepare for the questions they were going to ask in their own time regarding the comprehension of reading passages.

In the session when this event was held, the student questioner could name anybody. The same questioner was allowed to ask multiple questions to the same student. If the nominated student answered correctly, the questioner would normally say "yes", "thank you", "congratulations" or "that's right". Student's evaluations such as "yes that's right" tended to trigger laughter, perhaps because the students were not accustomed to having their answers evaluated by another student as generally the teacher was the only assessor. It was interesting to note how the students reacted to incorrect or no replies. They moved on to somebody else just like their teacher did. It appears that they were somewhat socialized into the teacher's teaching style.

In this event, the students took up a teacherlike role, preparing questions, designating speakers and evaluating replies. The reversal in roles was in fact the purpose of Miss Qian devising this event, as she said herself, "giving the students the opportunity to experience what being a teacher is like" (IN-Qian-3). The teacher stepped in from time to time mainly to award the floor to a particular questioner and to prompt volunteers.

This was one of the few events where there were IRF sequences, but there were student-led. In effect, the students were not only given the opportunities to initiate comprehension questions but to evaluate replies. At times, the IRF sequence was relinquished altogether when the students interacted with each other. This is the only event in both classes when instances were captured of one student selecting another student as the next speaker. In order to formulate comprehension questions, the students had to preview the text better than usual. However, apart from a wider range of

discourse moves the students were allowed access to, their language use was still largely restricted to recall from memory.

7.5.3 Language Points phase

The Language Points phase occurred in all the cycles I have addressed so far in both classes. Here in the Reading cycle, the three events: Vocabulary Explanation, Grammar Explanation and Pronunciation occurred in both Miss Qian's class and Miss Hou's class.

7.5.3.1 Vocabulary Explanation event

The Vocabulary Explanation event in this cycle was enacted the same way as in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2). That is, most Vocabulary Explanation events went through Example Following Definition and/or Elaboration in Miss Qian's class and through Example Following Definition and most importantly, through Drill Practice in Miss Hou's class.

7.5.3.2 Grammar Explanation event

In Miss Hou's class, the Grammar Explanation event which occurred in this cycle is the same as the Grammar Explanation event in the Dialogue I cycle (see section 7.2.4.3).

Miss Qian dealt with Grammar Explanation events here in the Reading cycle but not in the other Student's Book cycles. In terms of the academic participation structures, the two teachers differed in that Miss Qian did not provide practice on grammatical items as did Miss Hou. Thus, Grammar Explanation events in Miss Qian's class followed the order: **Focus–Explanation** while the same events in Miss Hou's class following the order: **Focus–Explanation–Drill Practice**.

In terms of the social participation structures, the two classes differed in two ways. One was that in Miss Qian's class, the three part IRF sequence was the most common pattern in this event where Miss Qian involved the students' participation in explaining grammar. After a students' correct reply, Miss Qian usually repeated the substance of the student's reply or added more information. When the student(s) answered

incorrectly, the teacher would give them several attempts to retry through the R/I exchange type, which sometimes looked like a guessing game (see section 7.1.1.2).

In Miss Hou's class, the teacher-student interaction was characterised by an alternation of Teacher Inform and Teacher Elicit exchanges. Miss Hou used the Teacher Inform exchange to offer the explanation of grammatical points and used the Teacher Elicit exchange to offer practice opportunities to the students.

The second difference was in turn-management. Miss Qian required her students to volunteer in some way, by having their hands up, by maintaining eye contact with her or by vocalizing part of the reply. By contrast, Miss Hou's students were free to respond, as was usually the case in her class.

7.5.3.3 *Pronunciation event*

In Miss Hou's class, the Pronunciation event which occurred in this cycle is the same as the Pronunciation event in the Language Structures (see section 7.1) and Dialogue I (see section 7.2) cycles.

The reading cycle was the only cycle where the Pronunciation event occurred in Miss Qian's class. Unlike Miss Hou who used a reading-after-me strategy, Miss Qian called for the pronunciation of the target word from the students through the IRF exchange structure. Her elicitation had three manifestations: a) providing two alternative pronunciations, one correct and one incorrect one for the students to choose from; b) how to pronounce + the Chinese meaning of the target word; c) reading out the original sentence from the text and pausing strategically before the target word. As in Vocabulary Explanation events, where Miss Qian tended to extend to other properties of the target items, in this event, the teacher often dealt with pronunciations of words derived from the target word. For example, after addressing the pronunciation of the target word "democracy", the teacher continued with the pronunciation of its adjective form "democratic".

7.5.4 Writing Techniques phase (Miss Qian Only)

The Writing Techniques phase was devoted to the ways that the writers of the reading passages used to fit their purpose for writing. This was a phase Miss Qian generated herself and it was observed twice. Once she marked it off by stating, “tell me the writing techniques used”. The other time she introduced it by directly telling the type of writing the target article was, framed by “so”.

Two events were identified in this phase across the two sessions observed: Identifying Techniques when Miss Qian dealt with writing techniques the writers used to fit their purpose for writing and Suggestion when Miss Qian stressed the importance of carrying out the Identifying Techniques event.

7.5.4.1 Identifying Techniques event

The Identifying Techniques event involved the academic participation structure of requiring the students to identify the techniques the writers employed to fit their purpose for writing. The following example is an illustration of how Miss Qian conducted this event:

TR7.35-Qian-S1/W1

Student

Teacher

- 1** *so we know this text*
- 2** *this text is a piece of expository writing right ((writing “expository” on the board))*
- 3** *not a ..*
- 4** *not the narrative ((writing “ narrative” on the board))*
- 5** *expository writing SHI DAI YOU SHUO MING XING DE WEN ZHANG (is expository writing)*
- 6** *NA WO MEN QIAN MIAN ZAI WO MEN SHANG JIE KE JIANG DE SHI HOU SHOU MING XINAG DE WEN ZHANG (last time I mentioned some techniques used by the writer of expository writing)*
- 7** *ZUO ZHE DOU SHI YONG DE NA XIE FANG FA NI MEN HAI JI DE MA (do you still remember them)*

8 Ss: *JU LI*

(illustration)

9 *yeah that's right*

10 *things can be explained*

11 *things can be explained in this passage by definition right/*

12 *by definition*

13 *now what is*

14 *what is national newspaper and what is Sunday paper right/*

15 *and just give us the clear definition of different types of newspaper right/*

16 *and also classification*

17 *is that right/*

18 Ss: *yeah*

19 *classification/*

20 Ss: *((no reply))*

21 *Classification*

22 *what's it/ ((writing "clarification" on board))*

23 *ZHI DE SHI SHEN ME YI SI YA (what does it mean)*

24 Ss: *((no reply))*

25 *FEN LEI (classification)*

26 *JIU XIANG DANG YU BA ZHE XIE British newspaper FEN CHENG LIANG DA LEI (it's like dividing British newspapers into two big categories)*

27 *ZHI HOU YOU FEN CHENG XIA MIAN DE FEN LEI DUI MA (and then dividing them into subcategories right)*

28 *and also illustration*

29 *illustration/*

((the teacher continuing to deal with the technique of illustration and the other two techniques))

In this event, Miss Qian first informed the class what the type of writing the text under discussion was (1-5). Afterwards, the academic participation structures followed a pattern of first identifying the technique used, then dealing with the definition of the technique if needed, and lastly exemplifying the technique. Miss Qian began this pattern by asking the students to recall the techniques (6-7). Though the students said, “JU LI (illustration)” (8), the teacher went on to explain the “definition” technique. She then illustrated the “definition” technique by using a textbook example, “what is national newspaper and what is Sunday paper” (14). When it came to the second technique: classification, the same academic participation structures were maintained. First, the teacher identified the technique “classification” (16); second, she dealt with the definition of “classification” (19-25); finally, she exemplified it (26-27).

The treatment of the first technique followed the social participation structures of the Teacher Elicit exchange in which the teacher called for the writing techniques from the students (6-7) and then ignored what they said. However, the social participation structures changed when it came to the second technique: classification. There was a Teacher Inform exchange followed by a Teacher Elicit exchange, and then another Teacher Inform exchange. In the first Teacher Inform exchange (16-18), the teacher supplied an answer to the elicitation (6-7) she provided herself. A Teacher Elicit exchange followed in which the teacher addressed the meaning of “classification” (19-25). Embedded in this Teacher Elicit exchange was an R/I exchange which occurred when the teacher failed to obtain the correct information regarding the meaning of “classification”. In the second Teacher Inform exchange, the teacher provided an example of the “classification” technique (26-27). The rest of the techniques followed the same social participation structures as did the “classification” technique. In terms of turn-management, the teacher’s elicitation were open to everybody.

As Miss Qian signalled at the beginning of TR7.35 (6-7), the same content had been dealt with before. When the same content appeared again, what the students were required to do was to recall from their memory. Miss Qian commented that, “It does not matter whether what I’m teaching is old or new. If it is old, I’m helping the students

review old stuff; if it's new, I'm teaching them something new" (IN-Qian-2). From the students' responses in class, it could be inferred that they did not learn much although the same event was addressed in three sessions in succession. Thus it is possible that the problem with the students' poor performance may be due to the teacher's direct telling and failing to offer the students any opportunities to process the task actively themselves. For example, the teacher supplied the techniques and exemplified them herself. The students were only asked to give the definitions of the techniques. Although the event itself was meaning-focused, it was totally directed and controlled by the teacher.

7.5.4.2 Suggestion event

In all the Student's Book cycles in Miss Qian's class, the Suggestion event only appeared once, here in the Reading cycle. In this event, Miss Qian stressed the importance of converting the text into a chart or a diagram to assist with grasping its structure. At the same time she expressed her hope that her students could think logically as the BS students were expected to. Miss Qian delivered the event in Chinese probably because she found it hard to produce long stretches of unplanned discourse in English (SR-Qian-W1).

7.5.5 Topic Sentences phase (Miss Hou only)

The Topic Sentences phase occurred when Miss Hou addressed the main idea of each paragraph of the text. The purpose of this phase was to help the students improve reading and writing by grasping the gist (OR-Hou-S4/W3). It was marked off by Miss Hou's announcing "now let's look at topic sentences". This phase was designed by Miss Hou herself. Three events were captured across sessions: Hint on Task, Identifying Topic Sentences and Suggestion. Identifying Topic Sentences was the core, as it occurred in every session.

7.5.5.1 Hint on Task event

The Hint on Task event appeared in both the Language Structures (see section 7.1) and Role-play (see section 7.3) cycles. In this event in the Identifying Topic Sentences

phase, Miss Hou informed the class directly what the possible positions of the topic sentence could be in a paragraph by speaking from her own experience rather than giving the students opportunities to discover by themselves. This practice reflected not only Miss Hou's effort to reduce the difficulty level of the task the students were soon required to do but a transmission mode of teaching.

7.5.5.2 *Identifying Topic Sentences event*

In terms of the academic participation structures, this event consisted of the students identifying the topic sentence of each paragraph of the reading texts. The segment below is used to illustrate what happened in this event.

TR7.36-Hou-S1/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>Now</i>
	2 <i>can you tell me which is the topic sentence for the first paragraph</i>
3 <i>Ss: the first sentence</i>	
	4 <i>Um</i>
	5 <i>the first sentence</i>
	<i>((several turns later))</i>
	11 <i>and then the next paragraph/</i>
12 <i>Ss: ((no reply))</i>	
	13 <i>which one/</i>
14 <i>Ss: ((no reply))</i>	
	15 <i>the last/</i>
16 <i>Sx: DAO SHU DI ER GE</i> <i>(next to the last)</i>	
	17 <i>DAO SHU DI ER GE (next to the last)/</i>
	18 <i>DI ER GE HAI SHI DI SAN GE JU ZI (the second or the third)</i>
19 <i>Ss: DI ER GE (the second)</i>	
	20 <i>DI ER GE JU ZI ME (should be the second)</i>

21 *no collector could hope to obtain a specimen of every stamp issued in the world*

With regards to the social participation structures, this event took the form of IRF interactive exchanges between the teacher and students. In the I move, the teacher started by calling for the topic sentence of a paragraph (2). In the R move, the students supplied it all at the same time (3). In the F move, a correct reply received a stressed “um” (4) and repetition (5). When no reply was forthcoming, Miss Hou re-started the question, “which one/” (13). Unfortunately there was still no reply. The teacher then suggested “the last/” in a rising intonation (15). Hearing that, one student disagreed by suggesting a different reply (16), which the teacher repeated for rejection (17) as in the same turn, the teacher asked an alternative question (18) to narrow down the scope of the reply. There were altogether eight sentences in the target paragraph. When the elicitation received no reply or a weak reply, other than launching an R/I exchange as shown in the above example, the teacher at times also supplied her own reply.

7.5.5.3 *Suggestion event*

In the Suggestion event in the Topic Sentences phase, rather than picking up students’ study habits for negative comment as she did in the Presenting phase (see section 7.3.2) of the Role-play cycle (see section 7.3), Miss Hou highlighted the importance of topic sentences in helping understanding a reading text. See section 7.3.2.2 for a discussion of the way Miss Hou handled this event.

7.5.6 **Presenting phase (Miss Hou only)**

The Presenting phase appeared only once in the Reading cycle when Miss Hou was addressing one reading text about the process of making bread. Miss Hou invited volunteers to describe the salad they had made for the Salad Competition held by the School. The students were required to prepare for that as homework. However, rather than preparing a mini-dialogue with their partner and acting it out as they did in the Language Structures (see section 7.1), Role-play (see section 7.3) and Dialogue II (see

section 7.4) cycles, this time, the students worked on their own to prepare a paragraph. There was only one event within this phase: Oral Exposition.

7.5.6.1 *Oral Exposition event*

The Oral Exposition event involved the academic participation structure of getting the students to present a specified topic they had prepared. Although it occurred only once during my observations, it was singled out for analysis because it was one of the few in the entire data set for Miss Hou where the students were given most talking space. TR7.37 below serves as an example of what happened in this event.

TR7.37-Hou-S1/W4

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>who'd like to describe the process of making a salad</i>
2 <i>Ss: ((no reply))</i>	
	3 <i>NI LAI ZUO (how about you) ((pointing at Gu in front of her))</i>
4 <i>Gu: first we buy some</i>	
5 <i>buy some fruits and yogurt</i>	
6 <i>and ice-cream</i>	
	7 <i>ice cream ok</i>
8 <i>Gu: chocolate</i>	
	9 <i>uh-huh</i>
10 <i>Gu: and =</i>	
	11 <i>=by the way</i>
	12 <i>did you melt chocolate</i>
	13 <i>YOU MEI YOU BA chocolate RONG HUA (did you melt chocolate)</i>
14 <i>Gu: YOU (yes)</i>	
15 <i>Ss: ((shaking head))</i>	
	16 <i>BU YONG (no)</i>
	17 <i>JIU BA TA BAI SHANG QU (you just put</i>

chocolate in straight away)

- 18** Ss: NA GE (*we used xx*)
- 19** *oh I see*
- 20** *Please*
- 21** Gu: WO MEN SHI BA TA
RONG HUA LE DE (*we did*
melt it)
- 22** *and first we peel the fruit*
- 23** *and cut them into pieces*
- 24** *and ...*
- 25** *then/..*
- 26** *put them into*
- 27** Gu: *there is a big plate*
- 28** *we put them on it*
- 29** *and we DAO (pour)*
((turning to her desk mate))
- 30** Sx: *pour*
- 31** *Pour*
- 32** Gu: *pour the yogurt and*
ice-cream on it
- 33** *and*
- 34** *then/*
- 35** Gu: WO MEN MAI LE YI XIE
(we bought some xx)
- 36** SA ZAI PANG BIAN (*sprinkled*
it around the side)
- 37** ZUO LE YI GE TAI JI DE ZAO
XING (*we put it in the form of*
Taiji)
- 38** JIU SHI YI BIAN SHI xx (*on one*
side is xx)

- 39 *LING YI BIAN SHI (on the other side is xx)*
- 40 *oh I see*
- 41 *Gu: and we buy some peaches*
- 42 *and we put it around*
- 43 *around the salad*
- 44 *and we named it is SHUANG SE GUO YUAN (colourful orchid)*
- 45 *JIAO SHUANG SE GUO YUAN (colourful orchid)*
- 46 *MEI SHUO TAI JI GUO YUAN (you didn't call it Taiji Orchid)*
((all laughing))
- 47 *all right ok*
- 48 *well/*
- 49 *also sounds nice and beautiful*

The teacher started off this event by asking the students to bid for the opportunity to present the salad-making process they had prepared (1). As nobody volunteered, the teacher resorted to the individual nomination (3).

Although the teacher-student interaction still followed the IRF exchange with the student response sandwiched between the teacher's I and F moves, the IRF exchange here represented a departure from that displayed in other events in three ways. First, rather than positioning herself as a "primary knower" (Nassaji & Wells, 2000:379) or a sole possessor of knowledge, and seeking a prescribed answer from Gu, the teacher placed the source of information squarely on the student.

Second, although the teacher initiated the overall thematic development of the event as a whole, i.e. the process of making a salad, it was not the teacher but Gu, who was leading the topic development of individual exchanges throughout the interaction. She started

with talking about the ingredients of the salad (4, 6, 8), then moved to the process of making it (22-24, 27-33), next to shaping it (37-43) and finished with naming it (44). The only exception occurred when the teacher interrupted her to ask about what she did with the chocolate (11-13). Even in this case, though, the teacher was picking up on a topic which had first been mentioned by a student.

The third way in which the IRF exchange was less restrictive lay in the nature of the teacher's F move. The teacher very often gave listening responses (e.g. "ice cream ok" (7); "uh-huh" (9); "oh I see" (19)) to signal to Gu that she was following and Gu could continue her turn. Other than acting as an interested listener, the teacher's role as a facilitator was evident in that she offered help only when she saw the student getting stuck or in Vygotskian terms, when the student had reached her ZPD. At two points (24, 33), Gu paused to think. To ensure that she did not subvert Gu's agenda, she gave her some time to think about her production before she stepped in. After gauging that Gu probably could not go any further without help, the teacher supplied a grammatical structure, "then put them into" (25-26) which Gu might need to proceed with her exposition. The same thing recurred when the teacher provided the English equivalent of "DAO (pour)" (31). The scaffolding the teacher offered shows her sensitivity to Gu's emerging needs and capabilities. This sensitivity was achieved through interaction and negotiation with Gu. Such contingent teacher responses differ from helping students "in a unidirectional way" (Nassaji & Swain, 2000:113) which characterized the traditional teacher-student talk evidenced in the extended data.

All the aforementioned variations lent to student responses much longer than monosyllabic responses associated with highly teacher-controlled discourse, realized through the traditional triadic IRF exchange structure. In effect, the resulting contributions from Gu were among the few spontaneous extensive student turns (see section 5.3.6) collected in this classroom.

This excerpt also revealed that the IRF exchange did not have to stifle student contributions if the teacher slightly modified it by giving the students some freedom as

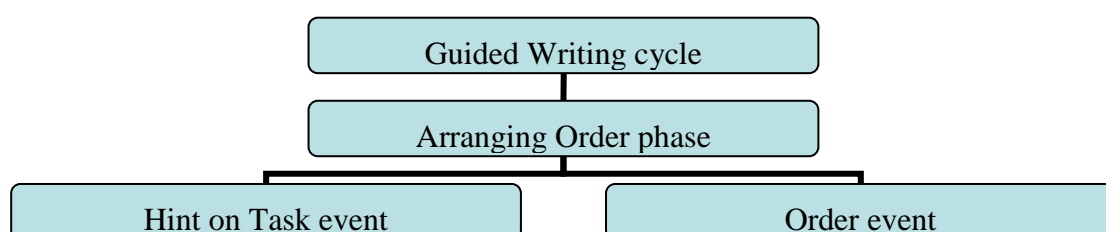
to what topic they desired to talk about in individual exchanges and allocating them most of the conversational space. This small but significant variation from the teacher-controlled IRF exchange has the potential to “build up to a discourse sequence and hence to open up the discourse in ways which, ...are likely to be enabling of second language development” (Gibbons, 2006:117). The above segment also suggested a direction that the teacher could orient towards in order to achieve a more symmetrical teacher-student discourse in a culture where teachers have long been looked up to as absolute authorities. As Van Lier (1996) contended, symmetry does not equate equality. Although teachers are in a more authoritative position both in status and knowledge than students, it does not necessarily mean that their interaction with students has to be asymmetrical, if teachers shift more rights and duties of speaking to students.

7.6 Guided Writing cycle (Miss Hou only)

The Guided Writing section in the Student’s Book offers exercises which target the development of students’ writing skill. Some exercises focus on linking words, some on paragraph writing and some aim to help the students write informal notes of various types, e.g. notes of telephone message, notes of congratulations, etc. The exercises in this cycle are recommended in the Student’s Book to be done in groups of two or three.

Miss Hou introduced this cycle by announcing “guided writing” and the relevant page number. In each session, she picked out the exercise of arranging order (Arranging Order phase) to work on. The exercise took the form of arranging scrambled sentences in the right order to form a particular type of note. Figure 7.7 below provides a summary of the phases and events in this cycle in Miss Hou’s class across sessions.

Figure 7.7 Phases and events within the Guided Writing cycle



7.6.1 Arranging Order phase

The Arranging Order phase occurred when Miss Hou addressed the exercise in which a number of scrambled sentences which went together to form a particular note were given to the students to arrange in order. Miss Hou always marked off this phase by using a discourse device, “now” plus the particular kind of note involved, e.g. “thank-you note”. Before engaging the students in arranging the order of jumbled sentences (Order event), Miss Hou would offer some hint by supplying the structure of a note, which facilitated the Order event which the students were about to participate in (Hint on Task event). By providing a formula the students could follow in the Hint on Task event, the teacher had considerably lowered the difficulty level of what the students were academically engaged in in the subsequent event. Rather than finding out the right order for themselves, all that the students needed to do was to fit bits of information in the given framework.

As the social participation structures embedded in these two events were very similar, they will be examined together as a summation rather than in separate events.

7.6.1.1 Hint on Task event

The Hint on Task event occurred in the Language Structures (see section 7.1), Role-play (see section 7.3) and Reading cycles (see section 7.5) in Miss Hou’s class. Here it recurred in the Guided Writing cycle. The following example demonstrates an additional feature which was not evident in other cycles, i.e. the Hint on task event with a series of Order events inserted. TR7.38 took place when Miss Hou was addressing a note of information.

TR7.38-Hou-S1/W5

Student

Teacher

- 1 *well/*
- 2 *if you write a note to offer some information*
- 3 *and then you may write like this*
- 4 *this is to inform you that*
- 5 *or you say*

- 6 *I'm writing to tell you that ok*
- 7 *and then/*
- 8 *give information as to what is going on*
- 9 *what will happen*
- 10 *Here*
- 11 *this is to inform you that*
- 12 *professor John Jefferson has arrived in Shanghai*
- 13 *and then/*
- 14 *you need to tell his purpose*
- 15 *his purpose of visit*
- 16 *why he comes*
- 17 *RU GUO NI YAO SHUO MOU REN LAI LE (if you
tell somebody that someone has come)*
- 18 *NI JIU WAO SHUO TA GAN MA LAI LE (you have
to state the purpose)*
- 19 *NA ME (then)*
- 20 *ZHE DI FANG ZENG ME SHUO (what does this
note say)*
- 21 *Ss: give us a series of
lectures on banking*
- 22 *give us a series of lectures on banking*
- 23 *NA TA SHI LAI ZUO JIANG ZUO DE (he comes to
give lectures) ((the interaction continuing))*

In the example above, Miss Hou offered the first hint by giving out the information as to how to start a note of information, i.e. “this is to inform you that” (4) or “I’m writing to tell you that” (6). She then offered the second hint signalled by “and then/” (7), i.e. “give information as to what is going on” (8) or “what will happen” (9). Indicating by “here” (10), the teacher was referring to the particular note that the students were working on. Immediately afterwards, the teachers provided the first sentence in order of the note of information under discussion (11-12). Signalling by “and then/” (13), the teacher

proceeded with the second element: the purpose of visit (14-18). The teacher then referred back to the note under discussion (19-20). Miss Hou followed the same academic participation structures to offer more hints until she finished dealing with the rest of the jumbled sentences.

7.6.1.2 *Order event*

The order event involved the academic participation structure of getting the students to combine scrambled sentences into a particular note.

The teacher's elications called for what the first sentence should be, what the second sentence should be, etc. The students answered these discourse elicitations (i.e. elicitations referring to the way in which sentences combine into cohesive and coherence sequences (Spada & Frohlich, 1995)) all at the same time. The teacher sometimes inserted Vocabulary Explanation events into the Order event. Here the target vocabulary items were contained in the sentences which needed to be ordered. Miss Hou treated these items briefly. That is, vocabulary Explanation events here followed the same process as in the Language Structures cycle (see section 7.1.4.1).

7.6.1.3 *Social participation structures*

In the two events implemented above, Miss Hou controlled the content and the floor by either informing herself or occasionally eliciting responses from the class. While the teacher was informing, all that the students needed to do was to follow the teacher's train of thought, to take note of key points and correct their own answers. While the teacher was eliciting answers from the class, all her questions were closed and display in nature. The students' statements were brief, consisting of a couple of words except for when they quoted sentences from the exercise. In the F move, the teacher typically repeated the correct student response. When the students' reply was incorrect, the teacher directly supplied her reply. To manage turns, Miss Hou invited the class to respond together.

The teacher did not get the students to discuss the exercises in small groups, although that was encouraged in the Student's Book.

The following chapter will be devoted to the description of the way the teachers interacted with their students in the Workbook cycle.

CHAPTER 8: MISS QIAN'S AND MISS HOU'S INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CLASSES IN THE WORKBOOK CYCLE

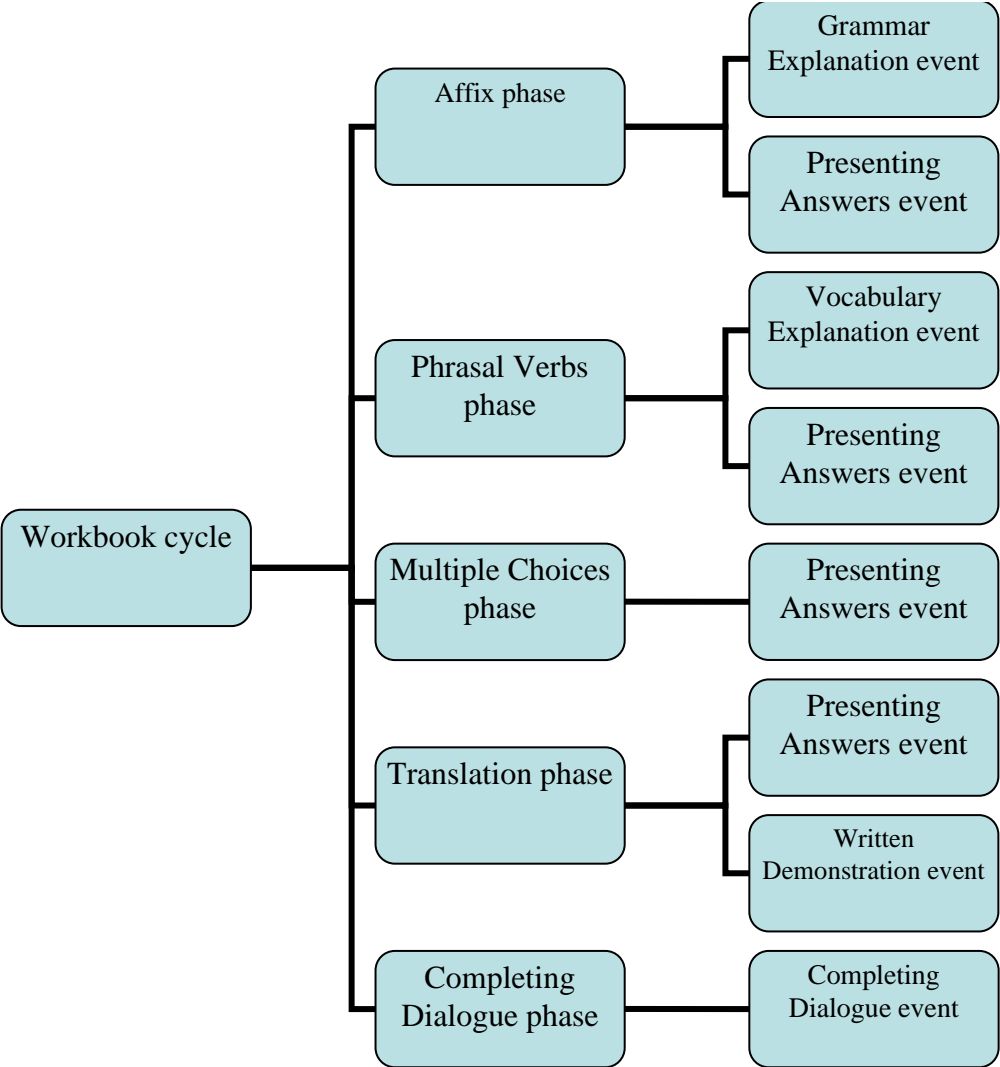
This chapter examines the teachers' way of interacting with their students while working through the exercises in the Workbook.

The Workbook offers various types of exercises. The teachers had latitude as to what exercises to cover as they could not afford time to cover them all. My observations showed that both teachers chose exercises from the Translation section, which involves Sentence Translation, and from the Vocabulary Work section, which normally includes affixes, phrasal verbs and multiple choices. In addition, Miss Qian picked out some comprehension exercises from the Reading section (see section 7.5.2.1). Miss Hou also chose to do a completing the dialogue exercise from the Dialogue section (see Appendix 10 for the exercises the teachers chose to work on).

Some exercises were worked on in class, such as comprehension exercises in Miss Qian's class and completing the dialogue in Miss Hou's class. For the rest of the exercises, both teachers assigned them to the students to do after class and then checked them in class. When the teachers were assigning the Workbook as homework in the middle or at the end of a session, sometimes they used a generic term "exercises" without explicitly stating what specific exercises the students were required to do. However, the students did not have any problem understanding the requirement. Even if the teachers did not mention the Workbook assignment, the students were supposed to have already got the routine exercises done by the time the teachers finished addressing the Reading section in the Student's Book.

Miss Qian always signalled the beginning of this cycle in the same way, namely, "please open your workbook + page number + name of the exercise". Most often Miss Hou started the cycle in a brief way by simply announcing "workbook" and the relevant page number. In a couple of cases, Miss Hou mentioned the specific exercise in the Workbook to start with and its page number. Figure 8.1 offers an overall picture of the phases and events within this cycle in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 8.1 Phases and events within the Workbook cycle



Tables 8.1 and 8.2 showed which types of exercise were dealt with by the teachers respectively in each session during my observations. Each type constituted a phase.

Table 8.1 Workbook cycle for Miss Qian

Sessions(S)/Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S1/W1	Unit 3	Translation Affix Phrasal Verbs Multiple Choices
S1/W2	Unit 7	Multiple Choices
S1/W3	Unit 9	Affix Multiple Choices
S2/W4	Unit 10	Multiple Choices

Table 8.2 Workbook cycle for Miss Hou

Sessions (S)/Weeks (W)	Unit from Student's Book	Phases
S1/W1	Unit 4	Translation Phrasal Verbs Multiple Choices
S4/W2 & S1/W3	Unit 7	Affix Completing Dialogue
S1 & S2/W4	Unit 8	Completing Dialogue Translation Phrasal Verbs
S1 & S2/W5	Unit 11	Completing Dialogue Affix Phrasal Verbs Multiple Choices Translation

As many students had their own copy of the Teacher's Book, it was hard to find out whether they figured out the exercises by themselves or simply copied expected answers from the Teacher's Book.

The two teachers used similar social participation structures throughout this cycle, so I have discussed them in a separate section (8.6) rather than on a phase by phase basis.

8.1 Affix phase

In the Affix phase (see the Vocabulary Work Section A in Appendix 10), the teachers addressed the affix exercise.

In this phase, both teachers spent time explaining grammatical rules (Grammatical Explanation event) before asking the students to present expected answers to the exercise (Presenting Answers event). This sequential order of events from given explanation to demonstration again reveals the teachers' deductive approach.

8.1.1 Grammar Explanation event

The Grammar Explanation event also occurred in the Reading cycle (see section 7.5) in Miss Qian's class and in both the Dialogue I (see section 7.2) and Reading cycles in Miss Hou's class.

This event in the Workbook cycle was not dictated by the Workbook. It was implemented by both teachers in the form of a monologue, in which they expounded on the general rules governing the affixes under discussion.

8.1.2 Presenting Answers event

The Presenting Answers event involved the academic participation structure of asking the students to present their answers to the exercise. Miss Qian used "now" as a frame to signal the beginning of a new item and the number of the item, e.g. "number three" as the focusing device. This was a typical "question-opener" (Lin, 1999:291) for Miss Qian in this event. Sometimes Miss Hou used the same frame and focusing devices.

Sometimes she skipped them. Both teachers read the beginning of the sentence and paused before the blank (e.g. “his lecture is so monotonous that every one in the hall soon get/”). The students then read out their answer, i.e. the proper form which could be filled in the given sentence.

8.2 Phrasal Verbs phase

In the Phrasal Verbs phase, the Workbook exercise specifies that students study the phrasal verbs listed and complete each blank with a phrasal verb in the list that fit in the proper form (see the Vocabulary Work Section B in Appendix 10). Both teachers realized this phase through two events: Vocabulary Explanation and Presenting Answers.

8.2.1 Vocabulary Explanation event

The Vocabulary Explanation event was the most frequent in both classes. So far it occurred in every cycle the two teachers had gone through. Here in the Workbook cycle, Vocabulary Explanation events followed the same process as in the Language Structures cycle. That is, they were brief and usually followed the sequential order from Focus to Explanation (see section 7.1.4.1). Here the vocabulary items that were addressed were the candidate phrasal verbs that were listed and used to fill in the blanks.

8.2.2 Presenting Answers event

After going through the phrasal verbs in the list, both teachers began to shift to the blank-fillings. The Presenting Answers event here was enacted the same way as the Presenting Answers event in the Affix phase (see section 8.1.2).

8.3 Multiple Choices phase

The Multiple Choices phase dealt with vocabulary in the reading texts in the Student’s Book. The specification of this exercise is to choose a word or phrase that best completes each of the sentences given (see the Vocabulary Work Section C in Appendix 10). Both teachers carried out the Presenting Answers event.

8.3.1 Presenting Answers event

In this event, the teachers asked the students to present their answers to the exercise. In the example I am using below to illustrate my points, the teacher and students were working on the following multiple choice.

It is apparent that new energy sources will be required to keep up the _____societies of the world in the future.

A. civil B. civilian C. civilized D. civic

TR8.1-Qian-S1/W1

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now Li the first one</i>
2 <i>Li: c</i>	
3 <i>society is a noun</i>	
4 <i>so we should choose an adjective</i>	
5 <i>civilized is a ..</i>	
	6 <i>keep up the civilized societies of the world in the future</i>
	7 <u>um</u>
	8 <i>keep up means what/</i>
	9 <i>keep up means what /(looking at Li))</i>
10 <i>Li:BAO CHI (to maintain an equal rate of progress)</i>	
	11 <i>yeah that's right</i>
	12 <i>to remain right/</i>
	13 <i>that's right</i>
	14 <i>to remain or keep in the good condition</i>
	15 <i>now here civil</i>
	16 <i>civil refers to what/</i>
	17 <i>now for example</i>

- 18 *civil war in America right/*
- 19 *civil war in America*
- 20 *or the civil defence*
- 21 *civil defence/((looking at the class))*
- 22 *Ss: ((no reply))*
- 23 *ZHE GE defence WO MEN ZI DE SHEN ME (what does defence mean)*
- 24 *FANG YU (protection against)*
- 25 *NA ME civil defence WO MEN ZHI DE SHEN ME (then what does civil defence mean)*
- 26 *Sx: GUO FANG (national defence)*
- 27 *MING FANG DUI MA/ (civil defence right)*
- 28 *ZHI DE SHI GUO NEI DE ZHE YANG DE FANG YU CUO SHI (refers to those protective measures taken at home)*
- 29 *NA ME (then) civil law*
- 30 *law SHI ZHI DE FA LV (law means regulations)*
- 31 *NA ME civil law WO MEN ZHI DE SHI SHEN ME YANG DE FA LV (what does civil law mean then)*
- 32 *Sx: XIAN FA (constitution)*
- 33 *BU SHI ZHI DE XIAN FA (not constitution) ZHI DE SHI MING FA (but civil law)*
- 34 *FA LV NE YOU XIAN FA (there is constitution)*
- 35 *YOU MING FA (civil law)*
- 36 *GONG SHANG FA (commercial laws)*
- 37 *NA ME (then)*
- 38 *WO MEN SHUO DE civil law JIU SHI ZHI DE SHI MING FA (civil law refers to law regulating ordinary private matters)*
- 39 *NA ME HAO (well)*

- 40 *WO MEN KAN XUAN XIANG B (let's look at option b)*
- 41 *ZEN ME DU (how do you pronounce it)*
- 42 *Ss: {si'viljən}*
- 43 *yeah that's right*
- 44 *the stress on the second syllable*
- 45 *{si'viljən}*
- 46 *civilian means what/*
- 47 *Ss: PING MING BAI XING*
(commoner)
- 48 *that's right*
- 49 *not of the armed forces right/*
- 50 *WO MEN ZHI DE SHI ZHE ZHONG PING MING*
BAI XING (it refers to common people)
- 51 *NA ME ZAI KAN ZUI HOU YI GE (let's look at the*
last option) civic
- 52 *NA ZHI DE SHEN ME YI SI (what does it mean)*
- 53 *Ss: CHEN ZHEN DE (of a*
town)
- 54 *CHENG ZHENG DE HUO ZHE CHENG SHI DE (of*
a town or a city)
- 55 *WO BU ZHI DAO NI MEN ZHU YI GUO MEI YOU*
(I don't know whether you notice or not)
- 56 *YOU YI ZHONG CHE DE PAI (there is a car brand)*
- 57 *TA NA HOU MIAN JIU SHI ZHE GE CIVIC (its*
name is CIVIC)
- 58 *XIANG BU QI LAI TA DE ZHONG WEN MING ZI*
NE (I can't remember its Chinese name)
- 59 *ZHE ZHI DE SHI CHENG SHI DE ZHI DE SHI*
CHENG SHI DE (civic here refers to of a town or a
city) right/

60 NA ME ZAI ZHE LI MIAN WO MEN ZHI DE SHI
ZHE ZHONG WEN MING DE DUI MA/ (*here in our
sentence we chose civilized right/*)

61 YI YING JING GUO LE JING HUA ZHI HOU DE
(*meaning having a high state of culture and
development*)

62 NA ME WO MEN ZHI NENG XUAN NA GE YA (*so
which one do we choose*)

63 Ss: c

64 XUAN XIANG C (*option c*)

65 civilized (*(gesturing Li to sit down)*)

The academic participation structures followed a pattern of first getting a student to present the expected answer, next dealing with new vocabulary in the stem, and finally, addressing the remaining three options. Of the three components, only the first one, presenting answers, was obligatory, hence the name of this event, “Presenting Answers”.

The teachers began this structure by asking the students to read out their answers. One slight difference between the two teachers was that Miss Hou’s students only needed to present their choices whereas Miss Qian’s students had to prepare both their choices and justifications as Li did in the example above (3-5). By asking the students to defend their choices, Miss Qian meant to prevent the students from simply copying the answers from the Teacher’s Book (OR-Qian-S1/W3).

In the second component, the teachers inserted a Vocabulary Explanation event to address the vocabulary item from the stem. In the example, Miss Qian singled out “keep up” in the stem for explanation (8-14). The Presenting Answers event ended here in Miss Hou’s class. In Miss Qian’s class, the event proceeded with the third component.

In the third component, Miss Qian dealt with the three remaining options one by one. Here we can see the insertion of Vocabulary Explanation events again when the teacher

addressed Option A, “civil” (15-38), Option B, “civilian” (46-50) and Option D, “civic” (51-58). The Vocabulary Explanation event here followed a very similar process as in the Vocabulary Explanation event in the Language Structures (see section 7.1) and Dialogue II (see section 7.4) cycles. The teacher inserted the Pronunciation event when she treated the pronunciation of “civilian” (41-45). Miss Qian ran the Pronunciation event the same way as she did in the Reading cycle (see section 7.5). Miss Hou mentioned in one SR that she did not want to address word differences (e.g. synonyms and homonyms) as she did not think first year students were ready for them (SR-Hou-W3). This might account for why Miss Hou did not go through this component as the options involved were mostly synonyms and homonyms.

8.4 Translation phase

Translation offered in the Workbook involves sentence translation from Chinese to English. Next to each Chinese sentence that needs translating is a bracketed key word suggested to be used (see the Translation section in Appendix 10)

Both teachers conducted the Presenting Answers event. After the Presenting Answers event, Miss Hou also ran another event, Written Demonstration where Miss Hou invited the students to write their translations of whole sentences on the board.

8.4.1 Presenting Answers event

The Presenting Answers event consisted of the students reading out what they had worked out in their own time.

In this event, the development of the academic participation structures followed two components in which only the second component, reading out answers was required and the other was optional. First, the teachers inserted the Vocabulary Explanation event in which they addressed the bracketed key vocabulary. Second, the teachers dealt with the expected answer. Slightly differently, Miss Qian’s students were required to present the translation of a whole sentence whereas Miss Hou’s students were required to present the translation of discrete points, namely, words or phrases. The Vocabulary Explanation

event slotted in was instigated the same way as in the Vocabulary Explanation event in the Language Structures (see section 7.1) and Dialogue II (see section 7.4) cycles.

8.4.2 Written Demonstration event (Miss Hou only)

In Written Demonstration, Miss Hou asked volunteers to write complete sentences on the board. She then read them through and corrected errors herself in the form of a monologue. This further reinforced the teacher's role as the only evaluator of the students' performance.

8.5 Completing Dialogue phase (Miss Hou only)

This exercise in the Workbook is a gapped dialogue patterned after Dialogue I or Dialogue II in the Student's Book for students to fill in the missing parts (see the DIALOGUE section in Appendix 10). The students were not required to do this exercise as part of homework. There was only one event in this phase: Completing Dialogue. The Completing Dialogue event was different from the above-mentioned Presenting Answers event in that the former involved the students working out the answers when the exercise was conducted in class, whereas the latter consisted of the students simply saying what they had worked out in their own time.

8.5.1 Completing Dialogue event

The Completing Dialogue event involved the academic participation structure of making the students complete the missing parts of a dialogue. The following example illustrates how this event was played out.

TR8.2-Hou-S1/W3

Student

Teacher

- 1** *Linda is visiting Betty in Betty's home*
- 2** *Betty is getting well from a bad cold*
- 3** *well/*
- 4** *this is the situation*
- 5** *and then/*
- 6** *according to the situation*

- 7 *you can complete the dialogue*
- 8 *so when you come into one's home*
- 9 *what would you say/*
- 10 *Ss: hello*
- 11 *Yes*
- 12 *hello Betty*
- 13 *or hi Betty*
- 14 *all right*
- 15 *I saw you walking in the garden an hour ago when I
passed by your house*
- 16 *and then/*
- 17 *I was taking a walk then*
- 18 *but I didn't see/*
- 19 *Ss: you pass*
- 20 *I didn't see you pass*
- 21 *or say pass by*
- 22 *all right*
- 23 *Next*
- 24 *when you talk to a person who is recovering*
- 25 *HUI FU DE SHI HOU ZEN ME SHUO (what do you
say)*
- 26 *Ss: you look better now*
- 27 *Yes*
- 28 *you look better now*
- 29 *or you look much better now*
- 30 *and go on/*
- 31 *Ss: Really*
- 32 *In fact*
- 33 *I feel better than before*
- 34 *I feel better than before*

At the beginning of this segment, Miss Hou read the situation of the dialogue (1-2) and outlined the direction (3-7). She then got the students to fill in the gaps one by one. Note the three ways Miss Hou employed to elicit the missing parts. Firstly, she offered a hint as to what should be filled in. The hint could take the form of a sociolinguistic elicitation. For example, she hinted, “when you come into one’s home” (8), “what would you say?” (9). The students’ reply, “hello” (10) was the expected answer to the first gap. The teacher gave the same type of hint a few turns later (24-25). Secondly, Miss Hou read through what was there and paused before the blank, “but I didn’t see/”(18). The students completed the teacher’s sentence, “you pass” (19). Alternatively, the teacher said “and go on/” (30) to signal to the class to supply the answer. Thirdly, she made a translation request. That is, the teacher gave a Chinese phrase or sentence for the students to translate into English. The English translation was the expected answer to fill the gap as in the following example:

TR8.3-Hou-S1/W4

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>Yes</i>
	2 <i>WO ZHI DAO MING ZI BU ZHI DAO REN ZEN ME ZHUO (how to say I know the name but not the person)</i>
3 <i>Ss: I know the name but not the person</i>	
	4 <i>Yes</i>
	5 <i>I know the name but not the person</i>

In the example, the teacher read what was already there, “yes” (1) and supplied a Chinese sentence for the students to translate into English (2). The English translation supplied by the students (3) was the required answer.

In this event, the academic participation structures required the students to complete the blanks. At times, the teacher gave the students the opportunity to work out the blanks themselves. At times, she simplified the task, e.g. by offering a strong hint as to the

expected answer in the form of a sociolinguistic elicitation or a translation request. When the teacher shifted back and forth between different options of the academic participation structures, the students displayed no difficulty in adjusting their talk, which again revealed the students' competence in participating in classroom events. Here in this event, we can see evidence of the effort the teacher made to orient the student answers to align with the answers she desired to hear.

8.6 Social participation structures in the Workbook cycle

In this cycle, the teacher-student interaction consisted of question-and-answer (IRF) sequences followed by teacher exposition. In the IRF exchanges, the teachers prompted, the student(s) read out their prepared answers or supplied their answers and the teachers repeated them for confirmation. Sometimes, Miss Hou also expanded on them by offering alternative expressions. When the students produced a wrong answer, Miss Hou would provide the correct answer in her third move. In Miss Qian's class, even if Miss Qian praised the nominated student for a clear justification as in the Presenting Answers event in the Multiple Choice phase (see section 8.3), she would restate everything so as to give the class a more authoritative script and signal that they could begin to take notes (IN-Qian-2). This practice reinforced the teacher's authoritative position of being the sole possessor of correct information and it bred teacher dependence. Classroom observations showed that both teachers seemed to be only concerned about the correct answer as they had never asked the students to justify their answers except for in the Multiple Choices phase in Miss Qian's class. However, the purpose was not as much to find out the students' reasoning as to deal with some students' bad habit of copying (OR-Qian-S1/W3).

Whenever they could, both teachers embedded language input, vocabulary in particular in the Presenting Answers event in the form of Teacher Elicit or Teacher Inform exchanges. The teachers anticipated likely areas of difficulty and pre-emptively covered them, which made it very unlikely for the students to raise any queries. In effect not a single instance of student initiation was observed in either class.

In this cycle, the teachers were in total control. They were primary possessors of correct information. In the vast majority of cases, the teachers checked the answers with the students. They held the answer keys to correct and incorrect responses although some students had them as well. The students' responsibilities were primarily to present their answers to the teacher's elicitation, to listen to the suggestions provided by other students and to change their own answers where necessary. Besides, the teachers controlled the content by initiating all the language points.

With regards to turn management, as usual, Miss Qian tended to nominate specific speakers. However, they were only held responsible for presenting the answers to the exercises under discussion. Additional elicitation regarding teaching points were open to the entire class. Miss Hou's turn-regulation mechanism, invitations to reply, remained largely stable except when she nominated individual students to present sentence translations in the Translation phase (see section 8.4).

In the following chapter I am going to address the two teachers' interactions with their respective classes in supplementary cycles, i.e. cycles which were not dictated by any of the mandated textbooks.

CHAPTER 9 MISS QIAN'S AND MISS HOU'S INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CLASSES IN SUPPLEMENTARY CYCLES

This chapter is devoted to three cycles which were not mandated by the Student's Book, Workbook or Teacher's Book. They are Recitation and Oral Presentation.

9.1 Recitation cycle

The students in both classes were required as part of homework to "recite" (i.e. to memorize) one lesson from NCE (the supplementary material chosen by both teachers) almost every weekday except for the day when there was no Integrated Reading class. They followed the order of the NCE textbook.

The students were also required to recite passages in the Student's Book. The teachers decided which component(s) of the unit the students were required to recite after class. The students in Miss Qian's class were required to recite Dialogue I of each unit while the students in Miss Hou's class had to memorise both Dialogue I and Reading of each unit. Miss Hou normally checked recitation of Dialogue I and Reading in separate sessions. After Miss Hou finished addressing Dialogue I, the students knew that they had to prepare for its recitation in the session which followed. It was the same with the recitation of Reading.

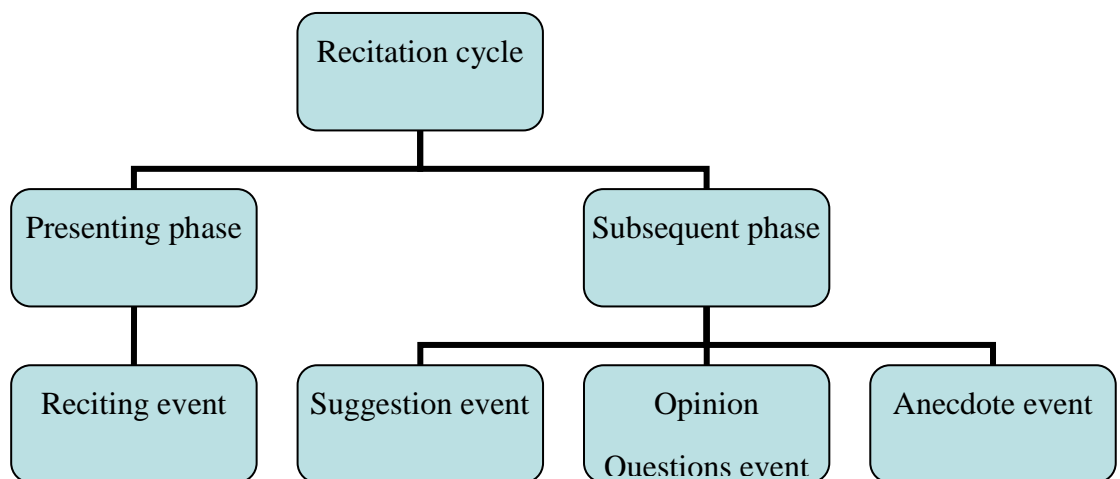
Recitation was something outside the curriculum the teachers required the students to do as it was considered to be an effective way for students to learn English in the Chinese context where students did not have much exposure to English (TR-Qian-S1/W1; SR-Hou-W3). The benefits of text memorization for second language acquisition were reported by Ding (2007) in his study of three highly successful Chinese learners of English. The interviews with them revealed that they regarded text memorization as the most effective technique in their English learning. Memorization enabled them to notice detailed formal properties of the English language such as sentence patterns, collocations and formulaic sequences, to rehearse them and then use them in subsequent production. My personal experiences as both a student and a teacher in this School informed me that it was a long-standing practice. The teachers believed that first of all, by learning

English by heart, the students could pick up accurate and idiomatic English (TR-Qian-S1/W1; SR-Hou-W3); second, language learning was a knowledge accumulation process. It was only by storing up things in their brains first that students were able to achieve spontaneity and flexibility in language production: “try to memorize as much as you can the standard, correct English in your mind so that you can output” (TR-Hou-S4/W4). Researchers (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 1996; Zheng & Adamson, 2003) have ascribed this great emphasis on memorization to two sources of influence: Chinese learning and the importance attached to reviewing. As a Chinese saying goes, if one could memorize three hundred poems of the Tang dynasty, he would be able to compose poems himself even if he was not a poet.

Miss Qian and Miss Hou checked recitation in class to make sure the students had done this homework. Both managed to check the recitation in class most of the time. However, on occasion, they failed to do so for various reasons. The reason could be the overloaded agenda in a particular session (TR-Hou-S3/W1). On two occasions, Miss Qian simply forgot it (OR-Qian-S2/W3 & S3/W3). At times, Miss Qian skipped recitation on purpose largely because she thought the atmosphere tended to be dull while checking recitation (OR-Qian-S2/W2). She would rather allot more time to Oral Presentation (see section 9.2 below).

When the teachers happened to have to check the recitation of both NCE and Student’s Book passages, they would always start with NCE. At such times, the very beginning of this cycle was marked by Miss Qian’s announcing the title of the NEC lesson or the number of the lesson. Miss Hou merely announced “new concept English” to notify the class of its beginning. Figure 9.1 provides a summary of the phases and events in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 9.1 Phases and events within the Recitation cycle



This cycle had a two-phase structure. After the students' recitation (Presenting phase), both teachers sometimes followed it up with different events which principally arose from the recitation material (Subsequent phase).

9.1.1 Presentation phase

Once the teachers indicated the beginning of the Recitation cycle, the first and the core thing on their agenda was the Presenting phase. In the Presenting phase in the Recitation cycle, what the students were required to present was the text they were asked to recite in their own time.

Both teachers marked off the beginning of the phase either by individual nominations or invitations to bid. There was an exception when it came to checking the recitation of the Student's Book passages in Miss Hou's class. Perhaps because of the bigger challenge in memorizing those passages, in three out of six sessions, Miss Hou checked how many students had actually done the homework before she set the recitation going.

Both teachers established only one event in this phase, i.e. Reciting when the students presented either NCE and/or Student's Book passages they had memorised in their own time.

9.1.1.1 Reciting event

While reciting the lesson from NCE, the students in both classes had to recite the whole lesson all by themselves. When it came to the Student's Book passages, both teachers broke them down into two or three parts. Each student or student pair was made to recite one part and then the teachers stopped them. The next pair started from where they left off. In both classes, those who had already got one opportunity to recite would not be re-chosen to recite on the same day.

In S3/W4, Miss Qian changed her routine way of checking the Student's Book passages. The changed strategy was to ask the students to perform it in front of the class rather than at their desk as they normally did. Moreover, the teacher expressed her hope that the students could put emotions and gestures to their performances and make language changes to the original dialogue if they wanted. The reason for the alteration was to prevent the students from peeking at the textbook, i.e. cheating and at the same time to create opportunities for them to produce the TL in a more natural way (OR-Qian-S4/W4).

Overall in this event, the social participation structures followed the IRF interactional sequence where the teachers nominated a student to recite, the student recited the specified text and the teachers evaluated the student's performance during or after the student's recitation. If the students did a good job, they received a positive evaluation from the teachers. If the students happened to be volunteers, Miss Hou praised them for their active participation as well. If someone got stuck while reciting, both teachers prompted by providing words or phrases to help him/her get through.

The two teachers differed mainly in the way they reacted to ill-formed utterances. In terms of the amount of error correction, Miss Qian corrected much less frequently than Miss Hou. My observations provided evidence that in quite a few cases, Miss Qian did not make corrections where the students erred. In contrast, Miss Hou seemed to correct as many errors as possible to make sure that the students mentally acquired accurate TL (SR-Hou-W2). When Miss Qian did correct, she waited until the student finished

performing. By contrast, Miss Hou was far more inclined to correct the error soon after it was made. As for how to correct, Miss Qian typically drew out the student's self-correction by eliciting as is illustrated in the following example which occurred after one student, Guan finished reciting:

TR9.1-Qian-S1/W3

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now</i>
	2 <i>BU DUAN DE ZEN ME SHUO (how to say BU DUAN DE)</i>
	3 <i>Guan</i>
4 <i>Guan: {kən 'tɪn yu ə li}</i>	
	5 <i>yeah</i>
	6 <i>ZHONG YIN ZAI DI ER GE YIN JIE SNANG (the stress is on the second syllable)</i>
	7 <i>{kən 'tɪn yu ə li}</i>
	8 <i>{kən 'tɪn yu ə li}</i>

Miss Qian spotted the mispronounced word “continually” in Guan’s recitation, she gave Guan the chance to correct it herself by giving a second initiation in the form of “how to say + the Chinese equivalent of the problematic word” (2), which was a very typical way Miss Qian deployed to correct pronunciation errors. Unlike Miss Qian, Miss Hou employed explicit correction, i.e. “the explicit provision of the correct form” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997:46) with an overt indication of the existence of an error. As Miss Hou provided the correct form, she clearly indicated that there was something amiss in what the students had said by interrupting the students or by using the negation (e.g. “not I catch anything but I don’t catch anything”). The following example serves as an illustration of it.

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>well</i>
	2 <i>um Wang please</i>
3 <i>Wang: ((beginning to recite))</i>	
4 <i>it is one of the</i>	
5 <i>one of the ugly faces I've=</i>	
	6 <i>=one of the ugliest faces</i>
	7 <i><u>ugliest</u> faces</i>
8 <i>Wang: ugliest faces I've ever seen</i> <i>((continuing reciting till finishing))</i>	

Wang made a grammar mistake in the superlative degree of “ugly” (5), which was rectified by the teacher before Wang finished her sentence in the form of supplying the correct form first, “one of the ugliest faces” (6) and then repeating the target form, “ugliest face” (7). Wang then incorporated the well-formed utterance into her ongoing recitation (8), which is what Lyster & Ranta (1997) termed “uptake”, i.e. student’s response to feedback. The integration was a frequent form of uptake for Miss Hou’s students.

In terms of turn-allocation rules, Miss Qian used individual nominations more frequently than Miss Hou. Of all the nomination devices, Miss Qian tended to call out names. Apart from calling out names, Miss Hou also employed such expressions as “ok please”, “are you ready”, “would you like to...”, “what about you” “all right”, “yes”, accompanied by eye contact or pointing.

On other occasions, the teachers invited the students to bid for the floor. Miss Qian initiated invitations by saying ““which group would like to recite”, “come on next group” or “volunteer”. Miss Hou did it by saying “who’d like to do it” or “who’s ready to recite it”. The students volunteered by raising their hand or maintaining eye contact with the teachers. The teachers then granted the floor to the bidder. The chosen one

stood up to recite. Sometimes some students' hands were already up while Miss Hou was evaluating the previous speaker. At such times, Miss Hou directly awarded the floor to the bidder without issuing invitations.

Although Miss Hou employed the same turn-allocation techniques while checking the recitation of NCE as checking the recitation of the Student's Book passages, namely, individual nominations and invitations to bid, these two techniques offered different choices to the participants. Miss Hou used individual nominations more frequently in checking NCE than in checking the Student's Book passages, but she employed invitations to bid more frequently in checking the Student's Book passages than in checking NCE. Miss Hou suggested that she did not want to embarrass students with difficult tasks (SR-Hou-W1), which could probably explain why she tended to invite those who were ready and well-prepared to recite the Student's Book passages which were academically more challenging than reciting the NCE passages. Thus those who did not prepare or who were reluctant could opt out.

In this event, the teachers imposed both content and interactional control over the patterns of communication. The teachers' main role was to check that every student had done what was required. When recitation was under way, the students assumed the role of performers and the teachers the roles of evaluator and prompter. The role of being an evaluator was more evident in Miss Hou. In the entire data set, about one fifth of Miss Hou's corrections were made while conducting this event. Although the students' utterances tended to be sustained, they were not generated by the students themselves but from the teaching materials. The students' language use was restricted both in form and content.

9.1.2 Subsequent phase

The Subsequent phase occurred in both classes when the teachers followed up the Recitation event with other events. Miss Qian implemented more follow-up events than Miss Hou. In addition to suggesting some English learning strategies (Suggestion event) as Miss Hou did, Miss Qian instigated other events which included discussing the topics

arising from the NCE (Opinion Questions event) and relating anecdotes (Anecdote event).

9.1.2.1 Suggestion event

In Miss Qian's class, the Suggestion event occurred in the Writing Techniques phase (see section 7.5.4) in the Reading cycle. In Miss Hou's class, the Suggestion event occurred much more frequently. It occurred in different phases such as Presenting (see section 7.3.2.2) and Topic Sentences (see section 7.5.5) and in different cycles such as Role-play (see section 7.3) and Reading (see section 7.4).

In a couple of sessions, after terminating the Reciting event, flagged normally by the teachers asking the designated student to sit down and shifting their gaze from the individual student to the whole class, both teachers justified the use of NCE as reciting material for its well-written and carefully-selected passages. Moreover, they underscored the importance of memorizing in language development. Miss Qian also gave some advice on learning. For example, she encouraged the students to pick up a few expressions from each lesson they memorized. She also suggested to them to find an English accent they preferred and to imitate its pronunciation and intonation.

This event was realized by both teachers in the form of an extended monologue. The notable difference between the two teachers was that Miss Qian delivered the event in Chinese while Miss Hou did it largely in English. Therefore besides getting some suggestions, from a language learning point of view, Miss Hou's students also got the chance to be exposed to additional TL input.

9.1.2.2 Opinion Questions event (Miss Qian only)

This is the only time when the Opinion Questions event occurred in a phase other than a Lead-in or Questions phase. The Opinion Questions event which occurred in this cycle was the same as the Opinion Questions event in the Questions phase in the Dialogue I (see section 7.2) and Reading (see section 7.5) cycles in Miss Qian's class. In the following part, I am going to focus on features that were not evident in other cycles.

In S2/W2, after finishing checking the memorization of a NCE lesson entitled “Do the English speak English?”, Miss Qian raised a discussion question regarding why a foreigner cannot understand the English spoken by English people. The teacher set this question spontaneously as she held that the students might frequently come across it in their language learning (OR-Qian-S4/W2). The following example is used to illustrate three additional features.

TR9.3-Qian-S3/W2

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now the last question</i>
	2 <i>do they speak English in England/</i>
3 <i>Ss: yes</i>	
	4 <i>but why the Chinese people</i>
	5 <i>not the Chinese</i>
	6 <i>just a foreigner from other countries</i>
	7 <i>why he couldn't understand what they say in England</i>
8 <i>Ss: because xx ((all speaking at the same time))</i>	
	9 <i>Um</i>
	10 <i>because what</i>
11 <i>Ss: ((hands up))</i>	
	12 <i>((pointing her arm at Mei))</i>
13 <i>Mei: because they also have accent ..</i>	
14 <i>just like FANG YAN (accent)</i>	
15 <i>so the foreigner can't understand it</i>	
	16 <i>Aha</i>
	17 <i>so the first reason</i>
	18 <i>why foreigner couldn't understand English</i>
	19 <i>in a certain community</i>
	20 <i>in England right/</i>

- 21 *because now in different communities*
- 22 *now they just speak the language with
different accent*
- 23 *or dialect right/*
- 24 *and anything else any reason/ ...*
- 25 *now Ma*
- 26 *because you raised your hand*
- 27 *Ma: TA SHUO DE JIU SHI WO
XIANG SHUO DE (she has said
what I wanted to say)*
- 28 *aha ((laughing))*
- 29 *anything else/*
- 30 *not only*
- 31 *not only accent*
- 32 *is the key point ..*
- 33 *or the major problem*
- 34 *to understand each other or by
understood*
- 35 *now who will answer this question*
- 36 *Xie and her desk mate: ((raising
hands simultaneously and
negotiating their turn))*
- 37 *you have to struggle for it ((laughing))*
- 38 *well Xie come on*
- 39 *Xie: because this is the oral English*
- 40 *but we study um most the written
English in Chinese*
- 41 *this is colloquial right/*
- 42 *Colloquial*
- 43 *that's right*
- 44 *and oral expression*

- 45 *in their speech*
- 46 *they use a lot of slang/*
- 47 *or idioms right/*
- 48 *now we seldom*
- 49 *we seldom have learned from your book*
- 50 *only learned from foreigners*
- 51 *or your foreign teachers right/*
- 52 *Sx: native speakers*
- 53 *yeah the native speakers*
- 54 *and/*
- 55 *anything else/*
- 56 *anything else/*
- 57 *Ss: ((no reply))*
- 58 *no/*
- 59 *Mei: ((raising hand))*
- 60 *((pointing her arm at her))*
- 61 *Mei: the native speakers speak very fast and*
- 62 *HEN DUO LIAN YIN (a lot of liaisons)*
- 63 *so the foreigner can't get it*
- 64 *oh I see*
- 65 *because their pronunciation right/*
- 66 *((the teacher giving an extensive talk in Chinese on such pronunciation features as liaisons, plosives, which cause difficulty in the foreigners to catch)*

The first additional feature is the students' self-involvement. It occurred when one student called out her contribution, "native speakers" (52) without being solicited, providing a more academic version of what the teacher said in her third move,

“foreigners” (50) or “foreign teachers” (51). This was an instance of the student following up the teacher.

The second feature is that the teacher asked “anything else” (e.g. 24, 29, 55) to indicate that the question had a range of answers and to encourage more students to contribute and to generate more perspectives. I think this interactional feature lent to the active classroom atmosphere. The students were actively contributing their opinions. There were even two students fighting for the floor (36).

The third feature is the students’ use of Chinese. The teacher and students seemed to have established a social norm according to which the students used English for contributing to the task set by the teacher and expressed other communicative intentions by means of Chinese, a finding also reported in Kasper’s (1985) study. For example, the students contributed mostly in English (e.g. 13-15, 39-40, 61-63). They resorted to Chinese only when they had difficulty in coming up with the English renderings (e.g. 62). However, when it came to the communication of ideas not immediately pertinent to the question at hand, they tended to use Chinese even when they were capable of expressing them in English (e.g. 27). In fact, Ma, the student involved, was one of the best students in class. This pattern had been observed consistently in the students, which suggested that the students were not accustomed to using English as a means of communication. It seemed to be accepted by the teacher as evidenced by the lack of the teacher’s re-initiation, “say it in English”.

9.1.2.3 Anecdote event (Miss Qian only)

In Anecdote, the students listened to the teacher relating stories or personal experiences a text reminded her of, normally flagged by words like “ZHE RANG WO XIANG QI (this reminds of)”. The following example is typical of what transpired:

TR9.4-Qian-S4/W3

Student

Teacher

1 *come on*

2 *now Ma*

3 *Ma: ((reciting))*

4 *yes that's right*

5 *NA ME ZHE PIAN GU SHI RANG WO XIANG*

QI LE (this lesson reminds me of a story)

6 *((the teacher relating a story in Chinese))*

In the particular session when the above excerpt appeared, the lesson that the students memorised was about a snake which could dance with music. After a positive evaluation of the student's recitation (4), the teacher began to recount in Chinese a story this NCE lesson reminded her of (5-6). The story told that a woman acted more calmly than most men in the presence of a poisonous snake.

Miss Qian normally delivered anecdotes in Chinese as she found it hard to produce them in English spontaneously, and she did not want to mislead her students by her ill-formed utterances (SR-Qian-W1). Most students proposed that the teacher should use a combination of English and Chinese, specifically, using English whenever possible and switching to Chinese when the teacher saw signs of incomprehension (SR-Qian Ss-W1&W3).

Telling anecdotes was an important technique that the teacher employed to enliven classroom atmosphere (OR-Qian-S1/W4). It normally served its purpose as those anecdotes greatly interested the students as evidenced by both classroom observations and the statements from the students (SR-Qian Ss-W1). When Miss Qian was relating those anecdotes, most students would put down what they were doing and direct their gaze at the teacher. Both the teacher and students agreed on the benefits of the content of anecdotes in broadening the scope of knowledge and providing rich material for their oral communication (SR-Qian-W1; SR-Qian Ss-W1).

9.2 Oral Presentation cycle

Like the Recitation cycle, the Oral Presentation cycle was not directed by any textbook. This was the only cycle in which the students, and not the teachers, chose the content.

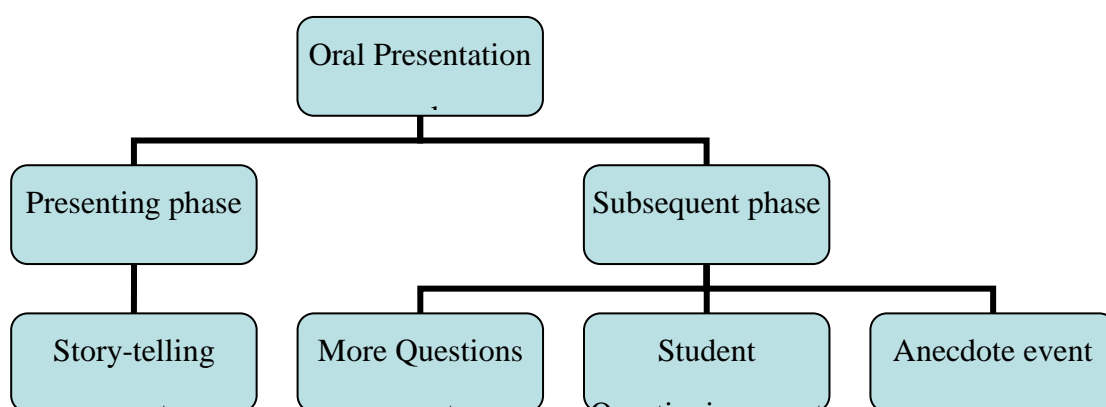
The students chose a piece of material which could be anything, a joke, a story, a poem, etc. and prepared it in their own time. Neither teacher specified the content of oral presentation. Other than the academic purpose of developing the students' oral ability, this cycle was used by Miss Qian to serve the purpose of livening up classroom atmosphere, doing something fun before moving on to something serious (OR-Qian-S1/W4).

There were two presenters in each session in Miss Qian's class while there was only one in Miss Hou's class. Each presentation lasted about five minutes. The students in both classes were not supposed to look at the material while presenting. In Miss Qian's class, if the students somehow failed to present in the session which they were held responsible for, they had to make up for it in the one which followed. As a result, there were more than two presenters in one session at times.

Miss Qian gave the students opportunities to do oral presentation in all sessions except one. However, in Miss Hou's class, this cycle occurred in only five out of twenty sessions. When Miss Hou instructed two classes together, she skipped it as she was worried that the students might be too shy to do it in the presence of a bigger audience (OR-Qian-S3/W2). I have no data on why it did not occur in the other sessions.

Miss Qian marked the beginning of the cycle by either using a noun phrase, e.g. "our oral presentation this morning" or a "let's do..." structure. No matter which grammatical structure she chose to use, she would always mention the key word, "presentation", "oral presentation" or "morning report". Miss Hou introduced it mostly in the interrogative form, e.g. "who will be the one who is supposed to give us the report" or in a statement, "I'd like somebody to give us a report". Sometimes if the teacher happened to know who the presenter was, she would start it off by asking the presenter whether s/he was ready. Figure 9.2 gives an overall picture of the phases and events in the two classes across sessions.

Figure 9.2 Phases and events within the Oral Presentation cycle



Similar to the Recitation cycle, after the student's oral presentation (Presenting phase), both teachers sometimes followed it up with the Subsequent phase.

9.2.1 Presenting phase

The Presenting phase in this cycle consisted of one event only, i.e. Story-telling, which involved the students giving a prepared oral exposition of something they chose.

9.2.1.1 Story-telling event

The Story-telling event involved the academic participation structure of asking the students to deliver an extended piece of text of their own choosing.

The teacher-student interaction in this event followed the IRF interactional pattern. The teachers issued invitations; the would-be presenter delivered what s/he had prepared to the whole class. In response, both teachers praised the presenters for their work by saying, "great" or "very good indeed" and/or showing their acknowledgement by saying "thank you", sometimes followed by their reaction to the content. Miss Hou picked up on the student presentation by making personal comment on it. Apart from commenting, quite often Miss Qian restated some content mentioned as well, which turned out to be very interesting to most students, for example, the association of a person's sleeping position to his/her character; the representation of different flowers, etc. By providing feedback of some sort, Miss Qian meant to indicate to the presenters the great attention and interest that she herself together with the rest of the class was showing (IN-Qian-2).

Different from the Reciting event, here both teachers were only concerned with understanding what the students presented rather than with the grammatical accuracy of their presentation. There was not a single instance of formal correction.

With regards to turn management, Miss Qian nominated the presenter. The nomination was realized by name-calling. Sometimes the nomination was less explicit. Miss Qian simply said “come on”, “next one”. One of the would-be presenters would stand up and walk to the front to present. This type of individual nomination was referred to as “automatic nominations” (Mehan, 1979:90). They were automatic in that the teacher did not overtly assign the turn to a student as it was scheduled in advance. Miss Hou typically asked the would-be presenter if s/he was ready.

In this event, as the material the students worked on was of their own choosing, this gave them control over the content. They could choose materials which suited their personal interests and proficiency levels. In fact, this is the only event in both classes when the students were allowed to choose both the topic and the way to present it. The presenters were given opportunities to deliver a prepared extensive talk. While they were presenting, the teacher was an audience member together with the rest of the class. Moreover the teacher also played the role of respondent, reacting to what the student presenters said in content. The student presenter was the “primary knower” (Nassaji & Wells, 2000:379) as whatever s/he was going to present was new and unpredictable to the rest. The rest of the class had the opportunity to listen to new language input. However, in both classes, the teacher was the main recipient as she was the only person who verbally responded to the information received. None of the students initiated any comment or were invited to do so.

In terms of TL use, as oral presentation was prepared speech or performance in nature, although it gave the students the opportunities to present extended text, the text was not spontaneously generated by the students. Additionally, only a limited number of the students got this opportunity. In Miss Qian’s class, each student had two opportunities to present stories in the entire semester. In Miss Hou’s class, the opportunities were even

rarer. Lastly, for much of the time, the students were not made to do anything about the information they received from the presenters, that is to say, they might lack the need or desire to communicate. During the event, I observed some non-teacher-approved things going on among the students, e.g. previewing the new text or working on the Workbook.

9.2.2 Subsequent phase

In the Subsequent phase in this cycle, Miss Qian instigated more events than Miss Hou, which included raising additional questions to the presenter (More Questions event), inviting the students to ask questions to the presenter (Student Questioning event) and relating anecdotes (Anecdote event). Miss Hou instigated only More Questions events.

9.2.2.1 More Questions event

Sometimes after the student's presentation, both teachers posed some additional questions to the presenter that arose from the student's presentation but were not covered in it. Let us compare the following two transcripts, TR9.5 from Miss Qian and TR9.6 from Miss Hou to see how the two teachers carried out this event. TR9.5 took place after Guan gave a presentation about her favourite musical band. Miss Qian asked her a couple of questions regarding this band. In TR9.6, Miss Hou was seeking from the presenter, Zhang some information about the source of the presented material.

TR9.5-Qian-S2/W6

Student	Teacher
	1 <i>now Guan</i>
	2 <i>you mean on your T-shirt</i>
	3 <i>the person=</i>
4 <i>Guan: =yeah</i>	
	5 <i>oh I see</i>
6 <i>Guan: it's only xx ((all laughing))</i>	
	7 <i>and you printed her photo</i>
	8 <i>his photo ((pointing at the T-shirt Guan's wearing))</i>
9 <i>Guan: no</i>	

- 10 *the T-shirt is sent*
 11 *is from Hong Kong*
 12 *the company*
 13 *all of our home member have one
 T-shirt*

14 *oh so great ((Guan beginning walking
 back to her seat))*

TR9.6-Hou-S3/W5

Student

Teacher

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| | 1 | <i>but where do you find such beautiful
things</i> |
| 2 | | <i>Zhang: xx JI TANG (xx chicken
soup)</i> |
| | 3 | <i>ah chicken soup</i> |
| 4 | | <i>Zhang: yeah</i> |
| | 5 | <i>chicken soup for the soul all right</i> |
| | 6 | <i>is that in English or in Chinese</i> |
| 7 | | <i>Zhang: both in English and in Chinese</i> |
| | 8 | <i>aha</i> |
| | 9 | <i>you borrowed it from the library/</i> |
| 10 | | <i>Zhang: from my roommate</i> |
| | 11 | <i>oh you borrowed it from your
roommate</i> |
| | 12 | <i>ok good</i> |
| | 13 | <i>I like it also</i> |
| | 14 | <i>it's complied by Time magazine</i> |
| | 15 | <i>SHI SHI DAI ZHOU KAN BIAN JI DE
ZHE TAO SHU (it's complied by Time
magazine)</i> |
| | 16 | <i>((the teacher continuing her turn to</i> |

- give an extensive account of what she knew about Chicken Soup and why she liked it))*
- 17** *very good indeed ((shifting her look to Zhang))*
- 18** *I like it*

As is clear from the transcripts, Miss Qian indicated the beginning of this event by using a frame “now” (1, TR9.5) whereas Miss Hou did it by using a frame “but” (1, TR9.6). These two framing words were typical of their respective ways of introducing a new event. Another noteworthy point is “oh so great” (14, TR9.5) and “very good indeed” (17, TR9.6). The terms “great” and “good” served multiple functions: to give an evaluation to the students’ participation and a metaevaluation of the entire sequence, signalling that the teacher was about to close this event (Gutierrez, 1994).

In terms of the social participation structures, the teacher-student interaction in both classes largely followed the IRF interactional pattern. Both teachers directed a couple of referential questions to the presenters in order to seek more information. The presenters provided the information. In response, both teachers supplied such short utterances as “oh I see” (5, TR9.5), “ah chicken soup” (3, TR9.6) to acknowledge what the students said. From time to time, Miss Hou also launched a Teacher Inform exchange where she displayed what she knew about the subject matter and her personal opinions when she gave a detailed description of what she knew about Chicken Soup and what she thought of it (13-16, TR9.6). This discursive feature was singled out for analysis as it was evident in the data set for her. This feature demonstrates how Miss Hou used every opportunity to make connections to what she had seen, experienced and felt instead of giving this opportunity to Zhang to do the same thing.

The above examples indicate how the students could create different opportunities for themselves. For example, Guan added more information (6, TR9.5) after Miss Qian’s short utterance, “oh I see” (5, TR9.5) although not obliged to do that. In contrast, Zhang

in TR9.6 allowed the teacher to lead the topic development and answered only when being asked. Furthermore, faced with the same type of yes/no form of referential questions, the two students involved produced different amount of talk. Guan produced a more elaborate answer (9-13, TR9.5) to the teacher’s question (7-8, TR9.5) whereas all of Zhang’s responses were minimal, e.g. “from my roommate” (10, TR9.6) or ultraminimal, e.g. “yeah” (4, TR9.6). By electing whether or not to risk the potential complications of trying to offer more explanations, the two students not only generated different opportunities for themselves but made a difference to the total of learning opportunities available to the rest of the class (Allwright, 2005).

In this event, the presenters were given opportunities to engage in uncontrolled language use while answering the teachers’ referential questions. However, as most of the questions were closed as in the extended data, they only evoked short student replies. Besides, all the questions were directed at one person, namely the presenter.

9.2.2.2 Student Questioning event (Miss Qian only)

The Student Questioning event involved a student questioning the presenter at the teacher’s request. It occurred in two sessions in Miss Qian’s class.

On one occasion, Miss Qian asked the class to raise questions to the presenter, Hen, who was one of the contestants in the English speech contest. The teacher reported to me that this decision was impromptu. She saw it as an opportunity to improve the presenter’s ability to handle the speech contest which consisted of two parts: prepared speech and question-answer session (OR-Qian-S3/W2). The teacher allowed the rest of the class to ask any question that was in their minds irrespective of whether it was related to the presentation or not. The following excerpt displays what happened in this event:

TR9.7-Qian-S2/W3

Student

Teacher

1 *and I hope ..*

2 *uh ..*

3 *rest of you*

- 4 *please put forward your questions*
- 5 *and to make question and answer*
- 6 *because it's the second part of the English contest*
- 7 *come on*
- 8 *any question ..*
- 9 *can be asked ..*
- 10 *about her prepared speech*
- 11 *and also about everything*
- 12 *if you want to know*
- 13 *Ss: ((no reply))*
- 14 *come on*
- 15 *Sx: what's your impression of the campus*
- 16 *Hen: my first impression was that*
- 17 *it is so big and there are so many people*
- 18 *Mei: what do you think of your classmates*
- 19 *Hen: I think*
- 20 *I feel very happy*
- 21 *because um*
- 22 *I think my classmates is very lovely and very kind*
- 23 *your classmates are lovely and kind*
- 24 *Yeah*
- 25 *Ma: if you can choose one colour to describe yourself*
- 26 *what colour do you want to choose*
- 27 *Great*
- 28 *I like this question*

29 *Hen: if I had to choose*

30 *I want to choose blue*

31 *Ma: why*

32 *Hen: because ..*

33 *because I love the sky and ..*

34 *and=*

35 *=sea*

36 *Hen: and sea yeah*

37 *and I think the blue is very*

38 *very ..*

39 *FEI CHANG SHEN MI DE YAN SE*

(very mysterious color)

((scratching her head))

40 *Ss: mysterious*

41 *but sometimes blue is the symbol of*

42 *Um*

43 *depression and sadness*

44 *what do you think about it*

45 *Blue*

46 *also we know the type of the music is Blues
right/*

47 *from um black people*

48 *Hen: don't you think it's very
comfortable/*

49 *what is comfortable*

50 *to listen to*

51 *to listen to Blues/*

52 *Hen: yeah/*

53 *sorry I haven't a chance to ..*

54 *to listen to Blues carefully...*

55 *what do you think about it*

56 *Hen: I think ...*

57 *it depends on yourself*

58 *depend on ..*

59 *somebody's emotion and feeling*

60 *in the different time right/*

61 *Hen: aha*

62 *come on another question*

63 *((the teacher continuing inviting questions))*

The patterns of communication emerging here contrasted markedly with the IRF interactional pattern found in most of the data. The substantial amount of student talk as opposed to teacher talk implied that the teacher imposed less control over the patterns of communication. In effect, for much of the time, the teacher did not participate directly. She handed over control of the social participation structures to the students.

First, the social participation structures which emerged from this event encouraged the students to initiate the topic of discussion, thus allowing them to talk about what interested them. Second, the teacher allowed the students to self-select. This occurred when Mei raised her question directly to Hen without waiting to be selected (18). This variation of the social participation structures led to student-student exchanges (18-22). The student-student talk recurred when Ma asked a further question, "why" (31) to Hen's reply (29-30). Third, Miss Qian was comfortable with the students taking on the teacher-like role, e.g. providing the word Hen was stuck with. It appeared when Hen had difficulty producing the word, "mysterious" (38). Other students chimed in with the word she needed (40). Here we see evidence of the students providing verbal scaffolds for their peer. Fourth, Miss Qian asked for clarification when she was unsure about what made Hen feel comfortable (49-51). After obtaining confirmation from Hen, the teacher admitted her ignorance about Blues (53-54) and asked for Hen's comment on it (55), thus handing the conversational floor back to Hen.

Although allowing for variation in the social participation structures, Miss Qian at times stepped in and imposed her control over the content of the academic participation structures. She did that in three ways: first, she made an error correction when she recast Hen's ill-formed utterance (23); second, she slotted in her personal comment on Ma's question, "great" (27), "I like this question" (28). This behaviour, on the part of the teacher, seemed to indicate that the students' questions were subject to her value judgement; third, faced with Hen's ambiguous statement, "it depends on yourself" (57), instead of "pushing" her to produce a more explicit text and clarify her thinking, the teacher expanded on it by adding her own interpretation (58-60).

Overall in this event, the teacher was willing to forgo the IRF pattern and allowed alterations to the patterns of communication. The students were encouraged to initiate topics and communicate with each other. The content of the students' language was primarily meaning-focused. This event offered the students opportunities to execute a range of language functions other than supplying information as they performed in most other events, e.g. asking about opinion (e.g. 18), requesting information (e.g. 25-26), challenging (e.g. 48).

Miss Qian was motivated to offer the students opportunities to ask questions. First of all, it gave them the opportunity to talk (IN-Qian-2); second, it catered to their interest as her students seemed to like raising questions (OR-Qian-S2/W3). Other than the benefits Miss Qian mentioned, by raising questions, the students could also initiate topics they were interested in. Furthermore, research (Damhuis, 2000; Swain, 1985, 1995) indicates that self-initiated output is more important for students' language development than response output. By asking the students to pose questions, the teacher was introducing an interaction pattern other than IRF and offering a different interaction possibility. It was an important step towards giving the students some control over classroom interaction.

9.2.2.3 *Anecdote event (Miss Qian only)*

The Anecdote event which occurred in this cycle is the same as the Anecdote event in the Recitation cycle (see section 9.1).

In Chapters 7, 8 and 9, I have addressed how the teacher and the students interacted. In the following chapter, through a consideration of contextual issues, I offer some explanation of why they interacted in the ways they did.

CHAPTER 10: CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

This chapter will address contextual issues that shaped teacher-student interaction in these two classes. I will start with concerns which are related to the teachers and then discuss issues in relation to the students.

10.1 Issues which shaped the teachers' talk

10.1.1 Change in class composition

Both teachers taught combined classes at some stage (see section 6.6), and made changes accordingly. Miss Qian became more repetitive in her talk to make sure that everybody could understand (SR-Qian-W6). Miss Hou had to make more changes as she taught the two classes for a longer period of time. She altered her turn-allocation technique by using more individual nominations to keep the students focused, especially those who sat at the back in order to be outside the teacher's surveillance zone (OR-Hou-S2/W3). She stopped asking the students to do oral presentations, worrying that her students might be too shy to perform before a bigger audience (OR-Hou-S3/W2).

10.1.2 View of teacher talk, language teaching and role of the teacher

When asked about the role of teacher talk in students' learning in the first interview, both teachers believed that first, teacher talk set a language model for the students to follow. Second, teacher talk provided the students with language input and exemplified how English was used in real situations. Third, teacher talk communicated what was to be learnt. The two case study teachers were not alone in positioning talk as a medium of transmitting knowledge and information and as a model that students should follow. It was a view shared by all the teachers interviewed in the School. Equipped with this 'conduit' view of language, the teachers performed their role of being a disseminator of knowledge and defined what role their students should take up. Specifically, they perceived themselves as experts whose job was to hand down information, experiences and feelings to students as a pre-defined package and to check whether they had been taken in by the students.

In both classes, it was teacher's questioning and/or teacher's exposition, not student responses, that shaped the direction of the discourse. The teachers' main reasons to engage in interactivity were to keep the students mentally alert and awake for incoming new information, to check that the students had done what they were required or to help the students better retain in their memory whatever was taught (IN-Qian-2; SR-Hou-W1). This monologic interactional orientation is closely associated with the teachers' transmission-based epistemological stance. As Gibbons (2006) pointed out:

if knowledge is seen as something held by the teacher which must be transmitted to students, there is little motivation or justification for according much airspace to hear and probe a student's view of things (p. 227).

Furthermore, the teachers lectured and defined not only curriculum content, but also correct ways of learning it.

They saw themselves as leaders of classroom discourse, changing its direction and pace in the way they believed was the best to get through what was on their agenda. This assumed role of being an authority was not only reflected in their teaching practices but in their verbalizations in the SR sessions and interviews, such as "I have to", "I'm supposed to". Assuming their role as the sole possessor of knowledge, the teachers were not confident in students' abilities as indicated in interview comments.

The teachers articulated three main views on language learning. First, they held that language is learnt from imitating standard and idiomatic language produced by native speakers of that language. Imitation and repeated practice would eventually lead to automaticity and creative use of the TL.

Second, language is learned through the gradual accumulation of one language point after another. One cannot engage in spontaneous talk without practicing bits of isolated language or being familiar with language structures (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-1). Thus, both teachers attached a lot of importance to linguistic details, especially vocabulary items.

Miss Hou even defined active and creative learning in terms of her allegiance to the teaching of discrete language points. Active and creative learning meant making up new sentences or using new expressions. Hence good students were those who learned not only what was taught and assigned by the teacher, but extended their learning after class. For example, they learned not only the meaning of a word in the textbook context but more about the word, e.g. its other meanings and collocations (IN-Hou-2).

Third, both teachers constructed language learning as something largely intentional and deliberate, something that could happen by being told, by doing something that was highly controlled by the teacher. This belief explained why the teachers were very much concerned with linguistic details and paused to explain them whenever they arose as they believed that students would learn whatever they were taught.

10.1.3 Current professional development

Other than encouraging the teachers to pursue higher qualifications in relevant fields, such as linguistics, or applied linguistics, the only opportunity the School offered for professional development was to observe colleagues' lessons. Each teacher in the School had to complete ten hours of observation each semester. Undoubtedly, peer observing itself is a good way to enhance teaching through learning from each other. However, what to observe makes a lot of difference to the technique itself. To my knowledge and also according to my personal experiences, while observing, many teachers did not have any focus. Even if they did, they focused on which classroom activity worked better in engaging the students' involvement. They rarely took note of interactional issues.

Except for two teachers who held an MA in applied linguistics, none of the teachers in the School had received any formal training on how to teach or how to interact with students. Like most others in the School, Miss Qian and Miss Hou normally taught in a way they believed should work without conscious knowledge. When asked about alternative interaction strategies, the teachers did not identify any (IN-Qian-2; IN-Hou-3). Further evidence of the teachers' lack of explicit knowledge about classroom

interaction concepts was that in an informal chat, Miss Qian asked me what display and referential questions are.

10.1.4 Extent of knowledge

Both teachers stressed the importance of having a broad range of knowledge in that it could facilitate the students' oral English. As Miss Hou said, "If you know more, you can talk more" (IN-Hou-1). Besides, as social beings, they believed that students should learn more of the world. Miss Hou said, "Students are social beings. As young people, they should know what's happening around them and in the rest of the world" (IN-Hou-1). It is also for this purpose that both teachers instigated Background Information events (see sections 7.2.1.2 & 7.5.1.2) and Background Information (by teacher) events (see section 7.5.1.1) and Miss Qian ran Anecdote events (see section 9.1.2.3).

10.1.5 Affect

Both the case study teachers and the teachers in the School emphasized creating a relaxing classroom atmosphere as it was conducive to learning. They unanimously maintained that language learning was a daunting experience. Only in a relaxing atmosphere would students be able to be more interactive in class (IN-Qian-1; IN-Hou-2). This emphasis on affect was corroborated by the observational data, which showed an absence of severe reprimand, frequent use of verbal praise and humour especially in Miss Hou's class. Miss Qian chose to spend more time on Story-telling rather than Reciting as the classroom atmosphere tended to be much better when Story-telling was conducted (see section 9.2.1). It was due to the same consideration that she related interesting anecdotes (see section 9.1.2.3).

10.1.6 Wait-time

Wait-time did not seem to be a problem in Miss Hou's class. Miss Hou had a much slower rate of speech and she paused from time to time in her delivery. So there was plenty of wait-time. When she elicited, Miss Hou allowed time for the students to contribute answers.

However, class observations revealed that Miss Qian did not allow much time for thinking before a reply. According to her, the time gap and the resulting silence between her elicitation and a student's reply made her uncomfortable (SR-Qian-W1). In order to counteract that, Miss Qian tended to repeat her elicitations a couple of times to fill in the time gap or nominate a student immediately after providing an elicitation (see section 7.2.3.1).

10.1.7 Confidence in language proficiency

Teachers usually have a very short time in which to assess the situation, and to organize the language that is used to respond to the students, which challenges their language proficiency. Miss Qian's lack of confidence in her English proficiency had consequences for her ability to correct ill-formed student utterances (see section 7.1.2.1) and to deal with disjointed student replies (see section 7.2.1.1). Additionally, when the student contributors did not have sufficient English to express ideas, help was unavailable (see section 7.2.3.2). The teacher's English proficiency was a very important factor influencing the amount of her Chinese use in class as well (see section 9.1.2.3). By contrast, Miss Hou seemed to have a higher level of confidence in her English proficiency as evidenced by the absence of such consequences in her class. However, my observations also showed that diffidence on Miss Qian's part actually provided the students with the opportunities to negotiate language forms with her (see section 7.2.3.2).

10.1.8 Pre-determined teaching plan

Miss Qian liked keeping to her well-organized plan, believing that encouraging open-ended discussions or accepting a reply which did not conform to hers would lead to divergence from the original plan (SR-Qian-W2&W3). The strict adherence to her own plan was especially reflected in the Opinion Questions event in the Lead-in phase (see section 7.2.1.1) and the Comprehension Questions event in the Questions phase (see section 7.2.3.2). In the Opinion Questions event, Miss Qian always had a hidden agenda while launching those discussion questions, namely, entering the Dialogue I text smoothly and naturally, thus she developed some topics but shut down others. In the

Comprehension Questions event, the students had to answer the questions by following the order of the text. We also see evidence of students giving a certain answer, while Miss Qian explained something else in her F move (see sections 7.2.3.1 & 7.5.6.1), and evidence of the teacher giving the same amount of explanation despite a correct student response (see section 7.1.1.2).

Miss Hou also stuck to her teaching plan through the types of questions she raised, for example, obvious questions (see section 7.2.1.1). Evident in the data was also the way she treated open-ended questions. She did not intend them to be totally open as she accepted some replies but discarded others. The replies she accepted conformed to the points she intended to make. She also kept to her original plan by closing the F move, thus not allowing the students to change the course of classroom discussion.

10.1.9 Attitudes towards errors

In the first interview, Miss Qian said that she prioritized the accuracy of language form (IN-Qian-1). However, in her teaching practices she seldom corrected where students erred. What Miss Qian said did not seem to match up with what she did. The mismatch can be accounted for by her lack of confidence in her ability to spot students' errors (see section 7.1.2.1).

Miss Hou stated that she also attached great importance to accuracy, holding two strong attitudes towards students' errors. One was that as long as she taught the right thing from the beginning, there would not be errors later on (IN-Hou-1). That accounted for why she did error correction frequently so as to prevent errors from becoming deep-rooted (see sections 7.1.2.1 & 9.1.1.1). The other was that mistakes were contagious and could spread from one student to another. That was why at times she even regretted having sustained interaction with the students and giving some space for students' contributions as she was worried that the prolonged interaction would increase the chance of students making errors and adversely affect the students who heard those errors (SR-Hou-W2). To her, it was evident that mistakes were evidence of learning not taking place.

10.1.10 Attitudes towards discussion

Here “discussion” refers to a type of classroom discourse in which the teacher gives considerable talking space to the students. Miss Hou turned the interaction away from the details of the text towards students’ own experience from time to time. In fact, she brought up more beyond-textbook topics than Miss Qian did. However, she did not develop them into sustained conversation between herself and the students. She avoided or moved away from discussion by: a) leading the students to the ready answer in her mind; b) being content with yes/no answers from the students; c) shutting down students’ contributions by simply repeating them and then using the conversational space to express her own ideas or opinions or demonstrate her own knowledge and d) glossing over different opinions (see section 7.2.1).

The SR session with Miss Hou revealed a lot about her rationale. First, Miss Hou held that the purpose of EFL lessons was primarily to transmit knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. For Miss Hou, teaching language points remained the goal, not engaging different perspectives. Discussion, as an illegitimate form of class work, could only be employed to serve the purpose of language points, e.g. clarifying, illustrating or reinforcing language points. At one point in an SR the teacher showed her disapproval of discussion in class, which she called “arguing”, by commenting:

...usually I don’t spend a lot of time arguing (with the students)... I think in fact it’s unnecessary (to argue with the students in class). Such arguments can be done after class if we have different opinions. ...In class any more argument would not be so necessary unless it’s really related to language points or teaching of the language (SR-Hou-W3).

The teachers’ strong orientation towards discrete language points was also revealed in her comments. Such terms as “words”, “phrases”, “expressions”, “usages”, “meanings” and “structures” pervaded her talk. Second, rather than seek the students’ thoughts and beliefs, questions posed by Miss Hou in the Opinion Questions event seemed to be mostly for the purpose of making her points. That is to say, the questions were only

meant to claim the students' attention for her perspectives. Lastly, she viewed differences in students' understanding not so much related to their personal experiences but simply as errors. Hence she needed to treat them the same way as she did formal errors, i.e. correcting them immediately to prevent them from becoming fossilized (see section 7.2.1.1).

10.1.11 Comfort zone

Compared with Miss Qian who assigned the students more challenging tasks, e.g. debates and difficult comprehension questions, Miss Hou aimed to keep students in their comfort zone. She made sure that what the students were required to do was non-threatening as she did not want to frustrate them (SR-Hou-W1) and also probably because she held low expectations of her students' abilities, as suggested in her SR comments (SR-Hou-W3). My observations revealed that she provided modelling or strong cuing before engaging the class in anything demanding, which was especially reflected in the Hint on task event taking place in different phases (see sections 7.1.5.1; 7.3.1.1; 7.5.5.1 & 7.6.1.1). She also avoided asking difficult questions in Comprehension Questions events (see sections 7.2.3.1 & 7.5.2.1).

10.2 Issues which shaped the students' talk

10.2.1 Teachers' interactional behaviours

The findings revealed an important issue which shaped the students' talk, namely, the teacher-centred learning environment created by the teachers' interactional behaviours. For instance, the teachers used a predominance of display questions; when the students had more to say, however, the teachers dismissed them or did not ask for an elaborate answer; the teachers tightly controlled the direction of classroom discourse and content of what the students could talk about and made almost all the decisions as to what to learn and what was the best way to learn.

10.2.2 Students' view of language and language learning

The SR sessions with the students revealed that the students' views of language and language learning were very much in line with the teachers'. This was not surprising.

They had been accustomed to learning through lecture or didactic instruction since they started formal schooling. Their previous learning experiences before entering university, had already enculturated them to a particular type of learning, done mainly through listening. The two case study teachers reinforced their beliefs by engaging them in similar kinds of learning experiences. Although the two case study teachers provided them with more opportunities to talk in English than they would have had in middle school, the instruction the students were getting was not radically different from what they had previously experienced.

The students believed that knowledge was possessed by one person, their teacher, and that it was passed on from their teacher to them. The development of their knowledge depended on the teacher's delivery of that knowledge. To be more specific, if the teacher explained more, more knowledge would be received by them; if the teacher explained clearly, the knowledge they received could be clearly retained in their minds. The students defined a good teacher as one who transmitted clear and correct information. As students, as long as they listened to the teacher attentively and remembered the information they received, they would learn. They took note of what the teacher said to help them remember (SR-Qian Ss-W3&W4; SR-Hou Ss-W1&W3).

The students also believed that the teacher was the perfect and exclusive possessor of knowledge, and that therefore the most efficient way to receive information was for the teacher to perform in a monologic fashion, and that student participation could only impede this most efficient method. Some students justified the teacher's exposition by saying "the teacher must have her own reason" (SR-Hou Ss-W1), "nobody can come up with such a complete idea as the teacher does" (SR-Qian Ss-W4). Cortazzi & Jin (1996) ascribed this mentality to the fact that the Chinese educational system has paid too much attention to grades while giving scant attention to the process of learning. Chinese students therefore hope that teachers can cram them with the future answers to tests and examinations without knowledge of the rationales behind those answers. The students also saw mistakes as a contagious disease which could spread from the one carrying it to people around him, "if the students answer correctly, that's fine. What if somebody

gives a wrong answer? The others will be misled” (SR-Qian Ss-W3). Their beliefs were further enhanced by the teachers’ practices, e.g. reiterating and/or expanding on every student reply even if it was right; requiring the students to note down their explanations of language points. These ways of doing things helped create student dependency on the teachers as the only correct and valid source of knowledge and strengthened the teachers’ authoritative position, which relates back to Confucian doctrines. Cortazzi & Jin (1996) noted, “...consciousness and recognition of teacher authority has been a significant aspect of Chinese traditional values since Confucius and a strong element in Chinese approaches to learning” (p.179).

Like their teachers, the students also attached great importance to outside knowledge. They saw the relation of wide knowledge to language learning the same way as their teachers did. For example:

A wide range of knowledge is closely tied to oral. When you know more, you can talk more in oral English. It will facilitate your oral (SR-Qian Ss-W1).

I don’t want the teacher to be limited to just book knowledge. Instead, I hope she can expand our knowledge by talking about outside knowledge. Plus, we are language learners, we can’t just talk about those tiny bits we learn in class. We should learn more about the outside world so that our extent of vocabulary and content of talk will be enriched (SR-Hou Ss-W4).

10.2.3 Learning by listening

The students’ responses in SR sessions indicated that, for the most part, what they expected their teachers to do was to explain words, sentences and texts in detail in class. In the meantime, they listened and took notes. This is consistent with the “learning by listening” style described by Cortazzi & Jin (1996).

In addition to the whole-class instruction which the students had been exposed to from the beginning of formal schooling, the large size of the class helped shape the students' learning style in this regard. Typically, the teacher could only call on one person to answer a question at a time, meaning that most students would not be heard. The students had learnt to listen to their teacher or their peers. If they did not get the chance to be heard, they compared their mental answers with the teacher's. Some researchers (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Liu, 2006; Peng, 2007; Tan, 2008) also found a cultural explanation for this listening-oriented style, i.e. "listening to the teacher" is an indication of respect for the teacher in the Chinese community, deeply influenced once again by Confucian doctrines.

The "more cognitive centred, learner-listening approach" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996:744) is supported by the following comments from the students:

I'm used to listening to others. I think it's good as I have my idea in my mind which won't be influenced by others. But at the same time, I can take in ideas from others...also I don't think it's good to interrupt the teacher. Sometimes, I'll write my ideas in my diary. Sometimes I just keep them in my mind, then think what is correct or incorrect in the teacher's opinions. Besides, it's a good thing to listen to the teacher's monologue so that we can practice listening (SR-Hou Ss-W1).

I can hear people around me talking. I can learn from those around me. I think it's good (SR-Hou Ss-W4).

If we can listen to the teacher using those expressions frequently enough, we should be able to produce them ourselves one day (SR-Qian Ss-W3).

In short, consistent with some researchers' findings (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Jackson, 2002; Zhang & Zhou, 2004), even if the students did not talk much, they were participating or at least, they considered themselves to be participating.

10.2.4 Reticence

My observations showed that the teachers did not always rigidly control the classroom discourse. For example, both teachers responded to student initiations. Also, Miss Hou tried to react to every student reply she could catch. However, most students did not insist on pursuing a line of inquiry, getting or giving an answer or initiating an opinion.

In their SR sessions, the students repeatedly mentioned their limitations in their fluency in the TL and their doubt about their own English proficiency (SR-Qian Ss-W1&W3; SR-Hou Ss-W1&W3). They ventured a reply only when they thought they had got a thought-through idea or a correct one (SR-Qian Ss-W4). To answer incorrectly was embarrassing and involved loss of face. Nobody wants to lose face in public as the Chinese people hold it in such high regard. Sometimes they hesitated to contribute. Instead they waited for another student to set a precedent by speaking up first, allowing them to avoid being seen as the “show off” (SR-Hou Ss-W3) as showing off goes against the Confucian value of modesty. When they disagreed with what the teacher had said, most of them remained silent and kept their different ideas to themselves (SR-Hou Ss-W1), most likely because it is disrespectful to challenge teachers, who are their superiors and authorities in traditional Chinese values (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Tan, 2008). Moreover the students were not used to bringing up their questions in class even if they had a very good one. When asked about that, they smiled and said that they did not want to disturb the class or waste their peers’ time by asking a question that probably only puzzled a few of them. Cortazzi & Jin (1996) argued that this behavioural trait has a lot to do with Chinese people’s priority of collective benefits over individual interests. They also pointed out one big difference between Chinese students and their western counterparts in the raising of questions: “the Chinese ask after knowing, the British know by asking” (p. 753). The students in the study also hesitated to pose questions to the teachers as they did not want to trouble the teachers with their probably “silly” questions (SR-Qian Ss-W3), which was cited by Jin & Cortazzi (1998) as another way of Chinese students paying respect to their teachers.

Although all the above findings have been confirmed by other studies as well (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Tan, 2007), the observational data has also shown that some students in Miss Qian's class were actually quite active. There was quite a lot of volunteering especially after some coaxing on the teacher's part (e.g. "come on"). And there were also instances of the students "fighting" for turns. Comments from the students revealed that they were torn between having a great desire to talk and worrying about other concerns mentioned above. They realized how important it was for them to improve their English proficiency by talking more. Here was what a proficient student said, "I tend to feel nervous (to speak English in front of the class) no matter what. Even if I have thought through the question, I'll still feel nervous" (SR-Qian Ss-W3). Although they did have other concerns, they did not allow them to get in the way of their volunteering, their seizing opportunities to practice English. That is to say, for some students, the desire to talk outweighed other concerns and worries. However, for other students, it tended to be the other way around. Other concerns seemed to gain the upper hand. By choosing to be reticent, they did their part to reinforce the teacher's dominant position in classroom discourse.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will start with a summary of the findings. Then I will offer implications for teachers, and very briefly for students, of the findings. I also suggest directions for future research.

11.1 Summary of findings

11.1.1 Academic participation structures

Both classrooms I observed were teacher-controlled and textbook-directed. At the cycle level, both teachers followed the order of the sections in the Student's Book. Both teachers followed similar cycle structures in that for the most part, the same phases occurred in both classes in each cycle, which indicates the similarities in pedagogical purposes the teachers aimed to achieve. The similarity at cycle and phase levels in the two classes is not surprising considering the uniformity in teaching materials, students, arrangement of classroom furniture, institutional constraints, time tabling, hours together, programming and lesson planning.

Very similar events occurred in the phases in the two classes, which indicated the similar academic content the teachers chose and the similar things they made the students perform to achieve pedagogical purposes in each phase. Most events in both classes were language-focused with different aspects of language as primary focus, e.g. vocabulary (Vocabulary Explanation), grammar (Grammar Explanation, Grammar Describing, Grammar Knowledge and Labelling Grammatical Term), pronunciation (Pronunciation) and discourse (Completing Cued Dialogue, Completing Dialogue, Order and Identifying Techniques). Of all events in both classes, most were form-focused ("form" here refers to formal language features, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling (Spada & Frohlich, 1995)). That is, most events were designed for accurate reproduction of linguistic details rather than meaningful use of the TL. In total, form-focused events consumed about 42% of Miss Qian's class time as opposed to 77% of Miss Hou's class time. Of form-focused events, Vocabulary Explanation was the most frequent. Vocabulary Explanation events took up the biggest percentage of class time, 21% for Miss Qian and 40% for Miss Hou.

Miss Qian allocated more time to meaning-focused events (i.e. events with understanding students' messages as the focus) than Miss Hou, but most of that time was devoted to two events: Comprehension Questions (19.2%), i.e. checking how much the students had understood the text, and Story-telling (11.5%), which is another form of prepared performance or text memorization for the students. Meaning-focused events totalled only 25% of Miss Hou's class time. This finding suggests that Miss Qian's class was more meaning-focused whereas Miss Hou's class was more form-focused.

Of all meaning-focused events, students were offered opportunities for communicative use of English in such events as Created Dialogue, Opinion Questions, Student Questioning and Debate in Miss Qian's class and in Created Dialogue, Opinion Questions, Duologue and Oral Exposition events in Miss Hou's class. Such events totalled only 13% of Miss Qian's time and 8% of Miss Hou's time.

Of all the communicative events carried out in both classes, only in Student Questioning, Opinion Questions and Debate, did the students engage in unplanned discourse. In Oral Exposition, and Created Dialogue (in which the students were made to present most frequently in the Presenting phase), the students were engaged in planned discourse.

Examination of the sequence in which the teachers arranged phases and events implies a heavily transmission-oriented teaching mode. First, the teachers employed a deductive approach: from given explanation to demonstration. The deductive approach is closely aligned with a transmission approach to pedagogy where knowledge and information is given rather than negotiated or constructed. For example, in the Affix phase (see section 8.1), both teachers supplied relevant grammatical rules before getting the students to present their answers. The same sequential order was followed in Miss Hou's Topic Sentences phase (see section 7.5.5) and Arranging order phase (see section 7.6.1) as well where the teacher offered a framework before engaging the class in the actual task. The Review and Drill Practice phases occurring consecutively is another example.

The deductive approach was also reflected in the development of the academic participation structures in some events. For instance, in Vocabulary Explanation events, both teachers provided the definitions of vocabulary items before giving examples or involving the students in practice. Second, the teachers took “a linear approach to language teaching” (Nunan, 1998:101) which progressed from simple to complex, i.e. from linguistic details to language use and from tightly-controlled language drills to freer communicative tasks (Gibbons, 2006). For example, Language Points phases paved the way for Presenting phases; Cued Dialogue events came before Created Dialogue events. Inherent in these teaching sequences was the premise that “language must first be ‘learned’ before it can be ‘used’” (Gibbons, 2006:17). Third, most consecutive events were thematically isolated and disconnected from each other.

By contrast, SCT proponents espouse a contingent sequence of learning and teaching activities. Following this sequence, in the prior event, teachers draw on the students’ previous experience in order to establish common ground (i.e. shared understanding and knowledge base) with them. This common ground is built upon and enlarged in the next event. That is to say, the prior event acts as a hinge for the next one and provides links to new learning.

To sum up, all the sessions observed in both classes have revealed a traditional transmission mode of teaching with the focus on rote learning, vocabulary, mechanical practice, recalling from memory and knowledge rather than on language skill, meaningful interaction, understanding and method. Johnson (1995) speculated that in the EFL context where the teachers and students are from the same culture, what hampers students’ participation in classroom activities may not be students’ frames of reference but classroom activities themselves which restrict students’ opportunities to use language for meaningful and communicative purposes. The current thesis has given support to this speculation that the opportunities generated for students’ communicative language use were far from being appropriate for English majors.

The two teachers controlled the content of the academic participation structures in three main ways. Firstly, the topics for the content were determined either by the teachers or the teaching materials except in the Story-telling event (see section 9.2.1.1). There was no instance of the students' initiating any event. Secondly, both teachers, especially Miss Hou, controlled not only the content of instruction but the way to learn the content, which was reflected in the high frequency of Suggestion events in her class (see sections 7.3.2.2; 7.5.4.2; 7.5.5.3). Thirdly, both teachers, and Miss Hou in particular, also tightly controlled the students' contributions to the content of the academic participation structures (see section 7.2.1.1). Both teachers prioritised their own agendas at the expense of the students' and decided what counted as relevant (see section 7.2.3.2). Miss Hou also controlled the content of classroom discussion through the types of questions she posed, for instance, obvious questions (see section 7.2.1.1). When matters of opinion rather than correctness came into play, Miss Hou accepted those interpretations or perspectives which conformed to hers (see section 7.2.1.1).

11.1.2 Social participation structures

The analysis of the two teachers' lessons has indicated that the patterns of interaction varied little across the sessions with IRF as the dominant social participation structure. This finding supported what has been firmly established by previous research, i.e. IRF does characterise teacher-fronted classroom discourse. It also demonstrates the prevalence of this structure in that it has been deployed in most events regardless of pedagogical focus, be it checking Workbook exercises as in the Presenting Answers event or open-ended discussions as in the Opinion Questions event.

The second most frequent pattern in Miss Qian's class was Teacher Elicit exchanges followed by Teacher Inform exchanges where the teachers gave further explanations. The Teacher Inform exchanges could be triggered not only by an incorrect student reply but by a correct reply. The second most frequent pattern in Miss Hou's class was Teacher Inform exchanges alone where Miss Hou passed on information without involving students' participation. Contrary to Johnson's (1995) speculation that the extent to which the teacher chose to control the patterns of communication might result

from the pedagogical purpose of an event, my data has shown that the case study teachers enforced similar amount of control over the patterns of communication irrespective of whether teacher-student interaction focused on form or meaning.

The social participation structures of IRF sequences and Teacher Inform exchanges may have the advantage of its efficiency, as Miss Qian said, “of course if I talk, time will be saved” (SR-Qian-W2). The teachers could probably cover everything on their agenda. However, consistent with previous studies (see section 3.1.1), the current research has confirmed that these controlling patterns of communication afforded little opportunity for the students to participate in classroom discourse and to develop linguistically and cognitively. The students were constrained in their use of English, and their opportunities to engage in classroom discourse were usually restricted to short and monosyllabic replies. They experienced a very limited range of language discourse types and language functions, spending the majority of class time responding to the teachers’ elicitations or listening to their expositions. Besides, they were not offered space to develop high-order thinking. This social participation structure also socialized the students into being a particular type of learner, with the epistemologies that the teachers had absolute authority over them and what they needed to do was to accept whatever the authority said and to say things only when being asked to and to say things that the teachers wanted to hear.

When the I move of the IRF structure was focused on, the findings indicate a high proportion of display questions posed by the teachers in order to elicit specific answers. Very rarely did the teachers issue open-ended or high-order questions. When the F move was focused on, the findings show that much of the time the F move was closed and evaluative and reserved by the teachers to achieve their own purposes. Rarely did the teachers open up the F move for student-initiated thoughts.

Sequences between Miss Hou and her students tended to be brief. That is to say, Miss Hou most frequently elicited, received a reply, followed it up and then moved onto a new elicitation. Only a small number of them were sustained over a three-move

exchange. Sequences between Miss Qian and her students were longer. This could be explained by the fact that when a student answered incorrectly or no reply was forthcoming, most typically, Miss Qian gave the students several attempts until obtaining the correct information. This resulted in teacher-student talk being like a guessing game. Besides there were considerably more instances of Miss Qian requesting repetition after a student reply. Both teachers seldom followed up the students' replies with a question that "invites the student to extend or qualify the initial contribution" (Nassaji & Wells, 2000:402). The fast-paced interactional sequences implied that the students were afforded virtually no opportunities to participate in extended dialogue with the teachers, to develop a topic and to make explicit their thinking or line of reasoning.

In terms of turn management, Miss Qian and Miss Hou differed. Most often, Miss Qian selected individual students to respond, whereby she generated different response opportunities for students to participate. She tended to nominate the quieter and less proficient students to be responsible for easier questions while reserving to the proficient more challenging questions. When the designated student failed to give a reply or gave an incorrect reply, the floor was open once again. At such times, her practice of encouraging volunteers often took precedence over individual nominations as she did not want to discourage willing and active students (SR-Qian-W1). In Miss Hou's class, the invitation to reply where students responded without being designated was the dominant strategy as Miss Hou believed that her students were too shy to speak English in front of the others (SR-Hou-W1).

Despite the tight control over the academic participation structures, both teachers, Miss Qian in particular, allowed for a certain amount of variability to the social participation structures, i.e. who talked and when. For instance, on occasion they were willing to forgo the strict IRF pattern and allowed the students to self-select and initiate their perspectives. No student self-selections were negatively sanctioned or ignored for being disruptive by either teacher. Calling out answers was almost always permitted in both classes. Although the social participation structures in both classes allowed the students to self-select, student self-selections appeared infrequently. Most of the student

initiations stayed at word level. That is, they appeared when the students requested the meaning of a word. Of those which were at idea level, i.e. initiating new perspectives, the criteria of relevance were solely determined by the teacher.

Although English was largely used as the medium of instruction in both classes, code-switching occurred from time to time on both the teacher's and student's part. The data has shown some benefits of the teachers' facility with L1, e.g. the increased efficiency in supplying the definition of some vocabulary items (see section 7.1.4.1) and enhanced understanding of grammar and some concepts (see section 7.1.1.2). However, the data has also demonstrated unnecessary use of L1 by both the teachers and students (see section 7.1.4.1; section 9.1.2.2).

A close examination of the data reveals that the teachers and students were on the same wavelength as to ways of doing the events. The students knew what they were expected to do academically and socially and they were adept at perceiving the teachers' expectations and intentions while working through the routines. A key word, a boundary marker at a particular time of the day, was sufficient to set them up for what was about to happen next. Besides, the students could fit their communicative behaviours well into both the academic and social participation structures. They exhibited great competency to participate successfully and appropriately.

11.1.3 Contextual issues

The investigation into contextual issues has revealed that the teachers' "conduit" view of language and "input/output" view of language learning and the lack of professional development have largely shaped their interaction with the students. These findings coincided with those of previous research (see section 3.4.1). The current research has also uncovered some other issues, e.g. teachers' wait-time, confidence in language proficiency, rigid teaching plan, attitudes towards errors, attitudes towards discussions, which adds to the current knowledge in this regard. The view of language and language learning reflected in the students' comments exhibited striking resemblance to their teachers. This finding should not be very surprising given that "ideologies of learning

and knowing are shaped over time through routine participation in the everyday practices of schooling” (Jones, 2001:86). It was teacher dominance and the constituent classroom interaction patterns that perpetuated the non-participation of some students (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Additionally, the students’ cultures of learning, learning styles, anxiety, and lack of confidence were also partly responsible for constructing the classroom as “a place of individual learners and one teacher subject-matter expert” (Hellermann, Cole & Zuengler, 2001:15).

11.2 Implications for the teachers

In this section, I propose implications for teachers from the findings on academic participation structures, social participation structures, professional development of the teachers and contextual issues.

11.2.1 Academic participation structures

11.2.1.1 Communicative events and spontaneous talk

Both teachers tried to create opportunities for the students to produce English in a more natural way. For instance, Miss Qian encouraged the students to make changes to their cued dialogues (see section 7.1.7.1) and their recitations (see section 9.1.1.1) while Miss Hou suggested the students make a cue card for the same purpose (see section 7.3.2.2). However, these strategies would not be as natural or meaningful as engaging the students in genuine and spontaneous talk. Besides, although the emphasis for first years is oral language, the findings have indicated that the students were offered little opportunity to use English spontaneously, let alone to produce extended unplanned discourse. This lack of opportunity was far from being appropriate to English-majors. Hence the teachers could make a place for authentic and spontaneous language experience rather than just prepared performances or planned production as in the Created Dialogue event (see sections 7.1.7.2 & 7.3.2.1). When opportunities for unprepared talk do come, the teachers could use them to push their students to output, to explore English rather than using them as the platform to display the teacher’s knowledge as in Miss Hou’s class (see section 9.2.2.1).

One major reason why the teachers, especially Miss Hou, constrained the students' opportunity for spontaneous interaction was their allegiance to teaching linguistic details. In this regard I have to argue that without doubt teaching discrete language points is important considering the EFL context that Chinese students are in and their deep-seated cultures of learning. However, language teaching is not all about teaching discrete language points. The ultimate end of language learning is to communicate effectively in real life situations. Instruction on linguistic details is a means to the end not an end in itself. Prioritizing linguistic details over communicative language use is like the tail wagging the dog. Also, those skills obtained through mechanical practice are not likely to be automatically transferred to real life communication (Allwright, 1984). The literature is replete with findings about the importance of negotiation during meaningful interaction in promoting second language acquisition (e.g. Gass & Varonis, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Long, 1983; Pica, 1987; Pica & Long, 1986).

Furthermore, as Nation (2003) proposed, a well-balanced foreign language course should consist of four strands with roughly equal opportunities afforded to each strand. They are: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused (which includes form-focused) learning and fluency development. That is to say, form-focused learning and meaning-focused output can go alongside each other and should do so in order to enable the students to achieve the goal of language learning. These two components complement each other. The best way for students to try out their hypotheses about a particular language form or structure is by being encouraged to use exploratory language. In turn, through talk, students learn not only the linguistic components of the TL but how to use it for real communicative purposes (Boyd & Maloof, 2000). Lastly, while being pushed to output, the students can also realize how much they can do with the limited repertoire of the TL they possess. Developing this ability to creatively use what they have already got is crucial to successful language learning (Atkinson, 1987).

If meaningful interaction is what leads to second language learning as both SLA and SCT claim (see Chapter 2), discussion is what the teacher should orientate herself to in

future teaching practice. However, for such a change to occur, first of all, teachers have to be made aware of the importance of discussion in students' language development. Discussion is not peripheral but central. Linguistically, discussion can increase the students' opportunities to talk, especially to talk extensively. Second, discussion is a type of spontaneous talk at a cognitively deeper level. It is valuable for stimulating students' thinking, broadening their understanding, sharpening their insights and cultivating their creativity and critical thinking. In fact students' conceptual development is also an important teaching aim stated in *the Curriculum for English Majors in Tertiary Institutions* (2000). At an affective level, discussion gives students opportunities to "share their own individual perspectives on issues that matter to them, and to share in a way that makes sense to them" (Kumaravadivelu 2003:115). In practice, teachers should not only provide students with plentiful opportunities to participate meaningfully and actively in conversations but also consciously design their interaction with students in a way that promotes extended and profound student talk (Thornbury & Slade, 2006:328).

In order to fit this component into their teaching plans, the teachers could consider cutting down the time consumed by vocabulary explanation and/or literal comprehension questions and channel it to post-reading discussion. The data showed that in two main cycles: Dialogue I and Reading, after a long preparation of literal comprehension of the text and discrete language points, the students were still not offered much opportunity to do something with the text in a more communicative way. What the teachers could do is to engage the students in discussing the author's intention or developing an authentic personal response to it so that "the students may realize that foreign language texts have something to say, can be interesting, and mean something more than just a structure or some new words that have to be learned as an unpleasant consequence of being read" (Morrow & Schocker, 1987:255). After all, the purpose for which the students work with the text is to increase their command of the TL.

The data demonstrates that both teachers taught language forms in isolation as shown in the Grammar Describing (see section 7.1.1.2) and Grammar Knowledge (see section

7.1.1.3) events. Nassaji (2000) maintained that focus on form and focus on communication do not have to stand in opposition. They could be incorporated in a way that leads to attention to form while maintaining meaningful communication, for example in the *picture difference* task where student pairs are made to compare the differences between the pictures they each have by using some specified grammatical forms. Larsen-Freeman (2007) is also of the opinion that an inert repertoire of grammatical rules will not be of much use to students if students cannot apply the rules to purposeful communication and apply them in a context-appropriate way. In order to empower students to dynamically adapt form-based rules to new communicative contexts, grammar teaching has to integrate language form (accuracy), meaning (meaningfulness) and use (appropriateness).

11.2.1.2 Plan for language points

The observations indicate that both teachers planned their lessons on a language point basis. However, researchers (Allwright, 2005; Crabbe, 2003) have argued that the teaching-point view of language learning is “persistent but harmful” (Allwright, 2005:39). Both empirical studies and our personal experiences as language learners and teachers inform that language learning is complicated and unpredictable and what gets learnt does not match what gets taught. Thus, it is unproductive for language teachers to plan for language points. Rather, researchers propose that we should plan for richness of learning opportunities and for understanding of life in language classrooms. For instance, instead of getting extremely upset about the students’ not preparing the role-play as required and repeatedly lecturing about its importance (see section 7.3), Miss Hou could hold a discussion with the class or ask the students to discuss their problems among themselves. By doing this, both the teacher and students can achieve an enhanced understanding of language learning and all it involves (Allwright, 2005) as in the long run what we want to develop in students is the skills of how to learn and how to manage their learning, which will be beneficial for the rest of their lives.

11.2.1.3 Pre-determined lesson plan

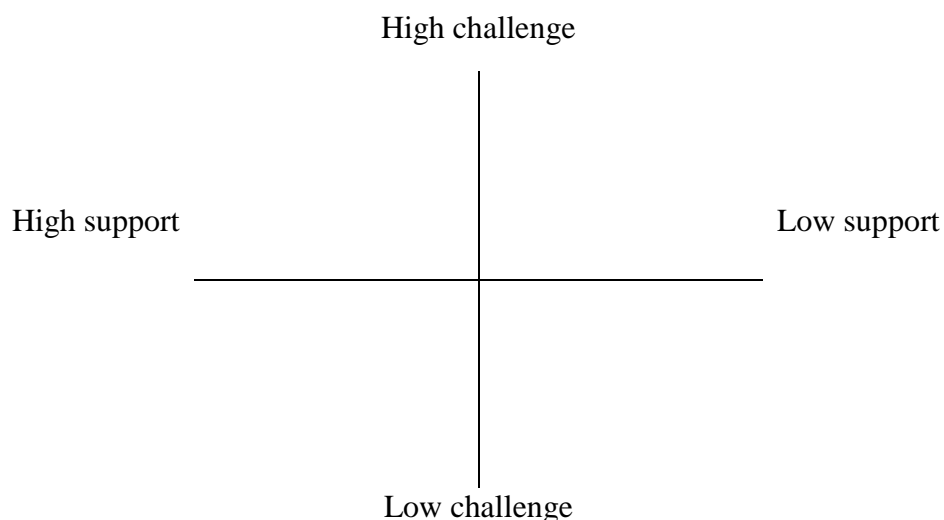
By adhering strictly to a predetermined lesson plan, a teacher can easily allow many learning opportunities produced by students to slip by and fail to promote negotiated interaction (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) and also run a danger of “overlooking linguistic, learning, and social possibilities of unplanned classroom interaction” (Cadorath & Harris, 1998:193). In addition, in the words of Ellis (1999):

opportunities for giving learners control of the discourse will arise naturally in the course of a language lesson. The extent to which teachers grasp these opportunities...may well prove more crucial for creating the optimal conditions for learning to take place than any planned decisions they make (p. 166).

So when the teacher’s agenda is in conflict with the students’, the teacher could give way to the students and use the opportunity as a platform to extend their thinking and stimulate substantive student talk.

11.2.1.4 Comfort zone

Miss Hou always made sure that her students “operated within their comfort zone” (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001:4) by engaging the students with easy tasks. Or if she had to assign them more challenging tasks, she supplied additional information or a framework (see Hint on Task event in sections 7.1.5.1, 7.3.1.1 & 7.5.5.1) or modelled beforehand (see section 7.1.5). Although the students may enjoy their learning experiences, it is unlikely that they will learn a lot. Mariani (1997:3) has proposed the following framework of learning contexts:



Based on this framework, a different combination of challenge and support constitutes a different learning context for students. A high level of challenge coupled with a low level of support results in anxiety, loss of confidence and frustration. On the contrary, a low level of challenge combined with a high level of support will lead to boredom and loss of interest and attention. Contexts where both challenge and support are low are those where boredom and low motivation easily set in. It is only within the zone of high challenge/high support that learning is most likely to occur. In this type of context, the teacher’s support brings students to a higher cognitive level they could not achieve by themselves. This challenge/support framework is in the same spirit as Vygotsky’s ZPD.

11.2.2 Social participation structures

A transmission-oriented way of teaching through IRF and teacher exposition as manifested in the two classes observed is not consistent with a sociocultural view of learning. Research (e.g. Hammond & Gibbons, 2001; Mercer, 1995, 2000; van Lier, 1996; Wells, 1999) grounded in the latter proposes that knowledge is not a commodity which can be handed down from one person to another. Thus learners cannot learn by being directly told what to do and what to think, by adding bits of discrete knowledge to their existing storehouse. Cognitive development in a learner has to be built on whatever knowledge s/he has already had. Most important knowledge and understanding can only be achieved through the learner’s conscious effort which involves them actively “formulating their own questions, developing their own strategies for solving problems

or making use of information” (Wells, 1992:285). The most important means of working on this understanding is through talk, specifically, initiating inquiries, formulating thoughts, expressing opinions, and articulating the current state of understanding on the student’s part (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). Thus, in order to enhance the quality of classroom interaction, both teachers would have to break the constrained and predictable IRF norm they usually used, increase students’ varied participation roles and interactive role in classroom discourse and move towards more symmetry in classroom interaction. For these to occur, teachers could make changes to their practices at the exchange level, questioning behaviours, follow-ups, affect, turn allocation and choice of language.

11.2.2.1 Exchange level

Although both teachers used many IRF sequences and both classes looked interactive with an alternation of teacher and student turns, especially in Miss Qian’s class, the interactivity between teacher and students stayed at a very surface level, somehow just gluing together what the teacher wanted to state. The sociocultural view proposes that IRF sequences can be used not just to test students’ knowledge, but to find out their initial levels of understanding so as to adjust teaching accordingly and better guide the students towards a higher level of understanding (Mercer, 2000). As Myhill (2003:368) succinctly put it, “interactive teaching is not simply about participation and response levels, ... it is about engaging learners in learning and thinking”.

Compared with Miss Qian, Miss Hou spent considerably more time lecturing extensively as evidenced by more Teacher Inform exchanges in her class. This interactional pattern was noted by her students as well, “I feel that she talks all the time” (SR-Hou Ss-W3). Miss Hou’s students held that, “We should be given more opportunity. After all, we are learners. The teacher has known the answer and she should be the last one to say, to sum up” (SR-Hou Ss-W3). The observations have demonstrated that unless the teacher lectured about some interesting topics, most of the time, the students seemed to be bored. They either did their own work or allowed their attention to wander (SR-Hou Ss-W3).

Teacher's monologue is problematic in that:

- a) By doing monologue, the teacher is ignorant of where the students are and what they are doing, thus it is hard for her to decide how much help they need to perform independently.
- b) No matter how clearly and well constructed her explanation may be, teacher monologue “does not foster active participation on the part of the learner because the learner, in his or her passive role, is not challenged with any problem to solve” (Anton, 1999:312).
- c) The students may not learn by being told. They are more likely to learn by being their own agents and by participating in discovering ideas and solutions for themselves.

Student-student exchanges were rare in teacher-fronted class time in Miss Qian's class and almost non-existent in Miss Hou's class. The paucity of student-student interaction made the students fail to see themselves as accountable for their peers' contributions as all the talk was directed to the teacher with the teacher as the sole recipient. It can be difficult to manage student-student interaction in a class of 30 students and the physical layout of the classrooms did not facilitate such interaction. However, on rare occasions, students did exchange information among themselves, especially when the students questioned each other at Miss Qian's request in the Student Comprehension Questions (see section 7.5.2.3) and Student Questioning (see section 9.3.2.2) events and the teacher withdrew from the range of the students' visual contact. At such times, the students listened to each other and responded to each other. The observational analysis revealed that it could be a way to promote student-student discourse in classes where the students might be too shy to initiate their perspectives in teacher-controlled sessions.

11.2.2.2 *Questioning behaviours*

In order to change the questioning behaviours that were revealed in the current study

(see 11.1.2), a first step both teachers could take is to considerably increase the number of referential, open-ended questions and high-order questions. They could probe further so as to elicit more extensive student responses. Miss Hou could intend open-ended questions as such instead of accepting some perspectives but discarding others.

Rather than filling all gaps with repetitions of the same elicitation, Miss Qian could give the students longer wait-time, i.e. pausing a few seconds, ideally three to five seconds (Rowe, 1974) before pursuing with another question or nominating a student. The students need time to process the question, formulate an answer and organize the language. The benefits of extended wait-time have been revealed in previous studies (see section 3.2.2). “Rapid-fire” questions only lead to short, incomplete and thoughtless answers and student frustration, which were borne out by the students’ comments in the SR sessions:

I was still thinking what the teacher’s question was about. The next moment, the teacher called out my name. I got nothing in my mind (SR-Qian Ss-W2).

Maybe some students can react quickly (to the teacher’s question). I just can’t (SR-Qian Ss-W3).

Additionally, little wait-time contributes to fewer student-student exchanges. At times, most of the students were so busy preparing for the next question that they could not even afford time to listen to each other (SR-Qian Ss-W3).

11.2.2.3 *Follow-up moves*

Both teachers took the third part in an IRF exchange automatically to achieve their own miscellaneous purposes. In so doing, they realized their own agendas and did what they believed a teacher was supposed to do. However, they severely restricted the students’

opportunities to participate in classroom discourse and in higher order thinking, thus considerably diminishing the opportunities for learning. As Wells (1999) commented:

it is not sufficient to repeat or reformulate a pupil's contribution: what is said needs actually to be reflected upon, discussed, or even argued about, and the dialogic element lies partly in getting students themselves to do so (p. 25).

And also as Gibbons (2006:262) concluded, "extended teacher-student talk is not necessarily the result of what has been learned, but the process of learning itself". Thus, both teachers could open up the F move to engage the students in further talk so as to increase potential for language learning. Specifically this extension has at least four benefits. First, it can increase the amount of student talk. As Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long (2001) suggested, to engage students substantively, teachers need to offer "high-level evaluation", which incorporates student replies into further questions. Second, the extension can scaffold the students in expressing what they want to say but fail to say due to limited language proficiency and "provide a 'push' for students as they work within the zone of proximal development" (Sharpe, 2001:40). Third, the extension can help establish links between the old and the new information, thus extending the students' thinking and understanding and making it more explicit. Lastly, students' perspectives and experiences can be drawn upon as sources of knowledge.

There were instances of the teachers restarting in the I move in order to give the students chances to re-consider incorrect answers. However, both teachers seemed to be only concerned about obtaining an answer they were looking for with no regard for how the students arrived at that answer (see sections 7.1.7.2 & 7.5.5.2). Cazden (1986:128) cautioned against using student answer as the only evidence for learning by claiming, "there is a critical difference between helping a child produce a particular answer and helping a child gain some conceptual understanding at a future time".

Miss Qian could minimize echoing student replies to signal that she was listening or to identify with students' statements as too much echo can lead to extended teacher talk (Walsh, 2003). Walsh (2003:112) suggested that teachers "use it sparingly as it can quickly become a habit with very little real function". Some researchers propose the use of listening responses to communicate the same message to the students (see section 3.3.2). There were instances of listening responses in both classes, although they were rare.

Miss Hou could encourage the students to do more self-correcting for the benefits claimed by previous research (see section 3.3.1.3). She could also modify her attitudes towards student errors. In Miss Hou's eyes, errors are evidence that learning is not taking place. By contrast, the proponents of SCT claim that errors are evidence of learning occurring, evidence of students attempting to do something, but not yet being able to manage it by themselves. Mistakes should be revealing to a teacher as they are indicative of what students currently know, where they currently are, what sort of scaffolding the teacher should provide to support them to do what it is they cannot do.

11.2.2.4 Affect

Dufficy (2005) argued that changes in teachers' discourse practices such as posing open-ended questions, prolonging wait-time and opening up the F move are helpful in offering students a variety of modes of discourse. However, these must be built upon a basis of mutual respect and trust between the teacher and students. The two teachers could strive to build up a safe interactive atmosphere in three ways:

- a) Rather than seek an answer which matches their expectations, they could "accept any and all student contributions" (Johnson, 1995:154) and accept them as an indication of where students are, what they know and how they have come to that understanding (Hymes, 1981).

b) The teachers, Miss Hou in particular, could make public space for student responses, provide a fertile terrain for students' sharing of ideas, opinions, feeling and attitudes and treat them as valuable and valid source of knowledge.

c) Most often the teachers used verbal praise (e.g. "great", "good" "that's right") to reward good work and correct answers. The teachers also praised the students for putting newly-learnt vocabulary items to use, for doing the homework assigned and for having a wide range of knowledge. Most students welcomed these complimentary words as they could motivate them to contribute more and better (SR-Qian Ss-W3; SR-Hou Ss-W3). However, as most were very general, to some students, they were just like exclamatory words and lost their significance (SR-Hou Ss-W3). The teachers could increase constructive and meaningful feedback while decreasing general complimentary evaluations.

The behaviors which receive positive sanctioning give students great insight into the social rules or norms the teachers desire and intend to reinforce (Beder & Medina, 2001). Thus the message the students in both classes received was that the desired behaviour was supplying correct answers and doing the assigned work rather than being reflective, critical and creative and having divergent thoughts, and the norm was being correct in a very factual and literal sense. In order to change the norm, the teachers could also praise the students for contributing divergent thinking or initiating an inquiry or expressing an opinion which differed from the teachers'.

11.2.2.5 Turn allocation

Miss Qian's turn-allocation strategies prioritized the active, mostly the more proficient students. In order to make sure that students of varying linguistic abilities can achieve in the school system, less able students should not be ignored or disadvantaged. Low-achieving students may even feel more unwilling to participate if the teacher sets low expectations for them by only asking them easy and simple questions. Mohr & Mohr (2007) proposed the use of the response protocol to engage less able and more reticent students more actively in classroom interactions, e.g. encouraging them to

elaborate their answers even if their answers are correct by probing, e.g. “can you tell me more?”, “what else do you know about that?”. Miss Qian could apply this protocol to everybody in the class.

Miss Hou directed her elicitations to the whole class and rarely singled out specific students for individual interaction. It is true that invitations to reply can ensure that everybody has equal opportunities for participation. However, some able students were discouraged. A couple of them had to call out loud for the teacher to hear their opinions especially when the teacher was running the Opinion Questions event (see section 7.2.1.1). Additionally, it resulted in monosyllabic student replies. When the teacher does not give public space for students’ ideas and opinions, it cannot be expected that any student will give an extensive reply as one student from Miss Qian’s class commented after being in Miss Hou’s class for a while:

In my class, if I want to say something, the teacher (Miss Qian) will give me the chance and what I say can be clearly heard and it can encourage us to be braver as well and improve our ability to contribute in front of the class. Miss Hou requires the students to say together, thus students’ replies cannot be clearly captured (SR-Hou Ss-W3).

Miss Hou could direct elicitations to individual students from time to time to challenge them to be braver, to be more active and also to allow the active students to have their voices heard.

11.2.2.6 Choice of language

Miss Qian typically used English to address planned content (excluding the treatment of vocabulary and grammar) while using Chinese to deliver unplanned talk, e.g. providing background information (see section 7.5.1.1); giving suggestions (see section 7.5.4.2) and telling anecdotes (see section 9.1.2.3). This practice decreases the authenticity of

classroom communication and enhances the students' belief that English is only an object of study but not a means of communication (Nikula, 2005). The students seem to have appropriated the teacher's way of code-switching, i.e. using English for the tasks set by the teacher while shifting to Chinese for metacommunicative purposes (see section 9.1.2.2). Moreover there were occasions when the teacher required the students to use English while she herself used Chinese (see section 7.2.3.2). This inconsistent English policy will not set a good example for the students.

Miss Qian could suppress the use of Chinese to the best of her abilities when it came to spontaneous talk. Miss Hou's code-switching seemed to work as the comments from her students showed that they favoured the current ratio of English use to Chinese use (SR-Hou Ss-W2&W3). Miss Hou spoke English whenever possible and provided the Chinese translations for bits of English utterances which she assumed the students might have difficulty with (see section 7.1.1.3). This strategy accommodated the disparate needs of her students. The high achievers could get the language input they wanted while the low achievers could still follow the teacher. However, it might lead the students to ignore the English while anticipating the Chinese translation. This concern needs to be explored through further research.

The data indicates that overall the students used Chinese to a considerable extent even when they were capable of offering a response in English. At such times, there was a trend for both teachers to reformulate students' Chinese responses in English themselves, thus enabling the students to easily get away with offering an answer in Chinese (see section 7.1.4.1). It is understandable that it was much more convenient for the students to speak Chinese as they said very clearly, "Chinese always pops out first when we are trying to answer a question" (SR-Qian Ss-W1; SR-Hou Ss-W2). However, what the teachers did to handle the situation did not encourage the students to extend their use of English.

Some strategies can be employed to make sure that the students do not take use of Chinese for granted and do not resort to Chinese even when they can express themselves

competently in English. What the teachers could do is to accept and acknowledge students' Chinese responses, thus encouraging their active participation. At the same time, they can launch a form-focused IRF (or an R/I exchange) to offer the students the opportunity to render their responses into English themselves as Miss Qian did now and then. By pairing a message-focused IRF with a form-focused IRF, the teachers can push the students to “move from what they were familiar with (e.g., Chinese expressions) to what they needed to become more familiar with (e.g., the English counterparts of the Chinese expressions)” (Lin, 1999:407) or actualize handover, in Vygotskian terms.

11.2.3 Professional development on teacher-student interaction

Based on their research on implementing educational reform, researchers (e.g. Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992) argue that the most effective way of bringing about a change in teaching practices is through the professional development of teachers. As far as the focus School is concerned, I propose that a professional development project should incorporate three essential components: reflection, coaching discourse strategies and language improvement.

11.2.3.1 Reflection component

The interviews with the two case study teachers and all the teachers in the School revealed that the teachers were heavily influenced by the “conduit” view of language and “input-output’ view of language learning. Their views of what learning is and what role teacher talk should play in the learning process are evidently different from what SCT proposes (see section 2.2).

The findings have also indicated that both teachers had a limited understanding of what constitutes optimal language learning conditions and how best to enhance students’ learning. The comments made by the teachers in both the SR sessions and interviews implied that they were aware of some of the features of their classroom discourse, e.g. excessive talk (IN-Hou-2), too much repetition (SR-Qian-W6). However, they appeared to have a low awareness of how much their current practices actually affected students’

learning. Considering how crucial the teachers' knowledge of, and ability to manage classroom discourse is to their students' language development (Hall, 2001), a starting point of their professional development, as some researchers have proposed (Jones, 2001; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005) might be a reflective approach, in which teachers gather data about their interactive behaviours, examine their beliefs about language and language teaching and then critically reflect on their discourse practices to see how their epistemologies are reflected in their discourse practices and shape their students' beliefs. This is now considered a major way to professional development for EFL teachers to reflect on their own classroom teaching practice and experience (e.g. Edge, 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1994, Wells & Change-Wells, 1992).

As previously mentioned (see section 10.1.3), peer observation was the only professional development the School offered. The current peer observation could be improved by establishing a focus (e.g. teachers' questions; student responses) for each observation. The focused observation benefits both the observer and observee. The observer has a purpose as to what to look for and the observee can get more constructive feedback (Richards, 1994).

Teachers could also collect audio- or video-taped data regarding their interaction with the students. Based on the data they gather, they could analyze what discourse practices enhance the quality of teacher-student interaction and promote students' language development and what practices hamper students' opportunities to talk. Given the current situation in the focus School, a teacher training program with teachers as "researching practitioners" (Buchholz, 2007:55) would probably be more effective if implemented through the collaborative work of colleagues under the guidance of a trained or a more experienced practitioner (Dillon, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Pontefract & Hardmand, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) as mutual modelling and feedback can help teachers overcome anxiety, uncertainty and frustration that innovation and change involve (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Tharp & Gallimore (1988) provided some specific means of assisting the teacher's performance, e.g. organizing regular conferences to review video- or audio-taped lessons or lesson transcriptions; setting up

regular workshops to provide peer counselling on each other's interactive behaviours and decision-making.

11.2.3.2 Coaching component

Given that the teachers did not have a wide range of discourse strategies at their disposal (see section 10.1.3), the professional development project could also involve coaching the teachers on how to increase students' opportunities to talk and to adopt a more active speech role. Research has shown that coaching can be effective in helping the teachers break the predictable recitation script in order to raise the quality of teacher-student interaction. For example, Damhuis (2000) gave an account of a successful educational intervention program in which teachers were supplied with practical suggestions on how to alter their interactional behaviours in order to promote higher-order thinking and self-initiated output on the part of the students.

Hardman & Mroz's (1999) study is another case in point. In their study, four teachers of post-16 English from the northeast of England received coaching and talk-analysis feedback. Specifically, the approach involved the teachers first being guided to explore discourse strategies such as alternatives to questioning and high-level evaluation and then being provided coaching and feedback on their use of alternative strategies in class. The findings showed considerably greater student participation than pre-coaching, as reflected in the increase of Student Elicit and Student Inform exchanges (see section 5.3.3) and students taking more control over their learning.

My data has indicated that some teachers and students sensed the benefits of occasional use of Dillon's "non-question moves" (1994) such as speculating, wondering. As one teacher told me in a casual chat, "As a teacher, you don't have to be Miss Know-it-all. I notice that sometimes if I pretend to be ignorant or uncertain, students become more active". One student from Miss Qian's class also said something of a similar nature, "Actually the teacher knows quite a lot about that topic, but she lets Deng talk first before she tells us what she knows about it. I really admire her for doing that" (SR-Qian Ss-W1).

11.2.3.3 Language improvement component

A language component with the purpose of improving teachers' English proficiency could also be integrated into a professional training project given several factors largely resulting from the EFL context: the teachers have little contact with the English language and the cultures associated with it; the maximum use of English in classrooms is a policy; a more communicative approach needs to be adopted which requires teachers to be ready for a wide range of unpredictable student contributions and to be able to react to them naturally and spontaneously (Cullen, 1994). The combination of a language improvement component with other components is for the benefits of saving time and resources (Berry, 1990; Cullen, 1994; Diaz-Maggoli, 2003), for "killing two birds with one stone" (Berry, 1990:97).

11.3 Implications for the students

The data has demonstrated that although a small number of students did not seem to be completely straightjacketed by the routinized interaction patterns, quite a few students did exhibit passivity and reticence. Leaving aside the linguistic gains verbal participation can possibly bring about (see Chapter 2), learners' active participation has broader educational implications as well. We are living in an age of rapid changes in every aspect of life. This rapidly changing world brings about plenty of new challenges and opportunities. In order to meet these challenges and seize these opportunities, learners need to be more pro-active and to take more initiative. Furthermore, today we are buried under a bewildering amount of information from different sources. An active hands-on approach to information gathering and handling becomes increasingly important, which involves relating the new information to one's personal experiences of the world, critically examining the new information and communicating it to others (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). A passive approach can only ever scratch the surface of what could be an in-depth and complicated subject. In short, a passive learning environment cannot prepare the students for the skills necessary for the future (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) or foster their ability to function effectively in this modern world (Liu & Littlewood, 1997).

11.4 Directions for future research

While I have been addressing the three research questions involved in this study, more questions have emerged:

a) Due to the inherent limitations of the case study research approach, in this case being directed towards two Chinese English teachers and their classrooms, findings here cannot be generalized to the wider English teaching community in China. Additionally, regional disparities make any such attempt to generalise to other EFL classrooms even less reliable. Hu (2005) reported that in China, the instructional practices in socio-economically developed regions are typically more communicatively oriented than those in less economically developed regions, in which the university is located. Therefore, future research should aim to gather more data from more classes to extend the range of relevance of the findings.

b) What I am focusing on in the current study is learning opportunities. I have not attempted to look at how they are taken up. Learning opportunity is not equal to learning. The former assumes the latter. Future research might focus more on the evidence that learning is taking place or has taken place when the same phase or event recurs across sessions. There should be some evidence in these repeated routines that the students can do by themselves what they can do partially or even cannot do at a previous time. To obtain such evidence may require more longitudinal studies and more data from the students.

c) The findings have implied that the teachers could relax their control and allow for greater variability in the social participation structures so as to generate more opportunities for the students to participate in classroom interaction. However, as Johnson (1995) asserts, the degree of control and variability the teacher grants depends on communicative behaviours the teacher and students from a given culture consider appropriate. So what is the appropriate degree of variability that Chinese teachers should allow for to expand the patterns of classroom communication?

d) Previous research has documented the benefits of both TL and L1 use, the causes of the teachers' code-switching, and teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of TL and L1. However, there is little empirical evidence of how the teachers' code-switching influences the students', thus the students' TL use. Put simply, does the teacher's code-switching behaviour act on the students' or the other way around? Is there a correlation between the teacher's TL use and the students' TL use? In the data, one student implied in an SR session that sometimes the students followed the teacher's language choice (SR-Qian Ss-W1). As the data was limited, I could not make a valid claim in this regard. Additionally, in the data, Miss Hou tended to provide Chinese equivalents immediately or soon after English utterances. It is possible that students might ignore English while anticipating the Chinese translation. This concern needs to be investigated through further research.

e) Considering that in the EFL context, the majority of English teachers themselves are English learners, i.e. their language proficiency is at least limited compared with English native speakers. The current research has provided some evidence as to how the teacher's diffidence in language proficiency can be both an advantage and a drawback (see section 10.1.7). More research needs to be conducted as to how teachers' language proficiency shapes their way of managing classroom discourse and creating learning opportunities for their students so that teachers can promote advantages while avoid drawbacks. For instance, Miss Qian's students seemed to be more active and articulate, as evidenced by a lot more student volunteering and sustained student utterances. Was this related to the students' boosted confidence as a result of the teacher's lack of confidence? Was this related to the fact that the teacher seldom evaluated the students by correcting their errors?

f) The interview comments indicated that the students had a lot of relevant thoughts going on in their minds while the teacher was interacting with the entire class or with individual students (see section 7.2.1.1). That is, although they were not participating directly or verbally, they were engaging with the content of the interaction and they were

cognitively active. This provides more evidence of Chinese students' non-verbal participation patterns. How are these private thoughts related to their English learning?

g) I missed the first month of the new semester when the teachers were supposed to be engaged in establishing classroom routines and detecting students' current intellectual knowledge and skills and academic background. The data-collection process of future research could start from the very beginning in order to investigate how the teachers and students construct norms and regulations from their first contact onwards.

h) The data has shown that both the teachers and students were thinking along the same lines as to how to do the events, which was largely due to the cultural norms and expectations they share. However, not all the courses offered to first years in the School were instructed by Chinese teachers. The Oral English course was taught by an English native speaker, who possibly established different patterns of classroom communication with the students from those revealed in this study. Data could be gathered from such a course to compare with the data collected in the current study. Will different patterns emerge? What adjustments have the students made to successfully participate in classroom interaction in Oral English? Would these adjustments have any effect on how they participated in the courses given by Chinese teachers?

i) Findings show a pressing need for the teachers to let go of some of the responsibility for learning. However, considering the students' views (see section 10.2), how should we prepare the students to take on that responsibility?

11.5 Concluding comments

The classes observed here have revealed a traditional teacher-controlled transmission mode of teaching with the focus on rote learning, vocabulary, mechanical practice, recalling from memory and knowledge rather than on language skill, meaningful interaction, understanding and method.

The overall aim of the English program, as stated in *the Curriculum for English Majors in Tertiary Institutions* (2000), is to produce English-speaking professionals who are capable of handling English-related careers with ease. The linguistic and cognitive requirements of the program are therefore that students acquire communicative competence and develop an ability to think, reason and analyze in order to understand important ideas and concepts.

It is hard to imagine that students instructed through this didactic mode of teaching can really meet these requirements. Students instructed in this fashion do not demonstrate the independent thinking necessary to achieve the goals of the English program. Instead, they are responding to the message that teachers' formulaic standards of success are of primary importance, that achieving the narrow outcomes that accord with teacher's instruction is paramount, and they are focusing entirely on achieving speed and accuracy with regards to the teachers' benchmarks and criteria for success before moving on to the next set of achievement standards. The dogmatic approach of instruction in a narrow, binary, right/wrong fashion may result in students failing to achieve a dynamic and meaningful comprehension of the facts the retention of which their success is measured by. Moreover, this narrow focus may constrain their perception of the world, and hinder their ability to achieve the initiative and creativity they need.

The aim of education must be suited to application in the real world. Real world application requires adaptability, initiative and an ability to proactively engage with people and concepts. Critical thinking skills and independent thought are vital for success in the modern world, and the purpose of education must reflect this.

Finally, I would like to use Dufficy's (2005) metaphor to conclude. He compared the learning experience to a journey out into the world. When parents take their children on such an excursion, they want their children to be involved in the world and its processes. Dufficy believed that teachers should do to their students as parents do to their children. When teachers take the students on an academic journey, they should see their students as companions or active participants in the journey, not as someone who must learn and

be tested on what they have seen, heard or felt or someone who reads the teacher's travelling guide. The value of this journey can be measured in the quality of the interactions and experiences the students participate in, and these should be assessed on the principles and attitudes that they are facilitated in acquiring.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Abbreviations

A system of abbreviations was created for common terms. They are as follow in alphabetical order:

EFL = English as a foreign language

ESL = English as a second language

L1 = first language

L2 = second language

FL = foreign language

I move = initiation move

R move = response move

F move = follow-up move

NCE = New Concept English

R/I exchange = re-initiation exchange

SCT = sociocultural theory

SLA = second language acquisition

TL = target language

ZPD = zone of proximal development

Appendix 2: Sample letter to the Head of the School

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear (name),

I am studying as a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington. I am currently undertaking a research project as part of the Ph.D program. The project sets out to investigate teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time within classes for English majors in the School. It will explore implications for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time. The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington.

I wish to collect data in your school from September 2006 till December 2006. I would like to invite two teachers for first year's "Intensive Reading" and the two classes under their instruction to participate in my research project. I would like to observe and audio- and video- tape these two classes conducted by the two teachers. Besides, the instructors will be invited to take part in three 15-minute interviews, seven five-minute oral reports and seven 30-minute sessions of stimulated reflection (i.e. the technique of playing back video recordings to participants and ask them to report and reflect upon their behaviours). The purpose is to elicit the thoughts, judgements and decisions behind their classroom language use and to understand contextual issues which shape their discourse choices. As for students, I would like to invite some of them to take part in stimulated reflection in order to elicit their understanding and interpretation of their teachers' classroom language. The students will be those involved in selected episodes for analysis or randomly-chosen ones. It will take each student around fifteen minutes each time. I would also like to conduct a 15-minute one-off interview with other teachers in the School about their views of teacher talk. The purpose is to situate the two focus teachers within the range of teachers in the school.

The research will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the university, the school, the teachers and the students.

I would very much appreciate the participation of your school in my research. However, should you feel the need to withdraw from the research, you may do so at any time until the data collection process is completed. And the data will be returned or destroyed if the participation is withdrawn.

If you have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, you can contact me at ...

If you are willing to take part in the study, please fill in and sign the attached form and return it to me.

Thank you very much indeed for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

CONSENT FORM

Statement by the Head of the School:

I have received a copy of the research proposal sent to me by the researcher and have had the opportunity to read it. I have been provided with adequate information regarding the nature, objectives and participants of her research project. My questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that the participation of my school is voluntary. Everybody can withdraw at any time until the data collection process is completed. I also understand that the data will be returned or destroyed if our participation is withdrawn.

I understand that the research will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the university, the school, the teachers and the students, so that individuals cannot be identified.

If I have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, I know that I can contact ...

By signing this form, I am consenting to my school's participation in the research.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 3: Sample letter to all teachers

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear teacher,

I am studying as a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington. I am currently undertaking a research project as part of the Ph.D program. The project sets out to investigate teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time within classes for English majors in the School. It will explore implications for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time. The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington.

I wish to collect data in Semester 1, 2006. As part of the research, I would like to conduct an interview with you about your views of teacher talk. The interview will take about fifteen minutes and I will audio-record it. I may also invite you to participate in a short follow-up interview.

The responses you provide will be put into a written report of the research if they are relevant to my research. You will be identified by pseudonyms rather than real names. The tape of the interviews will be electronically wiped when the research is completed unless you want it to be returned to you. Access to the interview notes and transcripts will be restricted to me and my supervisors only. You can check them if you want. They will be kept for five years after the conclusion of the research because I may need to refer back to them in developing publications arising from the thesis.

The written report will be submitted for examination to the School of Applied Linguistics and Language Studies and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that the findings of the research will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences.

I would very much appreciate your participation in my research. However, should you feel the need to withdraw from the research, you may do so at any time until the data collection process is completed.

If you have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, you can contact me at ...

If you are willing to take part in the study, please fill in and sign the attached form and return it to me.

Thank you very much indeed for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

CONSENT FORM

Statement by the teacher

I have seen the Information Sheet about this research and have had the opportunity to read it. I have been provided with sufficient information regarding the nature and objectives of the research project that Xie Xiaoyan is undertaking as part of her Ph.D. program. I have been offered the opportunity to seek further clarification and explanations. I am fully aware of the task I am going to be engaged in.

I understand that I am not obliged to take part in the research. Also I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time until the data collection process is completed.

(Please tick if appropriate)

I would like the tape of the interview to be returned to me.

I understand that any information or opinions I have provided will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be used to replace my real name.

If I have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, I know I can contact ...

By signing this form, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 4: Sample letter to two case study teachers

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear (name),

I am studying as a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington. I am currently undertaking a research project as part of the Ph.D program. The project sets out to investigate teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time within classes for English majors in the School. It will explore implications for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time. The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington.

I wish to collect data from Semester 2006 till December, 2006. As part of the research, I would like to observe first-year's "Intensive Reading" instructed by you. And I would like to audio- and video-tape the lessons as well. Besides, I would like to invite you to participate in interviews, oral report and stimulated reflection (i.e. the technique of playing back video recordings to participants and ask them to report and reflect upon their behaviours). You will be interviewed three times in total: prior to the period of in-class data collection, halfway and at the end. Each interview will take 15 minutes. I will audio-record all the interviews. The purpose is to understand the contextual issues which shape your discourse choices. Immediately after each lesson, I will ask you to give a five-minute oral report of what influences your decisions about discourse choices. One week after selected lessons, you will be asked to participate in the stimulated reflection as well. The purpose is to elicit the thoughts, judgements and decisions behind your utterances. There will be two 30-minute reflection sessions every other week, i.e. a total of seven 30-minute sessions over the seventeen-week period of data collection.

The information and responses you provide will be put into a written report of the research. Your university, your school, your class and yourself will be identified by pseudonyms rather than real names. The audio and video recordings of your lesson and the audio recordings of your reflections, interpretations and interviews will be returned to you or destroyed when the research is completed. The written materials including transcripts of your talk and interview notes will be destroyed five

years after the completion of the project unless you ask for them to be returned to you. Access to the transcripts of your talk and your interviews will be restricted to me and my supervisors only. You can check them if you want. They will be kept for five years after the conclusion of the research because I may need to refer back to them in developing publications arising from the thesis.

The written report will be submitted for examination to the School of Applied Linguistics and Language Studies and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that the findings of the research will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences.

I would very much appreciate your participation in my research. However, should you feel the need to withdraw from the research, you may do so at any time until the data collection process is completed.

If you have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, you can contact me at ...

If you are willing to take part in the study, please fill in and sign the attached form and return it to me.

Thank you very much indeed for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

CONSENT FORM

Statement by the teacher

I have received from the researcher a copy of her research proposal and have had the opportunity to read it. I have been given the opportunity to request further clarification and explanations. My questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction. Also I am fully aware of the tasks I am going to be involved in.

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can elect whether to take part in the research or not. I further understand that even if I take part, I can withdraw at any time until the data collection process is completed. Also I understand that if I choose to withdraw, the data collected in relation to me will be returned to me or destroyed.

I understand that any information or opinions I have provided will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for my university, my school, my class and myself so that individuals cannot be identified personally.

I understand that the audio and video recordings of my lessons and the audio recordings of my reflections, interpretations and interviews will be returned to me or destroyed when the research is completed. The written materials including transcriptions of my talk and interview notes will be destroyed five years after the completion of the project unless I ask for them to be returned to me.

(Please tick if appropriate)

I would like the audio and video recordings of my lessons and the tape recordings of my commentary and interviews to be returned to me at the completion of the research.

I would like all the written materials in relation to me to be returned to me.

I understand that I will have the opportunity to check the transcripts of all the recordings and to comment on them.

I further understand that I will have the opportunity to discuss the findings of the research with the researcher before they are disseminated.

If I have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, I know that I can contact ...

By signing this form, I am consenting to participate in the research.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 5: Sample letter to all students

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear student,

I am a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of the Ph.D program, I am doing a research project. The research sets out to look at teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time. It will explore implications (提示) for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time. The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington.

I am writing to invite you to participate in my research. I wish to collect data in Semester 1, 2006. I will be present in your Intensive Reading Course class for around three months, observing and audio- and video- taping your teacher.

I would very much appreciate your participation in my research. If you choose not to participate, I may need to advise you to sit out of the range of the video camera, and your contributions (发言) will not be transcribed or analyzed. You will not be penalized in any way if you do not wish to participate.

If you are interested, I can send a summary of the findings of the research to you at the completion of the research.

The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the Victoria University of Wellington. The written report of the project will be submitted (提交) for examination to the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and stored up in the University Library. It is intended that the findings of the research will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences.

If you have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, you can contact me at ...

Thank you very much indeed for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

CONSENT FORM

Statement by the student

I have seen the Information Sheet about this research and have had the opportunity to read it. I have understood it. My questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that it is part of the Ph.D program. I also understand that the participation is voluntary. I can choose whether to be a participant or not. I understand that if I do not wish to participate, I will not be penalised.

(Please tick if appropriate)

- I consent to being videotaped.
- I consent to having my contributions (发言)transcribed or analyzed.

If I have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, I can contact me at...

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 6: Sample letter to students participating in the stimulated reflection

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear student,

I am a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of the Ph.D program, I am doing a research project. The research sets out to look at teacher talk in teacher-fronted class time. It will explore implications (提示) for teaching practices in teacher-fronted class time. The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington.

In addition to being video- and audio- taped, I would also like to invite you to participate in the stimulated reflection, i.e. reporting and thinking on your reaction to your teacher's talk as a stimulus of the video recordings. The purpose is to obtain your understanding and interpretation of your teacher's language use. The task will take you about fifteen minutes each time. I will audio-tape all the information or opinions you have provided.

I would very much appreciate your participation in this part of my research. However should you feel the need to withdraw (退出) from the research, you may do so at any time until the data collection process is completed. You will not be penalised in any way if you do not wish to participate.

Your responses will be put into my written report if they are found to be relevant. However it will not be possible for you to be identified personally; a pseudonym (假名) will be used to replace your real name. Access to your responses will be restricted to me and my supervisors only. They will be kept five years after the conclusion of the research because I may need to refer back to them in developing publications arising from the thesis. The tape will be electronically wiped when the research is completed.

If you are interested, I can send a summary of the findings of the research to you at the completion of the research.

The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the Victoria University of Wellington. The written report of the project will be submitted (上交) for examination to the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and stored up in the University Library. It is intended that some articles will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences.

If you have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, you can contact me at ...

If you are willing to take part, please sign the attached form and return it to me.

Thank you very much indeed for your time and consideration.

CONSENT FORM

Statement by the student

I have seen the Information Sheet about this research and have had the opportunity to read it. I have understood it. I am fully aware of the task I am going to be involved in.

I understand that it is part of the Ph.D program. I also understand that the participation is voluntary. I can choose whether to be a participant or not. I will not be penalized in any way if I do not wish to participate. I further understand that I can withdraw (退出) from the research at any time until the data collection process is completed.

I understand that any information or opinions I have provided will be kept confidential (机密的) and be accessed by the researcher and her supervisors only. I further understand that a pseudonym will be used to replace my real name. And I understand that the tape of the recordings will be destroyed when the research is completed.

If I have further questions or concerns in regard to the project, I can contact ...

By signing this form, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 7: Plan for interview to all teachers

1. What do you think makes for effective teacher talk?
2. What role do you think teacher talk plays in students' language learning?
3. What kind of classroom atmosphere do you aim for in your class by the way you talk?
4. What normally changes the way you act and interact in class?
5. How long have you been teaching?
6. What qualifications did you have when you started teaching?
7. Since you began teaching, what opportunities have you had to learn how to teach?

Appendix 8: Plan for Interview for case study teachers

(IN-Qian-2)

1. I remember in one SR, you said that when you deal with the Language Structures section, you normally monologue, but you're not too sure about the effect of those monologues. Can you tell me more about that?
2. In one SR, you commented that you try to give the students opportunities to practice the language. Can you say more about that?
3. In one SR, you commented that you like to keep to your well-organized plan and also I notice that sometimes a student or students have a different reply from what is in your mind or in your agenda, when that happens, what do you think are useful ways to go about handling the situation?
4. Many times in your SR, you mentioned time limit. Can you say more about that?
5. What role do you think your students take up in your class?
6. What has it been like for you so far, having me and my equipment in your class?

(IN-Hou-2)

1. I remember that in the first interview, you have commented on the importance of oral output. And you also commented that teachers should give students more opportunities to talk. Can you tell me more about that?
2. I remember that in the first interview you mentioned you really admire those teachers who can attract the attention of all students but you can't. You can only manage to attract about 80 to 90% of your class but not all of them. What do you think are useful ways to engage students' attention?
3. Sometimes in class I notice that a student or students have a different idea on some point than you do or you have a different idea on some point from a student or students. When that happens, what do you think are useful ways to go about handling the situation?
4. What role do you think your students take up in class?
5. What do you think are useful ways to go about dealing with students' errors in whole-class settings?
6. What has it been like for you so far, having me and my equipment in your class?

(IN-Qian-3)

1. In one SR, you commented that if one student cannot answer your question or gives an incorrect answer, you tend to ask some other students to help before you step in as you think you are an authority while the students are equal between themselves. Can you say more about that?
2. What kind of role are you playing so far in your class?
3. In the transcripts of your talk I notice a recurring interactional pattern, i.e. you initiate, students reply and then you follow up mostly extensively and in various forms, e.g. paraphrasing, rewording, expanding, etc. Can you tell me more about that?
4. After you give your feedback, what signals do students give you to show how much attention they've paid to your information?
5. How has your Chinese speaking influenced students' learning in your opinion?
6. I notice that you repaired what you said from time to time and you also commented on that in the first interview. Can you tell me more about that?
7. I remember in the first interview you commented that you try to raise students' awareness of grammar. The first step you take is to make sure they will not make any mistakes in grammar and you hope that your students can speak grammatically correct sentences whenever they open their mouths. What have you done to achieve this?
8. How do you view students' mistakes?
9. So far how have my data-collection techniques such as SR, interview and oral report influenced your teaching?

(IN-Hou-3)

1. I remember in one SR you commented that you want everybody to be involved and you don't want any individual to take up too much of class time, that's also one reason why you tend to ask the whole class to answer your questions in chorus, can you say more about that?
2. In the transcripts of your talk, I notice a recurring interactional pattern, i.e. firstly you initiate, mostly in the form of questions, and then student reply either in chorus or

individually and then you will give some feedback. Normally in the follow-up move, sometimes you paraphrase and sometimes you expand students' replies. Can you tell me more about your follow-up moves? What do you expect students to use this kind of information you provide in the follow-ups?

3. I remember in the second interview you said that sometimes you don't want to talk too much, still you find yourself doing most of the talking, so how do you feel about yourself doing most of the talking?
4. So far how have my data-collection techniques such as SR, interview and oral report influenced your teaching?

Appendix 9: One teaching unit from the Student's book

Unit 15

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

1. Put the cassette near where there is a socket.
2. He will not be able to win the race unless he trains hard.
3. I am watering the flowers because I have not watered them for a long time. But since it is going to rain soon, there is actually no need to water them now.
4. Even though she wasn't bright, she worked very hard.

PRACTICE

I. Cues:

1. Don't put the cassette-recorder on the chest of drawers. There is no socket nearby.
2. Don't leave your bike in the corridor. It'll be in people's way.
3. Don't put the washing-machine in that corner. There is no drain-pipe nearby.
4. Don't leave the jam jar on the table. Johnny can reach it there.
5. Don't put the narcissus on the sideboard. There is no sunlight there.

Example:

A:

B: No, you'd better not. There's no socket nearby.

A:

B: Put it where there is a socket.

II. Cues:

1. As Bill has not watered the flowers for a long time. He is watering them now. But it is going to rain soon, so there is actually no need to water them now.
2. As Jim is expecting Susan in his office, she has to leave in a hurry. But Susan is not feeling well. I'll ring Jim up and ask him to come over. So Susan doesn't have to leave now.

3. As John has not shown up yet, the students do not begin their discussion. But the rest of the class are all here, so they can begin now.
4. As the bus is always terribly crowded, Janet is often late in the morning. But there is a school bus and she can take it, so she is going to take it.
5. As Jack has an important meeting this afternoon, Ted wants to ring him up. But Jack is coming in the morning anyway, so Ted can tell him then.

Example:

A:

B: Because I haven't watered them for a long time.

A: But since it's going to rain soon, there's actually no need to water them now.

B:

III. Cues:

1. Mary was not bright, but she worked very hard; so she won the first prize in the maths contest.
2. Pat was a poor swimmer, but she had been training hard; so she won first place in the last swimming competition.
3. Louis was a slow runner, but he had been training hard; so he won the race.
4. Zhang had poor handwriting, but he had been practicing hard; so he won a prize in the calligraphy contest.
5. Liu was a poor speller, but he had been working hard at spelling; so he won first place in the spelling contest.

Example:

A: Mary won the first prize in the maths contest! Isn't that good news?

B:

A: Why?

B:

A: Even though she wasn't bright, she worked very hard. She deserved the prize.

DIALOGUE I

Save Our Pandas

A: The giant pandas in the Wolong Reserve in Sichuan Province are facing a crisis. Have you read the news about it?

B: Of course I have. The newspapers and magazines have carried quite a few articles on the food crisis of pandas and I've been keeping track of the developments.

A: You like pandas as much as I do, I can see that. I've been reading all the materials available about the life of pandas. I never imagined that the flowering of arrow bamboo could be a threat to the pandas.

B: Neither did I. I never knew that bamboo withered and died after flowering. Do you know it takes almost ten years for the seeds dropped by the dying plants to grow into a forest again?

A: Unbelievable, isn't it? Well, giant pandas seem to feed on little else besides arrow bamboo. Since no other plants can be a substitute, it's very serious and before long, the pandas will die out.

B: Yes, it's an urgent matter. You know in the Wolong Mountains, at 3,000 metres above sea level, 95% of the bamboo has flowered. But down below the situation is not that bad.

A: One paper said that five pandas had already been found dead from starvation in that locality.

B: Something must be done to protect our pandas. The other day I ran across an article which said that in some other reserves in the 70s, the bamboo also flowered. And because nothing was done to rescue the pandas, as many as 138 of them died.

A: What a shame! That's a large number when you consider that the entire panda population in China is no more than a thousand.

B: I've heard the local government is taking emergency measures and that rescue teams are relocating these endangered pandas.

A: Yes. I feel a bit relieved, too, to know that the pandas have been moved to where there is plenty of bamboo.

B: Do you know how they relocated the pandas? The rescue people scattered sugar cane and cooked meat in the mountains to lure them down to the 2,500-metre level.

A: That was clever, wasn't it?

B: Yes, except that some pandas enjoyed the food so much that they refused to go where they were expected to go.

A: I hope the government will institute strict rules and regulations to safeguard the rescue operations. Those who harm the pandas, no matter how minor it might be, should be severely punished.

B: And those who assist the rescue operations should be highly rewarded.

A: Right! Wildlife protection is a long and enduring campaign that calls for everyone's cooperation and contribution.

Role-play

A Talk on the Giant Pandas

Situation:

News of the flowering of the arrow bamboo, which has become a threat to the giant pandas in the Wolong Nature Reserve, Sichuan Province, China, has spread far and wide. Mr. Dodd, a member of the World Wildlife Fund, is now speaking to Ms. Liang, a member of the Wolong Giant Panda Research and Conservation Centre. Mr. Dodd wishes to get some first-hand information from Ms. Liang.

Roles:

Mr. Dodd — concerned about the bamboo crisis faced by the giant pandas. He wishes to get some information from Ms. Liang about the rescue of the pandas.

Ms. Liang — in charge of the rescue operations. She is able to answer any questions Mr. Dodd asks her about the panda protection work.

Some sentences and sentence frames you might use:

Asking for information about the giant panda rescue operations:

When did you begin to be aware of the...? / When did you realize...?

How long will it take (for the seeds) to...?

Could you tell me something about (the 2,500-metre level in) the Wolong Mountains?

Would you please tell me something about the bamboo crisis in the 70s?

What emergency measures have you taken / have been taken?

What regulations have been set up...?



DIALOGUE II

Explanations

Phrases, sentences and expressions:

1.

How to express a reason or cause for doing something		
John decided to give up smoking	in order to	save money.
	so that	he would live longer.
	because	his wife hated it so much.
	seeing that now that	he had started to cough.

2.

How to express concession		
Although	John looked healthy,	the doctor said he was very ill.
Even though		
Though		
In spite of	the fact that he looked healthy,	the doctor said he wasn't.
Despite		
In spite of	his healthy appearance,	the doctor said he was very ill.
Despite		

Dialogue:

John is always talking about health and fitness, and regularly thinks up a new scheme or idea to improve his physical condition. Nevertheless, in spite of all these ambitions and good intentions, he always fails. He is telling his sister his latest ideas for keeping fit.

J: I've decided to become a vegetarian, Angela. From tomorrow on, I've decided to stop eating meat.

A: Why?

J: Because people in Britain eat too much meat and it's healthier to eat less.

A: Is this another one of your crazy ideas, John? It won't last a week! I remember your other ambitious schemes; last month, in order to lose weight, you decided to jog to work every morning. That only lasted a week, because every day you were late for work!

J: That's not the reason why I stopped! I stopped jogging because I pulled a muscle in my leg.

A: Well, what about your bicycle?

J: What bicycle?

A: Exactly! You can hardly remember you own a bike as it's been locked away in the garage ever since you bought it.

J: That's not completely true! As soon as the weather improves, I'm going to start using it again.

A: But do you think it will improve your health? That's the question.

J: Well, yes, of course.

A: I think you should start cycling straight away then, seeing that you've begun smoking again!

J: Oh, Angela, I can't stop smoking now that I've begun this new diet without meat. I can't do both things at once. My will-power just isn't strong enough.

A: Even though you have all these good ideas and intentions, John, these ideas never last!

J: Yes, I know. In spite of all my perseverance and strength, I don't seem to be able to succeed at anything.

A: Look, I want to stop smoking too, in order to save money, so why don't we both try and give up together? That way, we can help each other!

Practice:

1. Work with a partner and take it in turns to practice the following situation:

1) You are late arriving at your English class. This is the third time this term that you have been more than ten minutes late. Your teacher asks for an explanation. You give her an explanation.

2) It is Sunday, May 18, and firecrackers can be heard everywhere. Explain to your English friend why this is so.

3) Yang tells her American friend Sally that she finds it easy to read American women's handwriting, but difficult to read American men's handwriting. She asks Sally why this is so. Sally tries to explain.

2. Work in groups:

1) Which of the things below do you think are significant causes of conflict between parents and children. Explain how they contribute to the problem.

- a. school b. housing
- c. TV and films d. the urban environment

2) What are the three most important decisions you've ever made? Tell the others what you did and why.

3) You are interested in sports and want to start a sports club in your school which will be held on Saturday afternoon. Your English teacher asks you questions about it, and you give your reasons for starting the club.

READING I

Stuck in the Tube

One day I got stuck in the Tube.

The Tube — that's what most people call it — is London's underground railway system.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, the middle of the rush-hour, in fact. The train had just left Green Park Station when, instead of speeding up, it started to slow down and then came to a standstill. After five minutes of waiting, some of the passengers began to look fed up. After twenty minutes, which seemed like twenty hours, most of them were looking worried or annoyed, because it had become clear that unless the train moved again immediately they were going to be late for work. Besides, the train was getting hot and stuffy.

While we were waiting, a pale woman in beige started to tell the woman next to her the story of her life; a pretty girl gave her boyfriend sweets one after another, and a young woman with a suitcase and a baby took a scarf out of her suitcase and made her baby a nest, so that it could lie more comfortably. At last a railway man came down the length of the train to tell us that the power supply had failed, and that we were not to worry as they were working to put it right. I borrowed my neighbour's newspaper, and lent him my magazine. There was nothing else to do; we could not leave the train, as it had stopped in the tunnel, not at a station.

Half an hour passed, though it seemed more like half a day. All hope of getting to work on time had long since gone. Had the railway man forgotten all about our existence? Had there been a crash on the line in front? We had no means of knowing. The passengers had already opened all the windows and the doors between the coaches as well, in an attempt to freshen the stuffy air. A man with a Birmingham accent told his neighbour that he had not been with his present employer for long, and was very afraid they were going to give him the sack. An old woman with a lisp told us that she was taking her daughter a present but her daughter always left home at ten. Had the train

broken down? Several people thought so; but they were wrong. It wasn't the train that had broken down, but the power supply. However, to anxious people who are stuck in the Tube, I suppose it doesn't really matter what it is that has broken down.

When I had finished reading my neighbour's newspaper and listening to what the other people were saying, I began to wonder if we were going to stay there for the rest of the day; if, in fact, we were going to spend the rest of our lives down there. But just then the train began to move. A cheer went up, and people continued to talk excitedly as it moved in slowly along the platform at Piccadilly Circus. When the door opened, most of the passengers got out, and it seemed to me that a lot of foul air went out with them. The train went quickly after that, as if to make up for lost time. But unfortunately not even a fast train can bring back lost time.

That evening, at the foot of an inside page of the evening newspaper, I found the following report:

POWER FAILURE

There was a failure in the power supply over most of the London Underground this morning, causing a short break in the service.

READING II

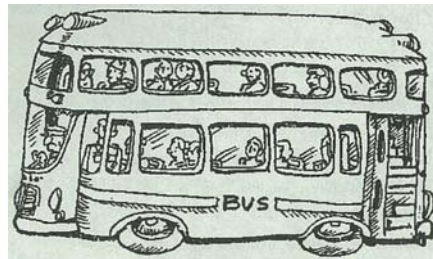
London Buses

Most of London's buses are the world-famous red double-deckers where generally you pay your fare to a conductor. There are also "Red Arrow" buses for commuters and shoppers, which have a single fare that is paid into a machine. On some other buses, mainly in the suburbs, you pay the driver.

On most buses in the centre of London fares vary with the distance travelled. Children pay a reduced fare. You pay separately for each bus journey. Whenever you

can, please have the correct fare ready. If a ticket is issued keep it until you get off. You may smoke on the upper deck of double-deck buses. For safety's sake, standing is never allowed on the platform or on the upper deck.

Buses in London are convenient and give a frequent service nearly everywhere in the Central Area. There is also an extensive network in the suburbs. You choose your bus by the number and destination shown on the front. Many bus stops show which bus numbers stop there, give details of the routes, and may show a map of the stops in the area. If you are still not sure which bus to catch, other people in the queue will probably be able to help you, (and don't forget to queue up, British style, when waiting for the bus). When you get on your bus, the conductor will tell you when to get off if you ask him.



GUIDED WRITING

I. Join the sentences in each of the following groups into one, using the connectives in parentheses. Then put them together in the right order to form a paragraph.

1. However, the stations are clean. The stations are almost spotless.
2. The people in Shanghai are grateful to the Metro for easing the ever increasingly troublesome traffic problem. The people in Shanghai are grateful to the cleaning squad. The cleaning squad maintains a good environment. (not only... but... as well... who)
3. The subway in Shanghai is called the Metro. Metro is short for metropolitan railway.
4. I see them. A sense of gratitude rises inside me. (whenever)
5. It is a rather new way of going about the city. It has become the most popular means of transportation. (but)
6. Some are young. Quite a few are rather elderly. (while)
7. With the heavy traffic as it is, travelling across Shanghai from south to north by bus takes at least two and a half hours. Nothing untoward occurs. It takes the Metro only 35 minutes. (if, but)
8. All of them are in pale orange jackets. They are big navy blue letters SM (Shanghai Metro) on each of the jackets.
9. It is getting more and more crowded from day to day. It is no wonder. (that)
10. Thanks to the workers. The workers undertake the tidying up. (who)
11. During rush hours, cars are packed tightly with working people and travellers. The travellers are carrying bags and bundles in all shapes and sizes.
12. It is even more so at the People's Square Station. There hundreds of thousands of people come and go to do shopping on the famous Nanjing Lu. (where)

II. Put the following sentences into the right order to form a note keeping in touch with a friend. Work in groups of two or three.

15 September, 199_

Dear Minliang,

I have eventually passed the examination and am now a first-year business administration student.

My present address is P.O. Box No. 101, Pujiang University.

We haven't met each other since July, after the crucial matriculation exams.

How do you feel about being a college student?

Hoping to hear from you soon.

I heard that you are now an English major in Hujiang University.

If you are not too busy, drop me a few lines.

I'm now a freshman, and I think the name suits me well as I do feel that everything around me is so fresh to me.

Jiawei

Appendix 10: Excerpts from the Workbook

(See section 8.1 in the thesis for a description of what the Workbook looks like)

Unit 7

DIALOGUE

Situation: Linda is visiting Betty in Betty's home. Betty is getting well from a bad cold.

Linda: _____. I saw you walking in the garden an hour ago when I passed by your house.

Betty: I was taking a walk then. But I didn't see _____.

Linda: You look _____ now.

Betty: Really? In fact, I feel _____ before.

(Continuing for a further seven turns)

READING

Multiple-choice questions:

1. Energy from _____ has been used by people for a long time to make work easier.
A. winds B. animals C. the sun D. flowing water
2. All of the following can be used to operate machines except _____.
A. water B. winds C. animals D. green plants

(Continuing for a further three questions)

IV. Translation

A. Translate the following sentences into English

1. 这本书几乎涉及了关于语言教学的所有重要论题。(cover)

2. ----我是否一定得参加秋季运动会? (have to)

----不是一定得去, 但我想最好还是参加。(had better)

(continuing for a further four sentences)

VI. Vocabulary Work

A. The prefix *in-* meaning “not” is used before many adjectives. Note that this prefix may alter its sound and spelling in four ways.

Examples: attentive _____ inattentive

literate — illiterate

possible — impossible

responsible — irresponsible

Give the antonym of each of the following adjectives by adding to it a prefix (*in-*, *il-*, *im-* or *ir-*); then complete each sentence with one of them.

patient practical legal experienced

legible regular relevant active

1. “Read” and “break” are _____ verbs.

2. His lecture is so monotonous that every one in the hall soon gets _____.

3 I wonder how such a vivacious person could become so _____ after an illness

4 He was arrested because he was involved in _____ dealings.

(Continuing for a further four sentences)

B. Study the phrasal verbs and fill in each blank with one that fits in the proper form.

bring about (cause)

bring around (persuade)

bring back (get)

bring down (cause to fall)

bring on (cause)

bring up (rear)

1 . Li Ming was born and _____ in Shanghai

2. Nervousness _____ his failure in the competition

3 .A heavy blow _____ the giant _____ and left him unconscious.

(Continuing for a further three sentences)

C. Choose a word or phrase that best completes each of the following sentences.

1. In schools, generally speaking, _____ teachers are better liked than those who are more demanding

A. strict B. Lenient C. cruel D. friendly

2. The popular home video games use _____ sounds and colorful, fast-moving visual effects

A. real B. realistic C. genuine D. enhanced

(Continuing for a further eight sentences)

Appendix 11: One lesson from NCE

I A Private Conversation

Last week I went to the theatre. I had a very good seat. The play was very interesting.

I did not enjoy it. A young man and a young woman were sitting behind me. They were talking loudly. I got very angry. I could not hear the actors. I turned round. I looked at the man and the woman angrily. They did not pay any attention. In the end, I could not bear it.

I turned round again. 'I can't hear a word!' I said angrily.

'It's none of your business,' the young man said rudely. 'This is a private conversation!'

Appendix 12
Transcription conventions

Ss	Indicating several students speaking at once
Sx	Indicating unidentified student speaker
Gu	Indicating identified student speaker, Gu
1,2,3, 4, etc.	Denoting an intonation unit
(())	Representing researcher's comment
()	Representing English translations of Chinese utterances
CAPITALS	Representing Chinese utterances
in bold	Denoting original text from the Student's Book or Workbook
{ }	Representing phonetic transcription
/	Indicating rising intonation, not necessarily a question
Xx	Indicating indistinct utterances
=	Indicating latching
[Indicating overlap
Underlining	Indicating stressed words
..	Denoting a pause of approximately two seconds Following this convention, each additional (.) represents an additional second. Pauses of less than one second are not transcribed.
<i>my classmates is lovely</i>	Erroneous utterances produced by classroom participants are left as they are.