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Instructional strategies and teacher-student interaction in the classrooms of a Chinese immersion school

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
AND TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION
IN THE CLASSROOMS OF
A CHINESE IMMERSION SCHOOL

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Tsueylin Tracy Wang
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This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

"My Mandarin Chinese language teacher doesn't know how to teach." I have

frequently heard the complaint reiterated by students from heritage Chinese schools, high

school Chinese as a foreign language classes, and college Chinese language classes with

which I have been involved for the past 10 years. Studies examining the learning

experiences in Chinese language classrooms recorded similar criticism from their

participants (Chao, 1993; de Courcy, 2002; Liu, 1992). The tedious process of language

learning activities, such as drills, memorization of characters, and teacher-centered

lectures, coupled with students' dissatisfactions with their teaching strategies, reflect

Chinese language teachers' inadequacy in using skillful and new strategies to stimulate

students' interest and to facilitate their language acquisition.

Firmly rooted in the traditional teaching approach, native Chinese teachers deem the

practice of rote learning appropriate (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Leng, 2005). Influenced by

Confucian teaching, past and present Chinese teachers enjoy their prestigious status as

transmitters of knowledge and cultivators for the young generation (Leng, 2005). In

classrooms, they are authoritative and duly respected by their students. Students are

expected to listen attentively. They are not allowed to talk or interrupt teaching in

classrooms. It is deemed a proper gesture of politeness and obedience to their teachers

(Qin, 1998). Unless teachers initiate interaction, students may not interact freely with

them.

This teacher-centered instruction has rarely been openly challenged by Chinese

students. For Chinese teachers, "to teach" is "jiao shu," which literally means "to teach

the book" (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998, p. 102). For thousands of years, Chinese students

acquired new knowledge through memorization and rote learning, the unquestionable

process of knowledge learning and the foremost teaching approach adopted by Chinese

teachers of various academic subjects. Transplanted to the U.S., Mandarin Chinese

language instruction has not changed much (Chao, 1993; Liu, 1992). Incompatibility

occurs when Chinese teachers encounter English-speaking learners whose classroom

learning experience is relatively different from their counterparts in the classrooms of

China or Taiwan.

In describing the development of second language pedagogy, Brown (2000) stated

that in the past few decades, second language educators in the West have drawn attention

to social constructionist perspectives of "communicative competence" (p.245).

"Communicative competence," which has become a recent trend, stresses the

development of the language learners' ability to use the language properly and accurately

for effective interaction outside the classrooms. Fluent communication and successful

interaction with others are viewed as important goals as grammatical competence (Brown,

2001). Thus the goals of a language classroom should achieve the students' competence

in using the language fluently, pragmatically, and accurately (p.69).

The above-mentioned principles necessitate second language teachers to create

meaningful settings for genuine communication. Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal

development" (p.84) further proposes guidance from teachers and interaction with peers

as essential in a learner's classroom learning. Long's (1985) interaction hypothesis also

emphasizes effective language learning from interactive communication instead of rote

learning. This communicative teaching practice is in contrast with limited interactive

practice in the Chinese traditional classrooms.

Therefore, what can be done to equip Chinese language teachers with more skillful and interactive techniques that are new for them, but familiar to their American students? What interaction patterns need to change between teachers and students to facilitate Chinese language learning? As the Chinese language is linguistically unrelated to English, what particular strategies are necessary for successful acquisition? Discovering adequate answers to these questions will be beneficial to many Chinese language teachers, whether they are in Chinese heritage language schools or in mainstream foreign language classrooms.

As a Chinese language instructor and a former administrator of a heritage Chinese school for years, I understand that to appease the criticism of Chinese teachers' inadequate instruction, some fundamental change of teaching methods needs to be initiated by teachers, including myself. I am fully aware that to become a competent and responsible language teacher, I need to attend to my students' learning needs. I must choose carefully and use a variety of strategies and techniques to motivate students and maintain their interest in language learning. For a long time, I have been seeking effective teaching strategies to enhance my teaching skills: I took a number of teacher training sessions offered by some Chinese heritage schools, I went to several lectures suggesting innovative approaches to teach the Chinese language, and even bought "how to" books to locate helpful guidelines for Chinese language instruction. Disappointingly, none of these strategies sufficiently satisfied my quest for better and non-traditional teaching strategies and techniques.

Finally, a Chinese immersion school in the West coast attracted my attention because of its success in achieving bilingualism and biculturalism in its students. Founded more than two decades ago with only 4 students in the first year of school, this private school

has evolved into a school of 400 students and has earned a renowned reputation for the success of its Mandarin Chinese immersion program. In 1987, the U.S. Department of Education designated the school as a "national prototype for Chinese language education in elementary schools", according to the school's spring 2006 newsletter. In 2004 the Goldman Sachs Foundation recognized the school for its excellent accomplishment in international education. Since it is both a pioneer and a role model for Chinese immersion programs, I decided to investigate its secret of success in Chinese language instruction. I hope the findings of this study will address my concerns with Chinese language teaching methods and present a solution to instructional inadequacy practiced in many current Chinese language classrooms (Chao, 1993; de Courcy, 2002; Liu, 1992).

My dissertation is a classroom research study that concentrates on Chinese language instructional strategies and teacher-student interaction in Chinese immersion classrooms. In reviewing the literature on immersion education, I found that the existing research interest was mostly in French immersion programs (Day & Shapson, 2001; De Courcy, 2002; Gayman, 2000; Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lyster, 2001, 2002; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Swain, 1986, 1996, 2001; Swain & Cummins, 1986) and Spanish two-way immersion programs (Amrein, 2000; Cazabon, Nicoladis & Lambert, 1998; Collier, 1992; Genesee, 1987; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001; McCollum, 1994; Peregoy & Boyle, 1999; Snow, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Comparatively fewer studies investigated Chinese immersion programs specifically (Chao, 1994; De Courcy, 2002; Liu, 1992; Tang, 1989). In particular, Tang's (1989) research explored the factors contributing to the establishment and implementation of a Cantonese immersion program for kindergarteners and first graders in a San Francisco public school. Chao's (1994) and Liu's (1992) research studies focused on intensive

summer Mandarin Chinese immersion programs for college students that simulated a Chinese speaking environment. De Courcy's (2002) study investigated students' learning experience in a Mandarin Chinese immersion program in an Australian college. Although teaching strategies and teacher-student interaction were reflected in students' learning experience, these researchers did not give adequate attention to the area of instructional issues. Aiming to explore classroom interaction and teaching methods used in a Chinese immersion school for primary and secondary grades of English-speaking students, this study may fill the gap in immersion educational research that reflects little concern about life inside Mandarin Chinese immersion classrooms.

<div align="center">Background of the Study</div>

Acknowledging the deficiency in foreign language education and the important role of the Chinese language in the future, the private school's key founders endeavored to establish a Chinese immersion school more than two decades ago to fulfill their dream of offering quality bilingual and bicultural education for students. Unlike the two-way immersion model, however, this Chinese immersion school was founded to meet English-speaking students' needs. About 90 percent of its students speak English as their first language, though they are diverse in ethnicities. From the school's 2006 report about its student ethnography, almost 50 percent of the students were Asian Americans, 20 percent were multiracial Asians, 20 percent were Caucasian, and 10 percent were other ethnicities, such as African Americans, Latinos, and Middle Easterners.

The operation of the Chinese immersion program in this private school is distinctive from that in numerous Chinese as a foreign language programs offered by mainstream schools and in heritage Chinese schools. It follows the French immersion model of implementation in its language and academic classes. Allocation of class time is half to

Chinese language learning and the other half is to English language learning. To understand the principles of practice in this Chinese immersion school, an elaboration of various immersion educational models and pedagogies is necessary.

The French immersion model is the pioneer of immersion education. In the early 1960s, a group of discontented English-speaking parents in the St. Lambert community in Montreal, Canada, rallied for the exploration of alterative teaching approaches that could effectively teach their children French as a second language (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). This led to the launching of a St. Lambert French immersion program in 1965 as an experimental language program. The main goals of the immersion program were for participating English-speaking children to achieve French proficiency in speaking and writing, to maintain English language development, to ensure academic achievement, and to promote understanding and appreciation of French Canadians and their culture. Termed as "additive bilingualism" (Genesee, 1987, p. 41), the immersion program ensures the attainment of second language proficiency without sacrificing first language development and academic achievement. The success of the experimental program encouraged a dramatic expansion of similar immersion programs in Canada as well as in the U.S. Numerous studies on immersion students' second language proficiency attainment and academic achievement confirm the success of the immersion approach as an alternative and better solution to bilingual education and foreign language education.

Three alternative models of immersion programs that focus on the needs of schools and students are: early, delayed, and late immersions. The basis of distinction is the grade level that commences content-based instruction using the second language as the medium of instruction. Early immersion initiates second language instruction during the primary grades (i.e., K-3rd grades). Delayed immersion starts from the 4th grade, whereas late

immersion postpones the second language instruction to the beginning of secondary school. According to the amount of time to use the second language as a medium of instruction, two variations exist: total and partial immersions. The total immersion model exposes students to 100% of second language instruction for the first 2 or 3 years, and then gradually introduces English to the students when they enter grade 2 or grade 3. In the partial immersion model, the amount of time for second language instruction and English instruction is allocated in different proportions for language exposure. The most popular model is the 50/50 version that evenly exposes students to both languages.

In the U.S., some schools incorporated the French immersion model into bilingual educational programs to help language minority students (Genesee, 1987). But some other schools in California developed the two-way immersion model that provides both bilingual education and foreign language education for students with different needs. While the French immersion program predominantly serves English-speaking students, the two-way immersion program serves both language minority students and English-speaking students. In two-way immersion classrooms, all students become language models for other language learners instead of native speaking teachers posing as the only models for students. The program seeks to promote bilingualism and biculturalism in both groups of students, to assure educational accessibility and equity for English language learners, and to achieve high academic performance for all students (Bikle, Billings, & Hakuta, 2003).

A report by the Center for Applied Linguistics (2006) showed that the number of two-way immersion programs burgeoned from 1 in 1962 to 338 in 2006. Now it is a favored model for second language learning in the U.S. schools. In regards to language instruction, adoption of Spanish-English two-way immersion programs is

overwhelmingly in use across the country, i.e., a total of 316 out of 338 two-way immersion programs. Thus, a large body of research evaluated the efficacy of this program, the learning outcome, and the learning experience of its students without giving greater attention to other language immersion variations. My study of Chinese immersion program hopes to accomplish several purposes by allowing broader understanding of this rarely studied language program.

Purpose of the Study

To understand the nature of teaching and learning experiences in the setting of Chinese immersion classrooms, this study aims to present particular characteristics of teaching strategies in these classrooms. By examining the patterns of teacher-student interaction and patterns of language use in the classrooms, the findings illuminate the teaching and learning behaviors in the context of Chinese immersion classrooms. Finally this study investigates the particular challenges faced by Chinese immersion teachers, their perceptions about the roles of teachers, and their apprehension of the needs of their students.

To pursue my inquiry, I conducted my research in the aforementioned private Chinese immersion school located in the West coast. My research method is a qualitative approach which attempts to capture the "lived experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 104) of the teachers and students in the Chinese immersion classrooms. I observed the teaching strategies and classroom interaction in 4 classrooms, 3 classes of primary grade level (2nd, 4th, and 5th grades) and 1 class of middle grade level (8th grade). Observation time was one and a half hours per week for each classroom over a period of eight weeks. I also conducted structured interviews with respective teachers. Based on the collected data, I attempt to give a thorough description and analysis of the instruction and interaction in

the Chinese immersion classrooms through emergent themes and offer insights into their success in teaching Chinese language.

Research Questions

1. What teaching strategies are used in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

2. What are the patterns of teacher-student interaction in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

3. What are the patterns of language use in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

4. What unique characteristics of Chinese language instruction are reflected in the teaching practice?

5. What are teachers' perceptions of their roles in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

Theoretical Rationales

Because this study seeks to explore classroom experience in immersion classrooms, several language acquisition theories are fundamental to the conceptualization of the immersion education and its pedagogies. These theories include first and second language acquisition theories, content-based immersion pedagogical rationales, and interaction hypothesis in second language classrooms. These theories help understand what and how teachers teach, talk, and interact with their students in immersion classrooms.

Based on a number of language acquisition theories, an immersion program seeks primarily to simulate a learning process similar to that of first language acquisition (Genesee, 1984). Supporters of immersion education believe that learners should learn the second language in a natural setting like children acquire their first language. Thus, in immersion classrooms, teachers are encouraged to create an anxiety-free environment for their students and to concentrate on oral-audio communication. Rather than forcing

students to produce language, they allow students to progress at their own speed. Whenever errors occur, teachers are discouraged to give excessive correction for fear of inhibiting the learners' progress in language production.

Genesee (1984) describes that in an immersion classroom, language is learned "incidentally" (p. 8) when students learn academic contents that are advantageous in creating a context for meaningful and interesting communication. It is believed that language can be learned in non-language classes, such as science or mathematics classes, just like children learn their first language when they engage in communication with others on the topics of non-language subjects.

Krashen (1983) suggested five fundamental hypotheses about second language acquisition that are applicable to the practice of immersion programs. His acquisition-learning hypothesis distinguishes two ways of language learning. Through genuine communication with native speakers, second language learners acquire language in a natural way. A second language attained subconsciously is similar to a child's first language acquisition. The theory thus disapproves of formal instruction of grammar and explicit error correction at initial learning stage, which is believed incapable of facilitating language attainment. It argues that parents seldom correct the forms of language produced by their children; a response eventually encourages acquisition. Second, if learners learn the language in a formal setting with the language being used by teachers, they tend to acquire consciously the knowledge related to the language itself but not real communication. However, Krashen believes that acquisition can be achieved in the process of learning in a formal setting if teachers create a natural environment for language learning. A natural learning process is precisely what immersion programs desire to accomplish.

In a second language classroom, the quantity of input of knowledge from teachers critically affects students' acquisition, claimed Krashen (1981). His input hypothesis provides an important pedagogical rationale for immersion programs. He hypothesizes that only when learners understand what meanings the input is passed by teachers does language acquisition occur. He proposes that the input should be "i + 1" (Krashen, 1983); "i" being the knowledge appropriate to the learner's level of competence and "1" the knowledge one step above his/her level. Thus, he encourages teachers to supply the learners with sufficient and new knowledge using contextual aides for easy comprehension. Krashen further argues that when meanings of the message are understood, language structure will then be acquired naturally. Therefore he suggests avoiding explicit grammar instruction, making an argument which conflicts with traditional second language instruction that emphasizes the practice of forms and grammatical rules.

For successful second language acquisition, Krashen (1981) suggests a few pedagogical approaches. First of all teachers should create a learning environment of low anxiety. In this relaxed environment, sufficient and interesting input needs to be made comprehensible for language attainment. He contends that acquisition will happen even if learners do not generate language as long as they are continuously exposed to a large supply of comprehensible input. The pedagogical principles have been widely practiced in immersion classrooms (Genesee, 1984; Snow, 1990). For educators like Cummins and Swain, the hypothesis is inadequate in its disregard of grammar instruction and language production.

To counter the inadequacy of Krashen's input hypothesis, Swain's (1986) theory of "comprehensible output" (p. 117) argues that comprehensible input alone does not

satisfactorily ensure second language acquisition. Swain (1986) conducted a study on immersion students' language performance and found that immersion students did not reach native-like proficiency, especially in the area of grammatical structure. She claims that only when comprehensible output is generated can learners become grammatically fluent in the second language. In the process of production, learners are alert to send an understandable message which ultimately allows learners to acquire language. She therefore suggests that teachers provide opportunities or even push students to generate speech in the classroom. The success of language acquisition relies not only on comprehensible input, but also on comprehensible output. The two theories critically influence immersion teachers' teaching approaches.

As immersion education aims to promote second language proficiency without sacrificing first language development and normal academic achievement, thus content-based instruction is deemed an indispensable strategy to achieve this goal (Genesee, Met, & Snow, 1989). It rationalizes that the instruction of the second language be integrated with content instruction for concurrent development of second language proficiency and curriculum cognition. Several rationales underlie the conceptualization of the integration.

First of all, based on the theory that the development of language and cognition occurs concurrently, content instruction using second language fosters both linguistic and cognitive growth. It does not alienate cognitive progress from language learning (Genesee, 1987; Genesee, Met, & Snow, 1989). The second rationale advocates that the second language should be learned in a meaningful context to facilitate language learning. The content of the subject matter provides a basis for meaningful, purposeful, and interesting communication in using second language. As a result, meaningful instruction

of content and language may motivate students to learn effectively. The third rationale is that through content instruction, students learn specific jargons of the second language in subject matter areas (Genesee, 1987; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989). The integration of content and language increases the awareness and appropriateness of language use on different topics.

Using the second language as a medium of instruction to conduct meaningful communication manifests the constructivist rationale that language and thoughts are developed through meaningful communication and social interaction. In a social environment, a child will undertake a process of internalization that attempts to construct new language and organize new thoughts in order to interact with the people around him/her. The needs to communicate thus stimulate speech production and self reflection which promotes a child's cognitive development.

Social constructivist Vygotsky (1978) further stresses the significant role of teachers and interaction in the process of learning. He proposes a "zone of proximal development" (p. 84) to address the essentiality of guidance from teachers and interaction with peers in classroom learning. Learning progress accruing from the assistance of knowledgeable adults or interaction with competent peers creates a discrepancy between the actual development and potential levels of mental development. Teachers should aim to create this zone of proximal development for maximum learning by providing meaningful context, encouraging genuine communication, and arranging collaborative activities. In immersion classrooms, providing more opportunities for second language learners to interact with teachers and peers who act as models of second language speakers will benefit the learners' language production.

The influence of interaction between teachers and students and between peers upon

learners' language acquisition is also reflected in Long's (1985) interaction hypothesis. The theory claims that in order to effectuate comprehensible input, native speakers should utilize a variety of modifications to communicate with learners. The modified input (p. 168) in the interaction involves speech modification, speed modification, comprehension check, clarification check, or paraphrases. Long emphasizes that both comprehensible input and interaction are indispensable in the process of second language acquisition. He subsequently hypothesizes that the development of linguistic accuracy is positively related to interactive communication rather than to grammar instruction and traditional rote learning.

Delimitation of the Study

This study limits its scope to a single Mandarin Chinese immersion school that offers classes for kindergarten through eighth grade. It does not intend to extend its findings to other levels of Chinese language learning. These findings may not be applicable to adult learners, nor are they applicable to Mandarin English two-way immersion programs which are implemented under different considerations. In addition, the experience of the Chinese immersion teachers from this independent school is a limiting factor. Nonetheless, the teaching strategies they use and the classroom interaction between Chinese-speaking teachers and English-speaking students may elaborate a new and promising learning process in Chinese language classrooms.

Significance of the Study

This study hopes to present an insightful description and analysis of the teaching performance in a successful Chinese immersion school. On the one hand, it promotes a better understanding of teaching strategies and teacher-student interaction in Chinese immersion classrooms. On the other hand, it portrays distinctive aspects of life in Chinese

immersion classrooms and the particular challenges Chinese immersion teachers are facing.

In regards to pedagogical significance, the findings will be beneficial to many current and prospective Chinese language instructors who are seeking alternative and innovative strategies to teach skillfully and successfully so they could adequately meet their students' needs. By analyzing teacher-student interaction, the findings may significantly motivate Chinese language teachers to realign their conception towards the importance of a teacher's role in a language classroom and learners' needs. Most importantly, this study is significant in contributing its findings to the existing literature on immersion education that has been lacking an interest in the research of Chinese immersion programs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Much of the research on immersion education attempts to confirm its effectiveness in promoting students' academic achievement and second language acquisition. The findings usually ease parents' anxiety and administrators' uncertainty about the effect of immersion education (Punchard, 2001; Swain, 1986). A comparatively small portion of research literature concentrates on the teaching and learning experience taking place in the immersion classrooms (Bernhardt, 1992; Punchard, 2001). An even tinier portion of the literature reports on Chinese immersion programs. At the time of reviewing the literature, I broadened my search to studies that investigated the classroom process related to teaching strategies, discourse, interaction, and teaching and learning experience in French immersion and two-way immersion classrooms. Then I narrowed my search to any literature that examined the teaching of Chinese language to English-speaking learners and the learning experience in the Chinese language classrooms. Four categories emerge from the literature review: (a) immersion teaching strategies, (b) French immersion classrooms, (c) two-way immersion classrooms, and (d) teaching and learning experience in Chinese language classrooms.

Immersion Teaching Strategies

What distinguishes immersion programs from other bilingual programs is their salient feature of integrating language and content in language learning. Immersion teachers use the second language as the medium of instruction to teach academic content, such as mathematics, science, or social studies. Nontraditional pedagogical approaches are suggested to effectuate both language acquisition and academic achievement.

To give evidence to the advantage of immersion strategies, Taylor (1998) conducted two case studies to compare different language performance from different instructional strategies. One study focused on a native Cantonese-speaking child, Victor, enrolled in an early French immersion program in Canada; the other focused on a native Turkish-speaking child, Deniz, enrolled in a Danish mainstream program in Denmark. Although French was Victor's third language, this fact did not inhibit his language development. The researcher credited his French progress to the immersion teaching strategies of modified measures for better comprehension. In contrast, Deniz was unsuccessful in the mainstream program because mainstream teachers did not know how to adjust their teaching strategy to meet his language needs.

The advantage of immersion strategies was not overlooked by foreign language educators either. In the field of foreign language education, a Center for Applied Linguistics study in 2001 examined successful aspects of foreign language education in 19 countries (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001). The researchers utilized a questionnaire to inquire about language teaching strategies and policies in different countries. Twenty-two educators from these countries returned their answers to the researchers. An analysis of the data revealed eight characteristics of successful foreign language education in these countries. In the aspect of effective teaching strategies, the findings showed that the integration of language and content instruction was successful in achieving students' foreign language proficiency.

In the early years of French immersion implementation, Genesee (1987) contended that integration of language and content was effective in promoting L1 development and L2 acquisition. He suggested four pedagogical approaches: (a) students use both first and second languages in classrooms at least during the initial stage of the program, (b)

teachers limit error correction of grammatical structures, (c) teachers use second language as instructional language in core curriculum, and (d) second language teachers act as monolinguals, not bilinguals.

Similarly, in describing the instructional characteristics of French immersion programs, Lapkin and Cummins (1984) stated that immersion language instruction emphasized meaningful interaction and provided extensive exposure of L2 input in a natural learning environment. Second language was not taught as an isolated subject any more, but integrated with content learning. They reiterated the use of some specific instructional strategies was related to the success of second language learning. These specific techniques included facial expressions, body languages, the use of real objects, retrieving students' vocabulary knowledge, the use of real experiences and contextual clues, implicit error correction without formal grammar instruction, and frequent group activities.

To understand what teaching strategies were used in immersion classrooms, The Center for Language Education and Research (Snow, 1990) undertook a survey of 58 teachers from five immersion programs in the U.S. The participant teachers completed a questionnaire about the various strategies they used in their classrooms. Ten specific strategies emerged from the findings. These strategies and techniques included language modification, body language, visual aides, redundancy, indirect error correction, frequent checking of students' comprehension. Snow (1990) identified three terms that conceptualized these ten strategies: sheltered instruction, comprehensible input, and negotiation of meaning. She further proposed that teachers use group work and cooperative learning to reinforce language attainment.

Echoing Snow's recommendation, Cummins (2000) offered a pedagogical

framework for immersion programs, which sought to promote students' cognitive development and linguistic proficiency. He proposed the same teaching strategies to challenge students' critical thinking and motivate them to generate new knowledge with emphasis on hands-on activities and cooperative learning. These strategies encouraged an advancement of students' L2 skills to a higher level (grade level appropriate) besides content cognition.

For a newly founded two-way immersion Mandarin-English program in Cupertino, California, Chang (2003) proposed six strategies to achieve meaningful and quality instruction. These strategies demonstrated similar features proposed by preceding researchers, which included group activity, clarification of language use, contextualized and meaningful learning, small group conversation, and medium of instruction.

All of the aforementioned teaching methods, such as meaningful interaction based on the integration of language and content, modified and extensive second language input, cooperative learning between peers, and group work suggested by the researchers, may guide me to analyze what instructional strategies are used effectively in Chinese immersion classrooms. Reviewing existing studies about the ways these teaching strategies are practiced and what interaction occurs in immersion classrooms may allow me to understand essential factors influencing language acquisition through formal learning.

However, from the review of immersion classroom research, I found that the studies on French immersion programs and those on two-way immersion programs are remarkably different in their areas of focus. The former concentrated more on language instruction and its impact on immersion students' French proficiency, whereas the latter concentrated on educational equity and achievement of language minority students. Most

studies I reviewed on teaching strategies were conducted in French immersion classrooms. Few studies explored the teaching strategies in two-way immersion classrooms.

<center>French Immersion Classroom Research</center>

Many studies about French immersion programs evaluated primarily English-speaking students' French proficiency, especially their productive skills. Genesee (1987) described three types of assessment to evaluate French immersion students' French language performance: a) comparison of French immersion students to an English control group taking French as Foreign language class, b) comparison of French immersion students to a French control group from regular French language school, and c) comparison of French immersion students from various types of immersion programs.

He reviewed the studies conducted by Harley and Swain (1984), and Spilka (1976), which concluded that immersion students performed less than native-like proficiency in productive skills of speaking and writing. Harley and Swain analyzed grade 5 students' usage of verbs when communicating with a native French speaker, whereas Spilka analyzed errors of spoken language made by grade 4, 5 and 6 students in St. Lambert. Both studies confirmed that immersion students tended to use simplified language and similar language forms to their first language. Nevertheless, these researchers agreed that the less than native like proficiency did not impair their communicative competence with native speakers.

Genesee's (1987) longitudinal study of early total French immersion students of grades 4, 5, and 6 in Montreal, Canada, found that immersion students' receptive skills were native like and they were highly proficient in functional communication, even though weak at linguistic accuracy. Based on the test results of French language

proficiency and linguistic accuracy, Genesee compared the immersion students' and French-speaking students' performances. The results indicated that the immersion students' listening and reading comprehension was better than their speech production.

Swain (1986) analyzed the data collected from a large-scale communicative competence test of the students in a French immersion program. The test aimed at exploring the traits of grammatical competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence in immersion students' productive skills. It intended to determine the relationship between the teacher's input and the students' output based on the students' language production. The results of her study were similar to that of Genesse. She thus challenged Krashen's (1981) comprehensible input hypothesis by emphasizing the important role of output in learners' second language competency and accuracy.

Attending to students' linguistic performance, more studies have shifted their attention away from product to process research in order to examine the process of teaching and learning in immersion classrooms (Chaudron, 2000). To explore the cause of unsatisfactory performance, Swain (1996) conducted a study on actual implementation of teaching strategies in immersion classrooms. By observing grade 3 and grade 6 French immersion classrooms, she specifically examined how second language was taught in content instruction. She observed teachers' talk, their instruction on grammar and vocabulary related to target content, error correction, and students' language output. The findings identified some aspects of inadequacy in the instruction.

In this study, Swain (1996) concluded that teachers' language input was insufficient because of their preference to use certain forms of the target language and some teachers' tendency not to correct students' grammatical errors. For content teaching, grammar and

vocabulary instruction was limited to the comprehension of the specific context. The teachers did not expand their instruction to functional usage of the language. The result of student talk was disappointing also in that minimal use, i.e., one or two words, of the target language in the classrooms was common. Teachers did not actively encourage students to produce sentence length expression. When engaging in error correction, teachers rarely corrected students' grammatical mistakes. The findings revealed incoherence between teaching rationales and actual teaching practice, which, Swain suspected, might be the cause for non-native like proficiency and accuracy in immersion students' language production.

In order to analyze a model of successful content instruction, Swain (1996) observed and videotaped the teacher's instruction in a grade 8 immersion classroom for one week. She found that the teacher adequately imparted content knowledge and language usage to his students. She utilized repetition, but not simplified language, to supply students with ample synonym input. She explicitly corrected students' errors and asked students to repeat corrected forms. Furthermore he used new vocabulary in a variety of contexts for students to practice word use in speaking and writing. The teaching practice manifested an ideal approach to content instruction which confirmed Swain's contention that in addition to comprehensible input, comprehensible output is necessary for successful language acquisition.

Some studies utilized quantitative research methods to explore the advantages of form-focused instruction and teacher-student interaction engaging both negotiation of meaning and negotiation of form. Lyster (2001) explored the relationship between different types of error correction, different types of error made by students, and students' repair in reaction to teachers' feedback. Using a quantitative approach to study the

teachers' feedback to the students' errors, the researcher and his assistants collected data in 23 French immersion classrooms for a total of 18.3 hours. The results showed that the teachers tended to provide correct forms or reformulate correct forms to respond to the students' phonological and grammatical errors, whereas they favored using the negotiation of forms for lexical misuse so as to elicit the students' self-repair. The study suggested that in order to push comprehensible output, the teachers should use more of the negotiation of forms to stimulate the students to correct the grammatical errors by themselves.

A subsequent study by Lyster (2002) explored the effectiveness of form-focused negotiation for comprehensible communication between teachers and students in 4 French immersion classrooms. He observed and analyzed a grade 4 teacher's interaction with her students using two types of error correction, negotiation of forms which were clarification questions, repetition of errors, implicit clues, elicitation of self-repair, and negotiation of meanings which were recast or reformulation of corrective forms. In his conclusion, he distinguished the advantages of using form-focused negotiation and meaning-focused negotiation for different types of linguistic errors made by students. He suggested both negotiations can be used to facilitate content comprehension and accurate production.

Day and Shapson (2001) designed new curricular materials for an experimental study orchestrating form-focused instruction and the communicative approach in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the new pedagogy. The researchers chose six grade 7 French immersion classrooms in Vancouver, Canada, as Experimental classes and six grade 7 immersion classrooms as Control classes. The experimental time was over a period of 6 weeks. The results showed significantly higher scores in writing by the Experimental

group than by the Control group. The Experimental group's speaking progress was also greater than the control group. The findings indicated that an integration of formal teaching of grammar, communicative activities for students to use forms, and group exercises to reinforce the learning could effectuate students' grammatical progress in speaking and writing. The researchers suggested possible pedagogical change and well-planned curricula.

In a case study of Bonowa State High, the first partial French immersion school in Queensland, Australia, de Courcy (1997) conducted several classroom observations from 1991 to 1995 to investigate grade 8, grade 9, and grade 10 students' learning experience. She too found that repetition and intentional supply of a variety of word usage increased students' comprehension of new concepts. Besides ample input, teachers constantly offered opportunities to generate language output to maximize the use of the new language, such as answering their question, making inquiry or request for clarification, conducting whole class discussion, and sometimes urging students to talk. Overall the students were satisfied with their learning experience in this program.

To further understand the learning experiences of the students in different language immersion classrooms, de Courcy (2002) undertook a qualitative classroom research in two Australian schools that offered Chinese and French immersion programs respectively. The researcher attempted to explore the process of second language learning in three aspects: the contextual factor that affected students' learning, students' learning experience in immersion classrooms and the strategies they used to effectuate their learning.

Four student participants were chosen from a year 9 French immersion classroom in an Australian high school. Four were chosen from a graduate Chinese immersion

program in an Australian university. Both groups of students were in their second year of language learning. The researcher used qualitative method to explore the immersion learning experience. Triangulation technique was adopted to collect the data.

Overall, the French immersion students were more satisfied with their learning experience than the Chinese immersion students in the aspects of second language learning context, teaching strategies, and students' needs. As the Chinese language teachers were mostly native speakers who were inexperienced in teaching immersion classes, a lot of English was used in the Chinese immersion classroom. They did not create a natural and communicative language learning environment. Their unstructured curriculum frequently confused their students. What these teachers emphasized was the instruction of grammar structures and new vocabulary, and ignored the functional use of the language. The participant students were also frustrated that the Chinese teachers did not notice their struggling. The teachers seldom responded to the students' questions and did not check their comprehension. The students complained that the teaching strategies were poor and ineffective in facilitating their second language acquisition.

French immersion teachers, on the contrary, were in constant vigilant of students' learning difficulties. They used French mostly in the classrooms and undertook a variety of helpful strategies to assist the students' comprehension of course content. They also offered more opportunities for students to produce the new language. The French teachers were positive and supportive, which created a comfortable learning environment for the students to develop confidence and competence in the process of learning.

The research was significant in giving an in-depth description of Chinese and French immersion classrooms. Though it sought to understand the learners' experience, it presented a thorough elaboration of the distinguished teaching practices in the two

language classrooms as well. The study importantly reflected the reactions of the students toward the French teachers' helpful teaching approaches and the Chinese teachers' inadequate teaching strategies. It suggested the essentiality of a well-planned and supportive language learning context and the role of the teachers to formulate such context to benefit their students' language learning.

As teachers' behaviors and teaching practice critically influence students' learning, some studies focused their process research on the nature of teaching experience in the French immersion classrooms. Salomone (1992) attempted to describe a variety of techniques used by several French immersion teachers and to explain why and how they were related to these teachers' pedagogical theories and classroom behaviors. It was a study of "teacher thinking" (p. 11), to investigate pedagogical implications from teaching practices. The study site was a Midwestern one-year-old elementary French immersion school. Over a period of 3 months at the beginning of academic year 1988-89, Salomone interviewed and observed six teachers: 1 kindergarten, 2 first-grade, 1 second-grade, 1 third-grade, and 1 fifth grade teachers. Multiple data collections allowed for triangulation to increase validity.

Twenty-five categories evolved from the process of data collection (Salomone, 1992) that were then divided into 9 groups to analyze each teacher: (a) Teacher presage variables and the role of the teacher, (b) Content comprehension techniques, (c) Specific content area techniques, (d) Second language input, (e) Classroom management techniques, (f) Teachers' relationships, (g) Improving the child's self-image, (h) Cultural input, and (i) Classroom surprises. The analysis procedure used quantitative approach to describe each teacher's classroom behavior and thinking. The instances occurring in the classroom or mentioned by the teachers were counted under corresponding categories.

The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data analysis constituted two parts: one was single-case analyses that described an individual teacher's classroom behavior within different categories, and the other was cross-case analysis that attempted to understand the teaching characteristics shared by the teachers.

Because much of the description was based on statistical evidence, Salomone's (1992) study did not adequately reflect the dynamic nature of teaching experience in the immersion classrooms. In other words, the factor of contextual features, like students' needs and classroom cultures, was of little consequence to their teaching practice and beliefs. The cross-case analysis found that many activities were teacher-fronted, that planned routines were for efficient content input, that teachers allowed students to use English to respond to comprehension questions, that teachers frequently used translation strategy to increase comprehension, and that teachers seldom conducted explicit error correction. These findings do not illuminate the teaching practice in immersion classrooms to the extent that teachers frequently used translation and allowed students to mix language use. Since the participant school was in the first year of immersion education, many teachers lacked experience teaching students in immersion classrooms. Overall, this study is not significant in demonstrating the characteristics of teaching experience of French immersion teachers.

Two-Way Immersion Classroom Research

Compared to the French immersion research, the research on two-way immersion is distinct in that its primary concern is with language minority students' academic accomplishment, linguistic performance, and attitude towards Spanish-English two-way immersion programs. From 1996-2001, Thomas and Collier (2002) conducted a five-year longitudinal study on the academic achievement of K-12 language minority students.

Five public school districts in the North, South, and West of the U.S. participated in the study. The student samples included newly arrived immigrants as well as students of other language heritages. The source of the participants was eight different bilingual programs in order to compare programs. Aiming to find out students' long-term academic achievement, the investigators employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. They used nationally standardized tests in English Total Reading for evaluation and collected student information from the databases of the school districts. Furthermore, they conducted interviews, visited schools, and collected related documents.

The findings from Thomas and Collier's (2002) study confirmed that, in general, students from bilingual programs outperformed monolingual students. In comparing students from different bilingual programs, those from two-way immersion programs outperformed those from other bilingual programs. The study is significant in discovering that the longer (minimum of four years) the immersion students stayed in schooling with both L1 and L2 instruction, the better their academic achievement in L2. The findings acknowledged language minority students' cognitive achievement from receiving bilingual education. The study suggested that students of limited English proficiency should not be put in short-term programs or be segregated in remedial programs which ineffectively developed students' L2 attainment. It also suggested that schools should provide these students with a natural learning environment that encouraged attainment of both L1 and L2 in order to meet students' needs. This study confirmed the effectiveness of bilingual education including two-way immersion programs for English limited students.

To examine the influence of a Spanish-English two-way bilingual program on

students' attitudes toward bilingualism as related to their academic performance, Cazabon, Nicoladis, & Lambert (1998) conducted a survey of the immersion students' attitude about becoming bilingual and examined their academic performance over time. In order to gain insights into the students' attitudes, they subsequently undertook in-depth interviews with two students. They also collected all immersion students' test scores on reading and math from standardized achievement tests during a period of 5 to 6 years to judge students' progress over time. They used two control groups for comparison: one group included English controls who were native English speakers and attended regular classes in the same school. In contrast, the other group included Spanish controls who were native Spanish-speaking students enrolled in the transitional bilingual programs in local public schools.

The small case study of the two students (Cazabon, Nicoladis, & Lambert, 1998) significantly reflected students' positive attitude toward being bilingual. Both valued the immersion program in their attainment of English and Spanish proficiency as well as their appreciation of Latin American culture. Both credited the program for their academic success. The analysis of test scores revealed remarkable performance of the participating students when compared with the two control groups. The study confirmed that both English-speaking students and Spanish-speaking students were gaining balanced skills in both languages. The program undoubtedly was successful in immigrant students' English progress without sacrificing their home language and culture. Furthermore, it was successful in developing these students' confidence in academic performance and their pride in their own culture.

In the area of classroom research on two-way immersion programs, many studies concentrated their research on educational equity between language majority and

language minority students. Amrein's (2000) study found incoherence between teaching principles and teaching practice. By examining a Spanish-English dual language program in Phoenix, Arizona, the researcher attempted to investigate if the program was implemented in a balanced approach towards both English and Spanish languages. The study concentrated on three categories: instruction, resource, and students, finding that asymmetry existed in all three areas. What interested me most was the instructional asymmetry reflecting teachers' incoherent language use in two-way immersion classrooms.

Amrein's (2000) research indicated that the imbalanced instruction occurred due to the shortage of Spanish-English bilingual teachers. In this dual language program, Spanish teachers were bilingual, whereas English teachers were monolingual. Therefore Spanish teachers were able to instruct in both languages and code switch when English-speaking students were in doubt. However, Spanish-speaking students could not rely on their monolingual English teachers to translate for them. The instructional asymmetry created unequal opportunities for Spanish-speaking students to learn both languages efficiently.

It is evident that Amrein (2000) was eager to address the issue of inequality in teachers' language use without realizing that in immersion classroom, language separation is necessary for maximum exposure of the second language. The fact that translation and code switching are used in immersion classrooms actually limits the supply of second language input and hinders the opportunity for language output. In regard to immersion teaching principles, I disagree with Amrein's conclusion about the unequal opportunities for language minority students in two-way immersion classrooms. I consider English-speaking students more adversely affected by the instructional

asymmetry than Spanish-speaking students because Spanish-speaking teachers used English to help them learn Spanish, which greatly reduced their exposure to the Spanish language in the classroom.

Fortune (2002) conducted an 8-month project investigation of one 5th grade Spanish-English immersion classroom. The study aimed to interpret distinctive factors affecting students' language use and interactive behavior with teachers and peers. It found that students used more English for interpersonal communication and more Spanish for academic purposes. Rather than teacher-led instruction, student-led activities were deemed effective at facilitating language production. Surprisingly, native Spanish speakers used Spanish to interact with other native speakers, but seldom to English speakers. Spanish speakers were not adequately exposed to the English language, which resulted in the disparity of academic achievement between English speakers and Spanish speakers.

Language minority students' academic needs were investigated similarly in Pam's (1994) study of a middle school two-way immersion program. The study found that Spanish speakers overwhelmingly used English for academic purpose. English was perceived as the language of power, whereas vernacular Spanish used commonly by the students were devalued by teachers. The use of language in the classroom significantly affected language minority students' language choice and their academic needs.

A few studies focused on English-speaking students' learning needs in two-way immersion programs. Peregoy and Boyle (1999) examined the strategies used by two teachers to support English-speaking students in the two-way Spanish immersion kindergarten classrooms. After observing two classrooms, the researchers analyzed and compared the different approaches the two teachers utilized in daily opening activities to

facilitate the English-speaking students' Spanish development. One teacher used storybook routine as the opening activity that engaged the students to read aloud and to comprehend the story through pictures, teachers' gestures, and dramatization. The other teacher used the class stuffed bear to interact with the students and to deliver the concepts of health and hygiene. The Spanish-speaking students acted as language models and the teachers' assistants to further scaffold the English-speaking students' language development. The study confirmed the effectiveness of the routines used by the teachers over time on increasing the students' level of linguistic development.

In a rare study of a French-English two-way immersion kindergarten classroom, Gayman (2000) focused on English speaking students' language use patterns, participation, and interaction with peers in informal activities. Two qualitative interpretive approaches were used: interactional sociolinguistics and ethnographic microanalysis. Through informal conversation with teachers and classroom observation, the study found that immersion teachers were overwhelmingly concerned with the difficulty of choosing which language to use in order to make the input comprehensible to two language groups of students.

"Language as problem" was the constant theme throughout the teachers' conversations. In the kindergarten classroom, the issue was manifested that the teacher frequently used translation for English-speaking students for immediate comprehension. Moreover, when formal instruction was taking place, the teacher did most of the talking, which deprived the opportunity for English-speaking students to use the language sufficiently. The teacher also did not carefully organize peer-peer interactive activities to attend to the language needs of English speaking students. As a result, English-speaking students showed a lack of French communicative competence. The incoherence between

content-based pedagogical principles and teaching practice was evident.

It is therefore imperative to understand the two-way immersion teachers' perceptions, beliefs and challenges that affect their teaching practice and students' learning experience. Mora (2006) specifically focused on the analysis of coherence among dual immersion program principles, teachers' beliefs, and actual classroom practice in order to investigate the effectiveness of the program. The research proposed that the quality of the program was determined by the level of congruence among the three factors. With a critical literature review and case studies in three school districts where Spanish/English immersion programs were offered, Mora concluded that teachers' beliefs about the importance and efficacy of different languages as mediums of instruction strongly affected their language use, instructional strategies, and their interaction with students.

Two studies examined teachers' roles and their beliefs in facilitating two-way immersion students' language fluency and academic mastery. Using a qualitative research method, Takahashi-Breines (2002) analyzed teacher talk of an experienced teacher of a Spanish dual-language immersion program in supporting her students' learning. She found four types of support from the teacher talk: (a) socio-cultural support empowering her students to think critically of their status in the large society and valuing their cultures and experiences, (b) linguistic support promoting student comprehension through language modification, clarification request, and repetition, (c) cognitive support using questions to stimulate student thinking and thus to scaffold their cognitive development through the interaction, and (d) academic support integrating content and language instruction to achieve the students' academic development. This process study offered an in-depth analysis of the teaching practice in one two-way immersion classroom, which was rarely administered in the field of two-way immersion research.

To explore the issues, problems, and challenges of immersion education from the teachers' perspectives, Walker and Tedick (2000) utilized a qualitative approach to carry out both interviews and a focus group discussion with 6 teachers from 6 different Spanish two-way immersion programs in one metropolitan area. However, the qualitative researchers did not conduct classroom observations to support their data as teachers' perspectives and self-reflection were the focus of the study. The results indicated that microcontexts, or individual classrooms and unique school cultures, surprisingly determined varied teacher's concerns and challenges, although the teachers shared some common characteristics of the immersion language instruction and problems.

From the study (Walker and Tedick, 2000), five issues emerged: (a) language use which concerned teachers' choice of instructional language in their classrooms and students' language development, (b) balance between language and content which concerned the difficulty of balancing the development of second language proficiency and content mastery, especially in upper grade students, (c) assessment which identified the complexity of developing an effective strategy to evaluate simultaneously students' academic and language developments, (d) various learning styles and learning needs which concerned the actual learning needs of the diverse students in the metropolitan immersion programs, and (e) the socio-political context which influenced teachers' relationship with parents and schools.

Walker and Tedick (2000) concluded that the efficacy of an immersion education should take into account the factor of microcontexts which constitute of schools, teachers and students. If unaware of the significance of the feature, we would not understand how and why teachers teach and what problems they face in the immersion classrooms.

Teaching and Learning Experience in Chinese Language Classrooms

What about the research in the context of the Chinese immersion program? Are there any different concerns from the perspectives of the Chinese immersion education? I found only a few studies that explored these issues. Due to little research on the Chinese immersion programs, I broadened my search to include some studies conducted in the classrooms of Chinese as a foreign language courses.

Much of the literature discussed the pedagogical issues on teaching an isolated linguistic feature from Chinese pronunciation, morphology, semantics, or syntax (Chao, 1993; Liu, 1992). A few studies investigated the learning experience of the students in the Chinese language programs. None of the studies specifically examined the process of instruction and learning in the Chinese immersion programs.

Three studies investigated students' learning experience in the Chinese immersion programs similarly reflecting traditional strategies adopted by the immersion teachers. de Courcy's (2002) study of the Chinese immersion program in Australia, as discussed in the category of French immersion classroom, displayed inadequate teaching practice by the Chinese language teachers.

In a case study of an intensive summer Chinese immersion program in the U.S., Liu (1992) described and analyzed the classroom and summer camp experience of the participant teacher, herself, and her three college students over a two-month period. An ethnographic approach was used to examine teacher-student interaction, their perceptions about the interaction, and the outcome of the interaction. The immersion program in this study was defined as a program that simulated a Mandarin language community. Its program model did not follow that of the French immersion model.

To present the immersion life, Liu (1992) collected data through participant

observation, interviews, journals, and surveys. As teachers and students were required to use only Mandarin in classrooms as well as on campus, the experience was valuable for all student participants to gain functional proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. The analysis concluded that a language community was imperative for students to use the language and interact with native speakers, which strongly affected their linguistic progress in a short period of time.

However, I was disappointed to find that in Liu's (1992) study, language instruction in the classrooms still reflected the traditional Chinese conceptualization about teaching strategy. Formal instruction was practiced in various tedious approaches like sentence and grammar pattern drills, quiz, vocabulary memorization, exercise on translation and making sentences. As teachers were encouraged to correct students' mistakes instantly, participant students expressed their anxiety over teacher-student interaction. But eventually they learned to adapt to the method and welcomed the pressure from their teachers. In my opinion, the fact that these participants were enthusiastic to enhance their Chinese skills and that they were adult learners may have contributed to their successful learning. How they were taught might not affect their learning outcome. I was wondering if the outcome would have been different if the program's participants had been younger learners or learners with different learning styles.

By exploring the experience of two adult Mandarin Chinese learners in an immersion program, Chao (1993) analyzed two contradictory results from the learners. One was successful; the other was experiencing learning difficulty. The analysis indicated that three factors were essential in the process of language learning: environment, instruction, and learners themselves. The researcher suggested that traditional teaching techniques emphasizing memorization, exams, and overt error correction might

intimidate learners and cause learning difficulty. She reiterated that immersion teachers need to adopt appropriate immersion strategies to maintain students' interest, to ease students' anxiety, and to increase communicative competence in students.

A rare study that explored the immersion experience and self-identity of 14 grade 6 students took place in a Chinese Bilingual Program in Alberta, Canada (Wu & Bilash, 2005). Interviews with the students from the program investigated their experience in the dual language program, their self-esteem, and their cultural identity. Using a qualitative approach to analyze the students' perceptions produced seven themes: (a) English proficiency and usage, (b) experiences of speaking Chinese in public places, (c) perceptions of multicultural Canada, (d) sense of belonging, (e) ethnic identity, (f) the effect of the dual language program on self identity, and (g) intentions of being in the program. Through the analysis of these categories, the researchers concluded that these students were positive about their own ethnic identity, and in the program, they learned to value their native language and culture. The findings asserted the positive impact of this Chinese/English dual language program on its participating students. This study did not focus on the teaching and learning process in the Chinese immersion classroom.

It is only in recent years that some researchers shifted their interest to the teaching and learning process in Chinese as-a-foreign-language classrooms. Liang (2004) discussed the practice of one-on-one instruction to facilitate communicative skills and to overcome the obstacles. Some solutions were suggested for effective instruction. In another study, Liang (2005) implemented a new strategy of reading instruction in her classroom to enhance teacher-student interaction and reading comprehension. Shih (2006) reported a new program targeting the reinforcement of students' speaking proficiency by transforming language classroom into a language community. The task-based instruction

optimally facilitated student talk and interaction. These studies were similarly exploring a limited area of instruction and interaction in classrooms.

Huang (1996) conducted the only research that applied the immersion principle of language and content integration to analyze the teaching process in a beginning level Chinese as a foreign language class for language majority students. This was an eight-month study using the qualitative approach, which sought to present the effect of the combination of both language form and cultural content instruction on students' functional discourse performance. The results suggested that well-designed curriculum and well-planned classroom activities and discourse could appropriately integrate form and function instruction in the classrooms of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Summary

In summary, the four areas of research literature bolstered my claim that more studies were needed to heighten the understanding of Chinese immersion programs. My study about Chinese language teaching strategies and classroom interaction in the context of Chinese immersion classrooms will add to the existing literature that showed a lack of research on the process of teaching and learning in this particular language immersion setting. The review directs my attention to the teaching activities, such as form-focused and meaning-focused instruction, types of error correction, and meaningful interaction between teachers and students, which characterized the formal language learning in immersion classrooms. It also calls my attention to the significance of the teacher's role and the classroom culture created by the teachers and the students in a language classroom that critically affected the language teacher's teaching performance and students' learning experience.

In my dissertation, not only do I explore the teaching strategies employed by the

Chinese immersion teachers, but I also attempt to investigate why they used these strategies, how they met the needs of their students, and what their difficulties and challenges were. Therefore, my study used a qualitative approach which enabled me to describe in-depth experience of these teachers in the context of Chinese immersion classrooms.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Accustomed to traditional teacher-fronted instruction, Chinese language teachers rarely adjust their teaching methods to meet the Chinese language learners' needs when they teach in non-Chinese speaking countries. The strategy of rote learning fails to encourage students' interest in learning Chinese and disregards individual student's linguistic needs. Exploring the teaching experience in a renowned Chinese immersion school could attribute to the discovery of innovative and skillful strategies in the Chinese language classrooms and provide insight of the classroom experience in this context.

Research Design

My research design was a case study that focused on the classroom process. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), and Patton (2002), a case study is an in-depth exploration and description of an organization, a program, a single subject, a time period, a critical event, or a community. A case study is advantageous in staying focused and in developing rich description within the limited context. Choosing one school to be the only setting of my research allowed me to undertake in-depth exploration of its classrooms with sufficient time to collect data and to make acquaintance with the participant teachers. Different types of case studies utilize different approaches to collect data. This was a non-participatory observational case study that sought to understand the aspects of immersion classroom interaction and instruction. Thus, I conducted classroom observations in conjunction with formal and informal interviews to achieve these purposes.

As my dissertation was a process study that explored what happened and how it

happened in the classroom, I focused on the experience of participant teachers in Chinese immersion classrooms rather than on the outcomes of the experience. For a classroom process study, the qualitative approach synthesizing phenomenology and ethnography is appropriate in depicting details of the teaching and learning experience of the participants (Patton, 2002). Not only did this approach aim at in-depth description of the teaching practice and learning process in the classroom, but also it attempted to reflect individual experience and perception in the process, especially from the teachers' perspectives. The research method intended to identify the nature of the Chinese immersion classroom experience and to gain a deeper understanding of the programs.

<div style="text-align:center">Research Setting</div>

I conducted my research in a private Mandarin Chinese immersion school located in the West Coast. The school implemented Chinese immersion program for grade levels kindergarten through 8th grade. It was a partial immersion model for the primary grades, in which English and Mandarin Chinese classes were divided into morning and afternoon sessions. In other words, the medium of instruction alternated on a daily basis. The students were immersed in two languages everyday, but the separation of language use in different classrooms was strictly enforced in order to maximize language use opportunities. For middle grades (6th, 7th, and 8th), the immersion class time was reduced to two classes per day, whereas English became the primary language for content instruction.

Inside the school, all the signs for general rules and directions on the walls were in both English and Chinese languages. Displays of students' work decorated the outside of each classroom. Displays of Chinese language essays represented the classrooms that Chinese language teachers used; whereas displays of English-written works indicated the

classrooms were for English language teachers. Inside the Chinese language classrooms, decorations and classroom furniture had labels with corresponding Chinese translation. Classroom rules were written in the Chinese language only. The linguistic environment was well established to contexualize the learning of the Chinese language.

Research Participants

As this was a qualitative research study, a thick description of personal experience and feelings was the essence of the study. I was specifically interested in exploring the teaching and learning experience in Chinese language classrooms. Therefore, Chinese language teachers were the focus of the study. However, a large pool of participants would have generated too much data for me to analyze the in-depth experience of each one. For a reasonable and manageable sample size, I decided to narrow my recruitment of the participants to four Chinese language teachers: three from primary grade classrooms and one from a middle grade classroom. Ideally these grades were 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th. I hoped to choose a teacher from every other grade to examine different strategies from different grade level. The participants were chosen on the basis of their willingness to participate and the grade level they were teaching. I listed the profiles of these teachers in the following chapter as a part of my research results.

Recruitment Procedure

My first contact with the school took place in the fall of 2006 when I was taking the Qualitative Research Methods course at USF. An assignment was to conduct a small research project of my own choice. I decided to investigate the teaching strategies used in Chinese immersion classrooms, which I thought might prepare me for dissertation research in the future. It took me some time to locate an acquaintance of mine to help me negotiate with the school administrators and gain entry into the school site. Fortunately,

the acquaintance, who had been the secretary to the Head of School, remained as a middle grade teacher in the school, and her recommendation rapidly helped me gain the trust and cooperation from the administrators. Soon, I made first contact with the primary grade director, and received approval to conduct a two-day observation in two 4th grade classrooms. The small research project enabled me to establish a good relationship with the participant teachers and the school administrators.

For this study, I decided to use the "known sponsor approach" (Patton, 2002, p. 312) again. I first wrote an e-mail to the primary grade director to elaborate my intention to do my dissertation research in the school this fall. Two weeks later, we had a meeting to discuss what my research would be and my method of data collection. As this study involved more teachers and more observation time, the director said he had to report to the principal.

As soon as he reported it to the Head of the School, my research study was approved without any objection. He said the principal welcomed the research and liked what my study intended to explore. Then he transferred my case to the Director of Program Development. The director contacted me one week later and set up a meeting to talk about the arrangement for my observation in the fall. She offered to recruit the teachers for me, which greatly eased my pressure of communicating with the teachers who I did not know well.

Four teachers agreed to participate in my research. They were 2nd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade and 8th grade teachers respectively. I did not know how the program director selected these teachers, but she told me these teachers were experienced and good teachers. Since my study was examining a model of successful Chinese teaching, these teachers might contribute skillful strategies to this research. I was satisfied with the

results of the recruitment, since they were close to my original plan, i.e., except the replacement of a 6th grade teacher with a 5th grade teacher. Following the requirement of IRBPH, I gave these teachers consent forms three weeks before the research began. The observation proceeded after the consent forms were collected.

Instrumentation

In classroom research, whether qualitative or quantitative, Chadron (1988) reiterated the essentiality of valid description and interpretation of classroom activities and the relationship among them. The research findings should be "meaningful, significant and applicable" (p. 23) enough for future studies. In other words, they should reflect the quality of generalizability of what the researchers interpret. Chadron stated that due to the complex nature of second language classroom activities, existing measurements were still disappointedly problematic and classroom researchers were still striving to validate their interpretation. I did not invent any earthshaking measures, but employed a traditional interaction analysis approach to study the Chinese immersion classrooms. Chaudron (1988) compared and contrasted a few observation instruments related to interaction analysis: Moskowitz's Flint instrument, Fanselow's FOCUS system, and Naiman et al.'s system.

I believed Fanselow's system (1977), Foci for Observing Communications Used in Settings (FOCUS), to be feasible for my study. The five characteristics suggested by the system thoroughly addressed the discourse of language teaching and learning. They were (a) Who communicates? It can be teacher, individual student, a group of students, or class. (b) What is the pedagogical purpose of the communication? It can be a move to structure, to solicit, to respond, or to react. (c) What mediums are used to communicate content? Three kinds of mediums are proposed. They are linguistic, non-linguistic, and

para-linguistic. (d) How are the mediums used to communicate areas of content? The mediums can be used to attend, to instruct, to present, to relate, to repeat, or to change. (e) What areas of content are communicated? They can be language systems, life experience, procedures, or subject matters (Fanselow, 1977, pp. 33-34).

In conjunction with the FOCUS scheme, I analyzed the factor of social reality in a language classroom proposed by Breen (1985) to understand the Chinese language teaching. Breen suggested researchers view the language classroom as a "coral garden" (p. 142) in order to explore the correlation between classroom participants' interpretation of classroom events, their behaviors, and the language teaching and learning. The metaphor of coral garden defines life in a language classroom as a two-dimensional experience: (a) "individual subjective" (p. 142) experience which derives from personal expectation, learning purpose and attitudes, and (b) "inter-subjective" (p. 142) experience which derives from collectively shared convictions by both teachers and students about how to behave, how to proceed activities and how to formulate a distinct learning environment for both participants.

I used this qualitative approach to understand the classroom experience. Unlike many classroom interaction and discourse researchers using empirical methods to collect data, I made use of the five elements of FOCUS and contextual factors as coding units to describe and interpret the formal and informal interaction in the classrooms. For validity purposes, I collected a variety of data through observation, interviews, and classroom documents to triangulate different sources.

As prolonged time was essential to the validation of findings from qualitative research (Breen, 1985; Creswell, 2003), I spent 2 months in the school to conduct the observations. I also invited participant teachers to comment on my interpretation of the

findings to assure fair explanation of their experience. Finally, I used an "external auditor" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196) to review my research and description. This auditor, a friend in the doctoral program of Organization and Leadership Department at USF, evaluated the overall procedures and interpretation from an outsider's viewpoint and offered new perspectives to refine my findings and interpretation.

Data Collection Procedures

The strategy of triangulation is frequently suggested to collect diverse resources in qualitative research to address similar aspects of classroom activities. Patton (2002) contends that the employment of a combination of data collection methods will "strengthen" (p. 247) a study. One single method is inadequate to explore the dynamic aspects of activities or problems occurring in a research setting. Thus, triangulation is an ideal strategy to accomplish qualitative research. In this study, I used a mix of data to achieve triangulation.

First, I observed all four classrooms. My observation was one and a half hours a week in each classroom for 8 weeks so the quantity of data was sufficient for analysis. When I observed, I took field notes and videotaped the class activities. The videotapes were extremely helpful to supplement my hand-written recording. Whenever I missed some activities or communications, I usually searched the videotape recordings to locate the missing portions. The data was thus more complete and accurate with the videotape recordings. Before I videotaped the classrooms, I assured the teachers about the confidentiality of the file and obtained their consent preceding to my observation.

I also wrote "descriptive notes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 189) about the actual occurrence in the classrooms and "reflective notes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 189) about my reactions and comments about particular events, activities, or participants as suggested by Creswell

(2003). After the observation for each week, I typed the written field notes on my computer in the same week. I tried to fill in as much description as possible while I still had fresh memory about what I observed and how I felt.

To follow up several observations, I had casual conversations with the teachers after classes so that the teachers could describe more about their instructional approaches, schedules, or their response to student behaviors in the classrooms. Whenever the teachers were free, they were more than willing to talk about their teaching strategies, beliefs and challenges. As they were busily occupied by enormous school work, they all suggested I interviewed them during lunch breaks. I arranged two formal interviews with each teacher. The length of each interview was approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

I combined an interview guide approach with a structured open-ended approach as suggested by Patton (2002) to carry out the interviews. A prepared list of interview questions ensured that topics were relevant and contained so that interviews could run smoothly. However, I had no intention of delivering the list to the teachers in advance, because I believed a natural response from the teachers reflected the genuity of their perceptions, beliefs, and interpretation.

The interviews were conducted in the Mandarin Chinese so as to capture the essence of the teachers' thoughts. In the process of the interview, I constantly asked unanticipated questions for further probing of interesting subjects that were not originally included in the inquiry, but from my observations. These teachers were all very eloquent in expressing their viewpoints and feelings towards their teaching and their students. Frequently I found the lunch time was too short to allow them for more deliverance.

The interviews were audiotaped with the teachers' consent. After each week's interviews, I transcribed the audio tapes and sketched down my reflective notes about the

teachers' attitude towards the interviews and their reaction to the interview questions.

Data Analysis

Following the data collection and transcription, I read through all the data first to determine what to incorporate in the final results. I included both positive and negative aspects of collected information to reflect the reality in these classrooms. Then I developed a list of "coding categories" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 161) to categorize the data on the basis of the Fanselow's system (1977) that assigned classroom interactive activities into various units for easy analysis and interpretation and Breen's (1985) "coral garden" (p. 142) metaphors that suggested some variables constituting a classroom culture. The findings subsequently divided into emergent distinctive themes that best captured the experience in the Chinese immersion classrooms.

In a case study, a rich description of the setting and individuals usually precedes the detailed analysis of the data which reflects emergent themes from coding categories (Creswell, 2003). I analyzed my data based on the instructional and learning activities in the four classrooms and uncovered similar patterns across the classrooms. I hoped that this case study will present holistic pictures about the Chinese language teachers, their teaching strategies, and interactive activities in the classrooms and offer an understanding of the occurrence and behaviors in the context of a Chinese immersion school.

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to data collection, I requested for human subjects approval to the Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Francisco and received approval on July 5, 2007. After the Director of Program Development of the Chinese immersion school was assigned to assist me in early May, 2007, I immediately explained the purpose of my research project and assured her of the confidentiality of the

information collected from the study. As the director volunteered to recruit the teachers for me, I told her the teachers should participate in this research study at their own will and they would be anonymous unless they gave their consent. The audio tapes were kept in a safe place for my personal access and use only. I would not transfer these files to school officials for the protection of the teachers' speech and behavior in the classrooms.

Background of the Researcher

Being a native Chinese in the U.S., I have always been concerned with my own children's cultural and language heritage. My involvement with Chinese language education began ten years ago when I sent my children to a weekend heritage Mandarin Chinese school for fear of the loss of their Chinese language proficiency. My first impression of the Chinese school was that the teacher assigned numerous pages of homework that were not helpful for language acquisition. My children were disinterested in attending the school, and their teachers constantly called me to pay more attention to my children's progress. Both my children and I were frustrated and disappointed with the school and the teachers. I saw many children dropping out of the school when they became adolescents.

After I volunteered to help with administrative work in the Chinese school, I began to discover that many teachers were novices and incompetent to teach the language. Although a small number of teachers used nontraditional strategies to increase students' interest, they were not professionally trained and were unaware of language teaching and learning theories. Being a volunteer administrator, I made frequent observation and evaluation of these teachers' classroom performance. I found that a majority of the teachers still employed traditional methods or sometimes poor strategies to teach the Chinese language. Disregarding the learning needs of their students, these teachers

matter-of-factly treated their students as native Chinese speakers without realizing they were teaching a heritage language to American-born Chinese children who speak mostly English, not Mandarin Chinese.

After I left the Chinese school, I took a Mandarin Chinese teaching job at Ohlone College in 2000. Four years later, I was offered a language teaching position in the Asian Studies Department of USF. When I was teaching in Ohlone College, I was simultaneously taking the nation's first certificate program for teaching Chinese as a heritage language. In the program, I learned pedagogies for second language instruction and developed awareness of how to be a good Chinese language teacher. But the actual practice and design of innovative and interesting strategies were harder than I thought because I met a different group of students every year. Because I had to continuously find new ways to meet their needs, the issue of teaching strategies has been circling in my mind ever since.

Besides teaching, I am a supervisor for Chinese language credential candidates in the Teacher Education Program at California State University, East Bay. My job is to observe each candidate four times per semester to evaluate and report their teaching practice, and to give suggestions regarding their performance. Disappointedly, these prospective Chinese language teachers from the Teacher Education Program still do not demonstrate sufficient competence in teaching Chinese. Thus, my long acknowledgement about the inadequacy of Chinese language teachers' teaching performance is my motivation to discover innovative and interesting strategies to benefit Chinese language teachers and their students.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

In this chapter, I first present profiles of the immersion school and the four participant teachers and their classrooms. Next I organize the results for instructional strategies and classroom interaction in accordance with the five research questions. I describe the corresponding findings for individual research question, in which four classrooms are grouped into four subunits. Finally I discuss similarities and differences in the teaching practices of the four teachers.

Profile of the Chinese Immersion School

A thorough introduction of the school will help acknowledge the macro-contextual factor that motivated these teachers to use non-traditional strategies in their classrooms. A pioneer of Chinese immersion program in the U.S., the private Chinese immersion school was earnestly dedicated to promote students' bilingualism and biculturalism as well as academic excellence. They were supportive of their Chinese language teachers and attentive to their students' successful language learning.

The participant teachers unanimously informed me during my interviews that to increase new Chinese language teachers' awareness of American culture and American students, the school required them to serve as teaching assistants in different classrooms for more than a year before teaching formally. The newsletters I collected from the school additionally revealed that the school sponsored various workshops for further teaching improvement and arranged regular teacher exchange programs between their own teachers and other teachers from Chinese-speaking areas.

Aiming to achieve Chinese oral proficiency among students, the school sponsored read-aloud and speech events as two major annual school events and supported the

performance of Chinese dramas by upper grade students. They also offered summer educational trips and exchange student programs to reinforce Chinese language learning and cultural awareness.

Inside the school, public hallways were decorated with posters written in both English and Chinese. The teachers were allowed to decorate the walls in front of the Chinese language classrooms with their students' Chinese writings. During the two months of observation, I found the decorations were regularly replaced by the students' newest productions. Inside the classrooms, the school sufficiently provided the teachers with a variety of equipments and resources such as projectors, televisions, DVD players, Chinese language novels, videos, and audios. Undoubtedly the school was very supportive of the Chinese language teachers' instruction and the students' language learning.

<div align="center">Profiles of Participant Teachers and Classrooms</div>

As Mandarin Chinese teachers and their immersion classrooms are the focus of my study, profiles of these teachers and the classroom contexts provide a thorough background to understand their teaching methods and interactions with students. As pseudonyms to protect their identities while distinguishing among them, I used four consecutive English letters before the Chinese respectful term for teachers, "Laoshi". A Laoshi is for the 2nd grade teacher, B Laoshi is for the 4th grade teacher, C Laoshi is for the 5th grade teacher, and D Laoshi is for the 8th grade teacher.

A Laoshi, the 2nd grade teacher, was a kindergarten teacher in Taiwan for 5 years before coming to the U.S. After entering this immersion school, she worked as a teaching assistant for 2 years before she became a teacher. She had been teaching in this school for almost 20 years. She preferred to teach younger students and was experienced in teaching

this level of students. For example, she had taught pre-kindergarten classes, kindergarten classes, 1st grade and 2nd grade classes. At the time of the study, she was teaching two 2nd grade classes: one came to her classroom in the morning, the other in the afternoon. I observed the afternoon class, which has a total of 18 students: 7 boys and 11 girls. She taught Chinese Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The medium of instruction for all these subject courses was Mandarin Chinese.

A Laoshi believed that using only one language, Mandarin Chinese, to teach and to communicate with her students is of primary importance in an immersion classroom. For students to learn effectively, she utilized a variety of strategies to make her input comprehensible. She always took into consideration her students' needs and responses when she plans each lesson. She also believed that a good teacher-student relationship will develop students' interest and motivation to study Chinese. "You have to let them feel that you are safe and trustworthy so they will come to you to ask questions. And they will develop interest. Sometimes, when you are stricter and demand them to do something, they won't be frightened and unwilling to do it."

B Laoshi, the 4th grade teacher, came from Southern China, where she taught 1st to 3rd grade classes Language Arts and Math for 4 years before emigrating to the U.S. She had been in this school for 7 years. For the first and a half year, she, like A Laoshi, was a teaching assistant. Since then, she had taught 2nd grade and 4th grade classes. This year she was teaching two 4th grade classes: one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. I observed her morning class with a total of 17 students: 7 boys and 10 girls. She was responsible for subject courses like Mandarin Chinese Language Arts, Social Study and Math.

Her philosophy of instruction was to develop students' autonomy in studying the

Chinese language. She assigned students to different study groups, which were responsible for discussion and reading comprehension. She believed that through collaborative learning, students became motivated and stimulated to learn the second language. Students' language production was essential to their language proficiency. She was flexible to arrange different class times for different subjects to accommodate students' needs, mood, and energy. "Students are the center of your teaching. Know their learning style and choose appropriate ways to teach them." For her, the best strategy was the strategy of flexibility to meet the different needs of her students in each school year. In her classroom, the Chinese language was the only language for instruction and communication.

C Laoshi, the young 5th grade teacher, came from Taiwan. She told me she had never had any teaching experience before she found a job in the after school program in this school 5 years ago. A year later, she became a teaching assistant as well as an administrative assistant. Due to a teacher's family emergency, she was recruited to substitute for that teacher and taught an 8th grade class in her third year. As she preferred to teach a lower grade, she was assigned to 3rd grade the following year and then 5th grade for this year. She said, "I was trained to become a teacher in this school." She was grateful that being a teaching assistant facilitated her transforming into a Chinese language teacher. Like the other two teachers, she had two 5th grade classes coming to her classroom. I observed the morning class with a total of 20 students: 7 boys and 13 girls. C Laoshi taught Mandarin Chinese Language Arts, Math, Social Study, and Health using Mandarin Chinese as the only medium of instruction.

C Laoshi put a lot of effort in choosing appropriate teaching materials and designing classroom activities that were both learning reinforcement and interest stimulation. "I

have to think assiduously that my purpose is to teach something to my students, how I can change my instruction into some kind of activity or game so they can learn from the activity, rather than just sit there and listen." Not only did she enforce speaking Chinese in her classroom, but also she encouraged her students to speak Chinese outside of the classroom. A variety of strategies were used to achieve students' language comprehension and production under the principle of single language use in an immersion classroom. She was a passionate teacher who was constantly seeking innovative strategies to stimulate her students' interest in studying Chinese. "Make your students become interested in learning Chinese, make them become proficient in speaking, and make them fall in love with Chinese language are possible, not impossible, goals to reach".

D Laoshi, the 8th grade teacher, was the most experienced of the four teachers. She taught elementary school and high school in Taiwan for 18 years before she emigrated to the U.S. She was recruited by the former principal of this immersion school and has been here for 11 years. For the first 4 years, she taught lower grade classes; then she was transferred to upper grade classes and stayed there since. She has taught 6th grade, 7th grade and 8th grades Mandarin Chinese Language Arts and Social Studies. This year, she taught two 8th grade classes. As 8th graders focus more on their high school entrance and attend more English classes, they take only 2 periods of Chinese classes each day. I observed the afternoon Chinese Social Study class with a total of 16 students: 10 boys and 6 girls.

To improve and update her skills, D Laoshi frequently attended conferences and workshops about teaching skills. She insisted that learning is a never ending task for her. In addition she prepared incessantly a variety of teaching materials to effectuate her instruction every school year. Dealing with a group of young and restless 8th graders, she

was skillful in managing her class. Her students were comfortable with her. Her sense of humor and amiability undoubtedly contributed to the successful relationship with her students.

As more advanced and difficult words were used in the Social Studies materials, D Laoshi adopted various strategies to ensure students' comprehension without resorting to translation. She believed that different approaches should be adopted for different teaching goals. To maximize language production, she stressed critical thinking and recurring oral practice related to complicated topics. Therefore she provided students with many opportunities to generate their own language. She was never shy to praise her students and was confident that her students had great potentiality to become proficient in Mandarin Chinese.

After so many years of teaching, D Laoshi remained enthusiastic and passionate about her job. She said, "(At the end of everyday) when I lie in bed, I would think what I should prepare for tomorrow, then when something is missing, I would get off the bed to look for it. I keep thinking what kinds of innovation I can offer to them. Teachers are like artists, really."

Profiles of Participant Teachers

	A Lao Shi 2nd grade teacher	B Lao Shi 4th grade teacher	C Lao Shi 5th grade teacher	D Lao Shi 8th grade teacher
Places of origin	Taiwan	China	Taiwan	Taiwan
Previous teaching experience	Kindergarten teacher – 5 years	Elementary school teacher – 4 years	None	Elementary and high school teacher – 18 years
Experience in the immersion school	Teaching assistant— 2 years Pre-kindergarten to 2nd grade teacher – 20 years	Teaching assistant – 1 and 1/2 years 2nd and 4th grade teacher –7 years	After school teacher—1 year Teaching assistant– 1 year 8th, 3rd, 5th grade teacher – 3 years	Lower grade teacher – 4 years Upper grade teacher – 7 years
Subjects	Mandarin Chinese, Math, Social Study, Science	Mandarin Chinese, Social Study, Math, Health	Mandarin Chinese, Social Study, Health	Mandarin Chinese, Chinese Social Study
Medium of instruction	Mandarin Chinese	Mandarin Chinese	Mandarin Chinese	Mandarin Chinese

	A Lao Shi 2nd grade teacher	B Lao Shi 4th grade teacher	C Lao Shi 5th grade teacher	D Lao Shi 8th grade teacher
Teaching philosophy and practice	Student-centered instruction	Student-centered instruction	Student-centered instruction	Student-centered instruction
	Frequent classroom interactions	Frequent classroom interactions	Frequent classroom interactions	Frequent classroom interactions
	Flexibility to change lesson plan	Flexibility to change lesson plan	Flexibility to change materials	Flexibility to change materials
	Affectionate T/S relationship	Frequent use of collaborative learning	Frequent use of collaborative learning	Frequent use of collaborative learning
		Stress of learning autonomy	Stress of meaningful activities to stimulate interest to learn Chinese	Stimulation of Critical thinking Encouragement of critical opinions

Though all four teachers came from Taiwan and China, their instruction and interaction with their students in the immersion classrooms demonstrate non-traditional teaching practices that could inspire other Chinese language teachers. Thus I was eager to analyze the data collected from their classrooms. Every week, after observations, I typed the field notes, comments, and supplementary data from video taping in my file while my memory was still fresh.

Aiming to search for repeated patterns of instruction and interaction, I coded each exchange between teacher and students or among peers. I read repeatedly my transcription from interviews with the teachers and the data from classroom observation so I was able to discover recurring patterns of teaching strategies and classroom interaction. The results are presented under each research question.

Research Findings

(1)Teaching Strategies

1. What teaching strategies are used in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

The question intends to explore the hypothesis of Krashen's (1983) "comprehensible input" reflected in the Chinese immersion classrooms. What strategies do the teachers use to facilitate students' comprehension if the only language used in formal instruction is the students' second language?

A: Teaching Strategies by A Laoshi

1) body language/visual aides.

When A Laoshi was teaching new phrases, she sometimes used body languages, such as gestures, body movements, or facial expressions, to express the meanings and elicited students to describe her body movement for comprehension check.

Teacher: 瞧瞧是什麼?

What is 瞧瞧?

(*She circled her fingers, put them in front of her eyes and watched across the classroom.*)

Teacher: 往外瞧是什麼?

What is 往外瞧?

(*She walked to the window and watched outside.*)

Teacher: 請什麼?

Please what?

(*She pretended to put food into her mouth.*)

Students: 請吃。

Please eat.

Teacher: 坐好是什麼?

What is 坐好?

Students: 坐好是

坐好 is

(*They are sitting straight to show the meaning of the phrase.*)

Frequently she used techniques of writing and drawing while teaching Chinese characters and Math problems. To show the sequence of strokes in each character, she used different colors for students to follow her writing. When she taught math, she would speak and write the numbers and equals on board. She said, "五加三等於八" and wrote 5 + 3 = 8. She told me that for the math problems, the students do not need to recognize all the words used in the problems. As long as they know some key words, they can solve the problems. " They have to have clear concepts and understand critical words, such as: 一共有多少啊 (How much/many in total?) 幾倍啊 (multiples). Like 你有三張磁碟片 (You have three CDs) 磁碟片 (CD) is not important; 她是你的五倍 (She has 5 multiples of your CDs), 五倍(5 multiples) is important."

2) language modification.

A Laoshi modified many expressions to increase student understanding. She rarely

used English to translate Chinese phrases, unless these were really difficult to explain or

students were still confused after repeated attempts of clarification. For her, modification

is a kind of paraphrase to clarify meanings, but not necessarily simplification of

expression. She believes modification expands students' vocabulary capacity in

synonyms. Therefore she expects her students to know how to use these synonyms when

learning new vocabulary.

> Teacher: 相差是不一樣。
> xiāng chā shì bú yí yàng
> Discrepancy means difference.
> Teacher: 從前是以前。
> cóng qián shì yǐ qián
> Before means in the past.
> Teacher: 散步是什麼?
> sàn bù shì shé mo
> What is 散步?
> sàn bù
> Students: 散步是出去走走。
> sàn bù shì chū qù zǒu zǒu
> 散步 is to stroll outside.
> sàn bù
> Teacher: 分散是本來是合在一起的,他們全部跑掉了,叫分散。
> fēn sàn shì běn lái shì hé zài yì qǐ de tā men quán bù pǎo diāo le jiào fēn sàn
> Scatter means they were together originally, then they all ran
> away.

3) contextual clues.

When it was hard to use paraphrasing to explain abstract words, A Laoshi would

utilize contextual implication to represent the meaning.

> Teacher: 感謝呢是非常謝謝,像我要感謝大樹,因為呢大樹
> gǎn xiè nē shì fēi cháng xiè xiē xiàng wǒ yào gǎn xiè dà shù yīn wèi nē dà shù
> 它可以做成紙啊。我很熱的時候啊,我可以躲在
> tā kě yǐ zuò chéng zhǐ ā wǒ hěn rè de shí hòu ā wǒ kě yǐ duǒ zài
> 它可以做成紙啊。我很熱的時候啊,我可以躲在
> tā kě yǐ zuò chéng zhǐ ā wǒ hěn rè de shí hòu ā wǒ kě yǐ duǒ zài

樹的下面涼快一點啊。
shù de xià miàn liáng kuài yì diàn â

Appreciation is deep thanks, like I want to appreciate big trees, because papers are made from them. When I am hot, I can hide under the trees and feel cool a little bit.

Teacher: 我很小的時候，我們家有一隻狗，那隻狗是我的寵物，
wǒ hěn xiǎo de shí hòu wǒ men jiā yǒu yì zhī gǒu nà zhī gǒu shì wǒ de chǒng wù
那我就是那隻狗的主人。JB 家養了很多馬鈴薯的蟲，
nà wǒ jiù shì nà zhī gǒu de zhǔ rén jiā yǎng le hěn duō mǎ líng shǔ de chóng
那他就是那些蟲子的什麼？
nà tā jiù shì nà xiē chóng zi de shé mo

When I was little, we had a dog. That dog was my pet, so I was the owner of the dog. JB raises a lot of potato bugs, so he is these bugs'…?

Class: 主人
zhǔ rén

Owner

4) connection to students' lives.

As A Laoshi stresses the importance of student-centered instruction, she frequently makes inferences related to students' lives or experience. The strategy is helpful in facilitate comprehension. For example, when she was teaching the equation of 25 + 42 to a confused student, she said, "你有二十五顆糖，媽媽又給你四十二顆糖，你現在有多
nǐ yǒu èr shí wǔ kē táng mā mā yòu gěi nǐ sì shí èr kē táng nǐ xiàn zài yǒu duō
少顆糖？這個要加呀?減呀?乘呀?" (You have 25 candies, mommy gave you another 42
shǎo kē táng zhè ge yào jiā ya jiǎn ya chéng ya
candies, how many candies do you have now? Do you add, subtract, or multiply?) The students understood the equation immediately. When she was teaching students how to write an invitation letter, she extended the language learning to students' experience.

Teacher: 親愛的 xx :請你來我家玩 她來我們家可以玩什麼？
qīn ài de qǐng nǐ lái wǒ jiā wán tā lái wǒ men jiā kě yǐ wán shé mo
Dear xx: Please come to my house and play. What can she play in my home?

S1: 看電視
kàn diàn shì
Watch TV.

S2: 打電動
dǎ diàn dòng
Play video game.

S3:　　　游泳
　　　　　　yóu　yǒng
　　　　Swim.

This made the discussion of letter writing an interesting activity to participate. Students were eager to tell the class how they were going to treat their friends in their homes.

5) repetition makes perfect.

For her young students, A Laoshi preferred to use repetition to reinforce their learning. When students were reading aloud new phrases and corresponding synonyms, she preferred them to read the individual phrase for several times.

Teacher:　清晨清晨是什麼?
　　　　　qīng chén qīng chén shì shé mo
　　　　　What is dawn, dawn?
Class:　　清晨清晨是很早很早的早上。
　　　　　qīng chén qīng chén shì hěn zǎo hěn zǎo de zǎo shàng
　　　　　Dawn, dawn is very very early morning.
Teacher:　清晨清晨是什麼?
　　　　　qīng chén qīng chén shì shé mo
　　　　　What is dawn, dawn?
Class:　　清晨清晨是很早很早的早上。
　　　　　qīng chén qīng chén shì hěn zǎo hěn zǎo de zǎo shàng
　　　　　Dawn, dawn is very very early morning.

After reading, they had to take turns to go to the teacher or teaching assistant for informal assessment.

When she was writing the strokes of different Chinese characters on the white board, students were fluently voicing the names of each stroke, 橫豎撇捺. I was surprised that
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　héng shù piě nà
they knew these difficult terms so well. A Laoshi told me whenever she demonstrated character writing, she had the students say the appropriate term for her and used their fingers to write in the air the same characters written on the board. Through numerous practices, they were good at the terms and writing. After the demonstration, students

usually exercised the character writing on their vocabulary workbook for learning reinforcement.

A Laoshi's approach applied to math instruction as well. Whenever she introduced new concepts like double digit addition, she would repeat her method of problem solving and subsequently ask students to exercise with a few relevant math problems for further practice.

B: Teaching Strategies by B Laoshi

    1) visual aides.

B Laoshi seldom adopts body language or pictures for students to attain comprehension. Instead she writes and draws frequently on the board for clearer messages. In Chinese language arts class, she would write some key Chinese characters or important idioms from lessons she was teaching and then discuss them with the class. In Social Studies, she drew bubbles and wrote ideas inside different bubbles to demonstrate what information students should include in their Little Guide project. It was a project that each student played the role of little tourist guide who should be knowledgeable about a tourist attraction's location, exterior and interior structures, its current and historical functions, and its historical facts.

She utilized this strategy in the math class to a greater extent. She frequently wrote math expressions on board, such as 36 x 72=?, and invited students to create word problems based on the expression. When she was teaching periphery of triangles, she drew the shape of a triangle and introduced the names of the side of a triangle as 邊 or its periphery 周長. It facilitates comprehension and problem solving without confusion. She wrote 5/8 on board and asked students to identify the fraction as a 真分數(proper

fraction), in which 5 is called 分子(numerator), and 8 分母 (denominator), whereas 8/5

is a 假分數(improper fraction).

2) real objects.

To effectively demonstrate Chinese expressions related to computer components, B Laoshi invited students to her computer desk at a corner of the classroom and asked them to identify different parts of the computer, and then introduced a Chinese computer game 接龍遊戲(connecting dragon) to them. The activity successfully stimulated students' interest in a new lesson "我愛電腦 I Love Computer." At the time of learning "青馬大橋", a lesson about a magnificent bridge in Hong Kong, she played a short film introducing the bridge to the students.

In order to show the expressions like 二等份 (two equal parts), 四等份(four equal parts), and 八等份 (eight equal parts), she asked students to fold a piece of paper into two equal parts as 二等份(two equal parts), folded it again in the center and made 四等份 (four equal parts), then folded it the third time in the center and made 八等份(eight equal parts). Students grasped the concepts and attained the Chinese expressions simultaneously.

3) language modification.

To make her input comprehensible, B Laoshi said she was inclined to use a simpler expression to explain new vocabulary or concepts. By "simpler", she meant an expression the students had learned previously, not one with elementary words. "I am very cautious about choosing what words to use in my speech," she explained.

T: 著名就是…
  zhe ming jiu shi
  Famous is..

S: 很多人知道
  hěn duō rén zhī dào
  Many people know it.

T: 也就是很有名
  yě jiù shì hěn yǒu míng
  It also is best known.
****

T: 被子是你睡覺的時候蓋在你身上的，美國也有被子。
  bèi zi shì nǐ shuì juè de shí hòu gài zài nǐ shēn shàng de   měi guó yě yǒu bèi zi
  Comforter is when you are sleeping, the thing that covers you on top.
****

T: 優點就是它好的地方，缺點就是它不好的地方。
  yōu diǎn jiù shì tā hǎo de dì fāng   quē diǎn jiù shì tā bù hǎo de dì fāng

Merit is something that is good, flaw is something that is not good.

Like A Laoshi, she regarded language modification as an alternative expression, not word simplification. For instance, she suggested her students replace "很" (very) with
  hěn

various synonyms "十分" "極了" "非常" so as to expand their vocabulary capacity.
  shí fēn   jí le   fēi cháng

4) contextual clues.

Sometimes, the teacher narrated a simulated situation to interpret some phrases. The context-based interpretation facilitated student comprehension of the expression. For instance, she wanted to explain 足夠 (enough), she utilized the following strategy
  zú gòu

effectively.

T: 如果我要買這瓶水，(*She picked up a bottle on a table.*)一瓶水多少錢?
  rú guǒ wǒ yào mǎi zhè píng shuǐ   yì píng shuǐ duō shǎo qián
  If I want to buy this bottle of water, how much is this bottle of water?

S: 三美元。
  sān měi yuán
  US$3.00.

T: 如果三美元一瓶，如果我有兩元八毛的話，請問夠不夠
  rú guǒ sān měi yuán yì píng   rú guǒ wǒ yǒu liǎng yuán bā máo de huà   qǐng wèn gòu bù gòu
  Suppose it is US$3.00 per bottle, if I have 2.80, is it enough?

S: 不夠
    bū gōu

    Not enough.

T: 如果我有三元一分的話，我的錢就怎樣
    rū guô wô yôu sān yuán yī fēn de huà   wô de qián jiù zēn yàng

    If I have US$3.01, my money is…

S: 足夠
    zú gōu

    Enough.

5) connection to students' lives.

This strategy of connecting to students' lives was frequently used in discussing the themes for different lessons. As the author of the article "I Love Computer" described his computer as a 好幫手(good helper), the teacher extended the inference to students'
    hăo băng shôu

personal experience.

> T: 誰是爸爸媽媽的好幫手，他們要你做什麼事?
>   shĕi shi bā bā mā mā de hăo băng shôu   tā men yào nī zuô shĕ mo shi
>
> Who is parents' good helper, what do they want you to help?
> (*Many students raised their hands.*)
>
> S1: 丟垃圾。
>   diū lē sē
>
> Throw away garbage.
>
> S2: 我會幫他們拿報紙。
>   wô hui băng tā men nă bāo zhi
>
> I will help them pick up newspapers.
>
> S3: 我會幫他們洗盤子。
>   wô hui băng tā men xi pān zi
>
> I will help them wash dishes.

When discussing the theme of "慧娟怎樣長大 (How did 慧娟 become a grown
    hui juān zēn yàng chāng dà   hui juān

person)?", B Laoshi again invited students to describe their thoughts about growing up and to compare their thoughts with the main character in the lesson. Students actively participated in the discussion.

> T: 是不是穿上大人的衣服就會長大了呢?
>   shi bū shi chuān shàng dà rén de yī fú jiù hui chāng dà le nĕ
>
> Are you a grown person when you put on adult clothing?

Ss: 不是
bù shì

No.

T: 那怎樣才算長大呢?
nà zěn yàng cái suàn cháng dà nē

What does it mean to be a grown person?

S1: 整理房間
zhěng lǐ fáng jiān

Tidying up your room.

S2: 洗菜
xǐ cài

Washing vegetables.

S3: 禮貌
lǐ mào

Having good manner.

S4: 收拾家裡
shōu shi jiā lǐ

Cleaning up house.

S5: 認真學
rèn zhēn xué

Studying diligently.

6) *repetitive comprehension check.*

B Laoshi frequently checked comprehension if she found students were unclear about certain expressions. Sometimes she made an overt repetition in attempting to reinforce students' language attainment.

T: California 怎麼說?
zěn mo shuō

How do you say California?

S: 我知道舊金山。
wǒ zhī dào jiù jīn shān

I know how to say San Francisco.

T: 我們住在加州。我們住在哪個州?
wǒ men zhù zài jiā zhōu wǒ men zhù zài nǎ ge zhōu

We live in California. Which state do we live in?

S: 加州
jiā zhōu

She subsequently asked the same question three times, then moved on. At the end of the class period, she asked again,

T: California 怎麼說?
             _{zěn mo shuō}

    How do you say California?

Class: 加州
      _{jiā zhōu}

T: 我們住在什麼州?
   _{wǒ men zhù zāi shě mo zhōu}

    Which state do we live in?

Class: 加州
      _{jiā zhōu}

After a peer reading activity, the teacher chose some phrases to check students' understanding of what they had read with their partners.

T: 在母親節前夕,前夕是…,前夕是….?
   _{zāi mǔ qīn jiē qián xi qián xi shi qián xi shi}

    In the eve of Mother's Day, "eve" is…, "eve is"….?

S1: 是像晚上
    _{shi xiàng wǎn shàng}

    Like an evening

S2: 以前的晚上
    _{yǐ qián de wǎn shàng}

    The evening before

T: 以前的晚上,噢,是前一天的晚上
   _{yǐ qián de wǎn shàng ōu shi qián yǐ tiān de wǎn shàng}

    The evening before, oh, last night

S2: 前一天的晚上
    _{qián yǐ tiān de wǎn shàng}

    Last night

Afterwards she took out a pile of flash cards with the same phrases written on them and checked if they recognized those words and their usage. When she showed the aforementioned phrase, she said,

T: 前夕是什麼意思?我忘了,誰可以告訴我,前夕是什麼意思?
   _{qián xi shi shé mo yi si wǒ wàng le shéi kě yi gào sù wǒ qián xi shi shé mo yi si}

    What is "eve"? I forgot. Who can tell me what it means?

S2: 前一天晚上
    _{qián yi tiān wǎn shàng}

    Last night

7)   *autonomous learning.*

B Laoshi constantly stressed the essentiality of autonomous learning. She believed

that students should be responsible for their own learning. Teacher is their helper, not the dictator of their study. Thus the students were responsible for checking up new vocabulary, acknowledging their meanings and usage, and helping other classmates in their groups. She assigned students to work together and cooperate with each other to discover the themes for different lessons. Only when they were confused or unable to find answers to their questions were they allowed to approach the teacher with questions.

Thus she arranged many small group activities around her instruction. The major tasks of small group activities were to read content together, check group members' comprehension of new vocabulary, write their own story with the vocabulary, or simply make sentences with new phrases. Sometimes she asked them to discuss relevant topics before she introduced a new lesson to stimulate students' interest.

Whenever the teacher checked their comprehension after the activity, if one or two students could not answer her questions, she would dispatch them to their own groups for further discussion. The small group activities were extensively used in her class. Her instruction concentrated on checking comprehension of content knowledge or the meanings of new phrases. She reiterated, "The first thing you need to let students understand is they have to learn by themselves, to learn autonomously. We have to help them develop their ability to do it. This is extremely important." This philosophy was truly reflected in her instruction.

C: Teaching Strategies by C Laoshi

1) body language/visual aides.

C Laoshi communicated with a variety of body movements. She used hand gestures, facial expressions, even tones to dramatize her message. Once she just asked students to look at her face and guess what she was thinking. She stood in front of the white board

with two hands on her waist, staring at the whole class, smiling but saying nothing. The

motionlessness stimulated students' interest in guessing what she was doing.

> S1: 你在想要我們看著你。
> ni zài xiǎng yào wǒ men kàn zhe ni
> You are thinking we should watch you.
> T:　不對。
> bù duì
> Wrong.
> S2: 我是最好的。
> wǒ shì zuì hǎo de
> I am the best.
> T:　不對。我要怎麼樣讓你知道我在想什麼？
> bù duì　wǒ yào zěn mo yàng ràng ni zhī dào wǒ zài xiǎng shě mo
> Wrong. What should I do to make you understand my thoughts?
> Ss: 說出來。
> shuō chū lái
> Speak out.

Her purpose was to encourage students to express their thoughts. The message, "Nobody

is able to recognize your thoughts if you don't communicate", was clearly delivered.

When she was narrating a story about an old king searching for a virtuous person as

the heir to his throne, her voice changed into an old man's low and coarse voice. She

coughed, bent her back, walked slowly, and continued to narrate the story. It was vividly

told.

C Laoshi made frequent use of visual aides to effectuate her instruction. To compare

the styles and surroundings of two buildings, she used power point to demonstrate the

images of the two buildings, which clearly reflected the theme of the lesson about the two

buildings. To teach students a Chinese song, she hung two big posters written with the

lyrics to allow for class concentration on reading and singing the song. She encouraged

her students to use visual aides and a small white board for group presentations as well.

At the time of presentation, they demonstrated their drawing and writing describing to the

class the results of group work.

To explain math concepts, she wrote terms and numbers on board for clarification. When she explained the concept of 三的公倍數 (least common multiple of 3) with two

sān de gōng bèi shù

numbers 18 and 24, she first wrote the numbers on the board. Then she listed 18, 36, 54, 72 for the group of 18; 24, 48, 72 for the group of 24. Thus the first common multiple she found was 72. She circled the number 72 and clearly revealed the procedure of problem solving.

When she was teaching sentence expansion, she wrote the shortest sentence first. For the second sentence, she added the first adjective students proposed and expanded a little more. For the third sentence, students proposed an addition of the second adjectives to expand further. Step by step she accumulated five or six sentences that looked like a shape of a triangle modeling accurate language forms on board for students to duplicate and follow.

2) language modification.

Like the two other teachers, C Laoshi used language modification to communicate the meanings of difficult words. She admitted that modifying language was not easy work to do. She sometimes struggled with finding appropriate expressions. "When I tried to explain some words, I found I frequently ended up using advance and incomprehensible words that were not level-appropriate to my students," "Sometimes I just could not think of anything." Still she insisted on using Chinese language to communicate and sometimes invited students' input.

T: 你知道什麼是長處?
nǐ zhī dào shē mo shì cháng chù
   Do you know what strong point means?
S: 就是說他做很好的東西。
jiù shì shuō tā zuò hěn hǎo de dōng xi
   It means he can do some good stuff.

T: 很好的東西，長處也就是優點，很好的東西。
　　hěn hǎo de dōng xi　cháng chù yě jiù shì yōu diǎn　hěn hǎo de dōng xi

Good stuff. Strong point means merits, good stuff.

***

T: 巧妙的擴句就是我們在造一個句子的時候，怎樣讓它越來越長，越來
　　qiǎo miào de kuò jù jiù shì wǒ men zài zào yí ge jù zi de shí hòu　zěn yàng ràng tā yuè lái yuè cháng　yuè lái

越特別。
yuè tè bié

A clever expanded sentence means when we are making a sentence, how we can make it longer and more special.

3)　contextual clues.

To clarify her explanation, she sometimes described certain situations for easier comprehension. For example, once when she tried to ask students to perform a type of reading, the students were confused. She rephrased her description and included a contextual situation.

T: 你先唸一段，我再唸一段，但是你就一直照著三段唸然後你唸完
　　nǐ xiān niàn yí duàn　wǒ zài niàn yí duàn　dàn shì nǐ jiù yì zhí zhào zhe sān duàn niàn rán hòu nǐ niàn wán

一段我再唸。
yí duàn wǒ zài niàn

You read one paragraph first, then I begin the paragraph. But you continue reading three paragraphs. I will follow you after you finish each paragraph.

Ss: 噢，我們知道。(Oh, we get it.)
　　ōu　wǒ men zhī dào

T: 這叫輪 (This is called alternation)。
　　zhè jiào lún

Ss: 輪，輪。
　　lún　lún

***

T: 如果你是這個國王變老了，你會希望找一個什麼樣的人?
　　rú guǒ nǐ shì zhè ge guó wáng biàn lǎo le　nǐ huì xī wàng zhǎo yí ge shé mo yàng de rén

你要找一個有什麼條件的人?他要長得很高?他要長得很帥?
nǐ yào zhǎo yí ge yǒu shé mo tiáo jiàn de rén　tā yào cháng dé hěn gāo　tā yào cháng dé hěn shuài

還是他要很聰明?還是他要會音樂?
hái shi tā yào hěn cōng míng　hái shi tā yào huì yīn lè

If you were this old king, what kind of heir is you wish for? What kind of attributes you are looking for? Should he be tall? Should he be handsome? Or should he be intelligent? Or should he be able to play music?

4) connection to students' lives.

The teacher used this strategy extensively. Much of her instruction was extended to students' experience. A big project she did with her students was a complete student-fronted lesson. Students discussed what they liked to learn and agreed to choose a topic, "Kickball," for their new lesson. The teacher helped them make a list of vocabulary words that they did not know how to say or use in the situation. For the next few weeks, they learned the new vocabulary and practiced using new phrases in simulated situations. Finally the teacher took them to the school's play field to play kickball and use Chinese to communicate. It was a long and exciting project in which the students eagerly participated.

To teach attributes of a person, she asked students to share their experience of being honest or dishonest in their lives. Students actively participated and talked about cheating, returning things not belonging to them, telling lies or making confession of wrong doing. The communication was meaningful, allowing for effective language learning.

5) comprehension check.

C Laoshi seldom did word or sentence comprehension check. Students' frequent presentation or performance was a method to confirm their comprehension. The presentations covered a variety of content: word information, such as strokes, radicals, usage or sentence making; interpretation of content knowledge; summary of paragraphs from content; poems following the format introduced in textbook. They demonstrated what students learned from formal instruction and the extent of their comprehension.

6) autonomous learning.

To promote students' interest in Mandarin Chinese, C Laoshi designed and arranged numerous activities in class. Several times when I observed (even in math class), students

were engaged in small group discussion. The teacher was there to check and give suggestions to different groups. A variety of activities were designed to precede formal instruction and to stimulate students' interest in the new content. Post lesson activities were for learning reinforcement, such as creating their own poems or interpreting content from different groups' viewpoints.

The teacher emphasizes autonomous learning as well, but implemented this differently than did B Laoshi. She utilized activities to engage students to produce their creative works demonstrating their comprehension of content knowledge, whereas B Laoshi engaged students to repeatedly read and check comprehension of words and phrases from content in their own group.

D: Teaching Strategies by D Laoshi

1) *body language/visual aides.*

As more abstract words appeared in upper grade's learning materials, D Laoshi said she seldom used body language or pictures to communicate meanings of new words. She said she would rather elaborate the meanings through contextual clues or situations. But she would not object to using this if it is necessary. She said, "my students sometimes like to watch me acting…I had to become an actor sometimes."

D Laoshi was a dramatic teacher. When she utilized body language, she effectively delivered her message. For example, when she tried to explain 賬單 (a bill), she stood in front of a student sitting in the first row and pretended she was a waitress,

> "Xx 先生，你吃得還好吧，吃飽了沒有？還有沒要什麼東西呀?都很滿意， 好，來，那麼，我就把一張賬單交給了他。"
> (*handing him a piece of paper*)

Mr. Xx, how's your meal, are you satisfactorily full? Anything more you want? Very satisfied! Good, Now, I give a bill to him.

When she was explaining 老天保佑(Heaven bless me), she looked up, held her palms together like praying and pleaded sincerely: "老天保佑噢！拜託噢！" (Heaven bless me! Oh, please!)

She sometimes utilized power point to communicate complicated topics, like the reasons why people emigrate to other countries. But the most frequently used visual aide was writing on the board. She wrote for several purposes: a) to clarify her guidance, b) to demonstrate new vocabulary, and c) to compare characters or literature. Examples are described below.

a) She wrote to clarify her guidance. For students' research reports about immigration, she listed these questions on the board as guidelines: (1) 為什麼要移民 (Why people emigrate?) (2) 移民時遇到的困難 (What kind of difficulties they encounter?) (3) 怎麼解決 (How do they solve their problems?) (4) 成功的例子 (Successful cases).

b) She wrote to demonstrate difficult new vocabulary, such as new words or idioms like 竭盡(make every effort), 技能 (skills), 小不忍則亂大謀 (A lack of patience in small matters upsets great schemes).

c) She wrote to compare character components, such as 賺 and 賠 to demonstrate identical radical indicating money issue; 帳 and 賬 to demonstrate character variation, but not meanings.

d) She wrote to compare two stories like "Romeo and Juliet" and "梁山伯與祝英
liáng shān bó yǔ zhù yīng

台" (The Butterfly Lovers, a famous Chinese love story) in different aspects,
tái

such as historical background, reasons of conflicts, and endings.

 2) *language modification.*

Language modification is a method for easy access to language comprehension. D

Laoshi was no exception in employing the method to make her input comprehensible.

She sometimes engaged her students to generate their input.

T: 你看不起人家，對人家有不平等待遇，這就是歧視。
nǐ kàn bù qǐ rén jiā   duì rén jiā yǒu bù píng děng dài yù   zhè jiù shì qí shì
If you look down on others and treat others unfairly, that is
discrimination.

T: 錄就是把人家原來的東西重新記錄下來。那節呢，就是說你選錄，
lù jiù shì bǎ rén jiā yuán lái de dōng xi zhòng xīn jì lù xià lái   nà jié nē   jiù shì shuō nǐ xuǎn lù
選擇性的刪掉一些不要的，只選一部份進來，那就叫節錄。
xuǎn zé xìng de shàn diào yī xiē bù yào de   zhǐ xuǎn yī bù fèn jìn lái   nà jiù jiào jié lù
錄 is recording, record original article. 節 is deleting unnecessary
lù jié
parts, selecting partial article is called excerpt.

T: 帳單就是告訴你，你花了多少錢，你要付人家多少錢。
zhàng dàn jiù shì gào sù nǐ   nǐ huā le duō shǎo qián   nǐ yào fù rén jiā duō shǎo qián
A bill is telling you how much you spend, how much you have to pay.
***

T: 什麼是門當戶對?
shé mo shì mén dāng hù duì
What is well matched?

S: 就是有錢人和有錢人的家庭結婚。
jiù shì yǒu qián rén hé yǒu qián rén de jiā tíng jié hūn
It is rich people marry rich people.
***

T: 什麼是顯然?
shé mo shì xiǎn rán
What is apparently?

S1: 明顯。
míng xiǎn
Obviously

S2: 很容易就看得出來。
hěn róng yì jiù kàn dé chū lái
It is very easy to guess and realize.
***

T:　靈機一動。

　líng jī yī dòng
A clever idea suddenly clicks.

S1:　我知道，忽然想出了。

　wǒ zhī dào　hū rán xiǎng chū le
I know, suddenly think of.

T:　忽然想出了什麼？

　hū rán xiǎng chū le shě mo
Suddenly think of what?

S1:　好辦法。

　hǎo bàn fǎ
Good solution.

S2:　好主意。

　hǎo zhǔ yì
Good idea.

3)　contextual clues.

D Laoshi used the method of contextual clues extensively. Many difficult and abstract words were used in social studies reading materials. The teacher thought providing contextual situation served two purposes: promoting cognitive development and maximizing exposure of second language. "When I am giving explanation, students are engaging in a thinking process…and they will come up some answers. At the same time, they are absorbing the language I am using and learn more word usage."

When she was introducing 做子女的人要體貼父母(children's thoughtfulness for

zuǒ zi nǚ de rén yào tǐ tiē fù mǔ

their parents), she elaborated three contextual situations to clearly reflect connotation in this expression. The following is one of the situations.

比如說，媽媽回來了，你會幫她做一些事情。你知道她很辛苦，

bǐ rú shuō　mā mā huí lái le　 nǐ huì bāng tā zuò yì xiē shì qíng　 nǐ zhī dào tā hěn xìn kǔ
你可以了解她的辛苦，然後你能夠想一想，她現在最需要什麼，

nǐ kě yǐ le jiě tā de xìn kǔ　rán hòu nǐ néng gòu xiǎng yì xiǎng　tā xiàn zài zuì xū yào shě mo
你就幫她去完成她的心願，這就是體貼了。有的人看到媽媽，

nǐ jiù bāng tā qù wān chéng tā de xìn yuàn　zhě jiù shì tǐ tiē le　yǒu de rén kàn dào mā mā
好累噢，坐在這裡，啊，媽媽來，我幫你捶捶背。好體貼哦。

hǎo lèi ōu　zuò zài zhě lǐ　à　mā mā lái　wǒ bāng nǐ chuí chuí bèi　hǎo tǐ tiē ō

For example, when your mom is back from work, you help her
with some chores. You know she works hard, and you understand her
hard working. Then you are able to empathize what she needs mostly
right now and you are willing to accomplish her wishes, this is

thoughtfulness. Somebody sees her mom, she looks so tired sitting there. Mom,come, I'll massage your back. That is very thoughtful.

When a group of students was confused about the usage of 半哄半騙 (half coaxing and half defrauding), she again offered a situation that effectively promoted comprehension.

你跟她要，她不給你，你半哄半騙的把妹妹的那個蛋糕
給拿了過來，吃起來了。你說妹妹這個蛋糕吃了會痛，
吃了會胖。像我們女生怕胖，女生不要吃。男生就說啦，
你不要吃啊，你吃了會胖啊，來來，我不怕胖，那我幫你
吃吧，半哄半騙的。

You asked for it and she refused to give it to you, you took over your younger sister's cake and eat it by half coaxing and half defrauding. You said little sister, eating this cake will make your stomach ache, will make you fat. Like we girls are afraid of obesity, we don't want to eat. Boys take advantage of it, and said, don't eat it, eating it will make you fat, come, I am not afraid of becoming a fat boy, let me help you eat, half coaxing and half defrauding.

4)   *connection to students' lives.*

D Laoshi never failed to connect instruction with students' experience and lives. No matter if she instructed words, expressions, fictions or social studies, she managed to extend the instructional contents to students' lives. For her, it served only one purpose: to stimulate students' interest in Chinese language and content knowledge. "You have to connect student's experience with what you are instructing, otherwise they will feel very bored. Even when you teach literary classics, you can connect them with modern life. If you connect it with their lives, they would find it interesting. If they are interested, they will learn it very well."

I was always amazed how well she related students' classroom behavior to the new phrases she was teaching. When she intended to describe what 持續(incessantly) meant, she walked toward a student who had been tapping his table with his pen and said to him, "不停，一直持續敲著筆，害老師喉嚨快要破了。" (No stopping, incessantly tapping with a pen. My throat is hurting.) The class was laughing loudly. The student stopped for a brief moment, then continued to do it. She confiscated his pens and utilized another new phrase 存心 (deliberately) to describe the situation. "你到底有幾枝筆？他存心氣老師，存心的噢！" (How many pens do you have? He deliberately irritates teacher, deliberately!)

After reading "梁山伯與祝英台" ("The Butterfly Lovers"), students were supposed to discuss and compare the conflicts (衝突) that caused the separation of the couples with the play "Romeo and Juliet". When a boy and a girl were arguing about some matters, the teacher approached them and said, "你們有衝突，到外面解決。好像羅密歐和朱麗葉，一個是羅密歐，一個是朱麗葉，到外面。(You have conflicts. Go outside and solve your problem. You are just like Romeo and Juliet: one is Romeo, the other is Juliet. Go outside)." The statement stunned the students and both stopped immediately.

She always invited students to talk about their experience related to her instruction. Following her explanation about 體貼(thoughtfulness), she asked what students did to show their thoughtfulness to their parents. The students were eager to share their experience.

S1: 媽媽回家的時候，她很累，所以我就馬上拿一杯熱水。

mā mā huí jiā de shí hòu　tā hěn lèi　suó yǐ wǒ jiù mǎ shàng ná yì bēi rè shuǐ

When mom is home, she looks tired, so I bring her a cup of hot water right away.

T: 好體貼噢，真好！

hǎo tǐ tiē òu　zhēn hǎo

Very thoughtful, good!

S2: 我的媽媽生病的時候，我就告訴她去睡覺。

wǒ de mā mā shēng bìng de shí hòu　wǒ jiù gào sù tā qù shuì jué

When my mom was sick, I told her to go to bed.

S3: 我媽媽打噴嚏，我跟她說 God bless you。

wǒ mā mā dǎ pēn tì　wǒ gēn tā shuō

When my mom sneezes, I said God bless you.

Students' study, pressure, leisure activities, talents, and feelings were frequently drawn upon to support her instruction of new vocabulary or new concepts. When she taught the word "壓力" (pressure), she asked if students recently had pressure in their study and invited them to share their feelings with the class. When she taught the expression of a mixed feeling, "又期待又怕受傷害" (anticipation mixed with a fear of being hurt), some students shared they had that kind of feelings before they performed dancing in public. Another said love.

5)　*comprehension check.*

The teacher seldom did word comprehension check in class. Her assessment of their comprehension was in various forms, such as in students' presentation, writing project, workbook exercises or vocabulary tests. Whenever she conducted content comprehension check, she expected her students to participate fully and express their thoughts actively. It was more akin to a form of discussion rather than traditional comprehension check. She sometimes asked students to design their own questions to check their classmates' comprehension.

After reading the first paragraph of the story of "單車記" (The Bicycle), students

drew a picture about the passage. Subsequently D Laoshi discussed the paragraph with the students. Afterwards she asked students to check and revise their pictures to show their comprehension of the content. For the second paragraph, students were expected to design their own questions to check other classmates' comprehension.

S1: 為什麼侯文詠要去騎腳踏車?
wèi shé mo hóu wén yǒng yào qù qí jiǎo tà chē

Why did 侯文詠 (*the main character*) want to ride the bicycle?
hóu wén yǒng

S2: 為什麼莊聰明不自己騎,要讓侯文詠騎?
wèi shé mo zhuāng cōng míng bù zì jǐ qí yào ràng hóu wén yǒng qí

Why didn't 莊聰明 (*a friend*) ride the bicycle himself , instead he
zhuāng cōng míng

gave the chance to 侯文詠?
hóu wén yǒng

The questions brought up much discussion. The teacher commented that they were smarter than she in asking these questions. Alternation of the roles of teacher and students made the learning more interesting.

6) balance of teacher-fronted and student-centered instructions.

Though I observed a variety of activities that involved students to discuss and present, I found D Laoshi spending much time to instruct as well. She provided many opportunities to allow for group activities, but balanced this with her guidance and instruction. I observed students discussing in small groups about how to present a situation of 小不忍則亂大謀 (A lack of patience in small matters upsets great schemes
xiǎo bù rěn zé luàn dà móu

or 發洩情緒 (To release one's frustration), how to write a Chinese script for "Romeo
fā xiè qíng xù

and Juliet", how to write their immigration report. They performed the Chinese version of "Romeo and Juliet" in class. They performed read-aloud in class, as well. However every discussion or presentation was preceded by the teacher's guidance and instruction.

D Laoshi would first teach new vocabulary, content or offer guidelines for writing project in order for students to work in small groups or by themselves without confusion. Many of the newly taught vocabulary words were expected to be used in the following activities that reinforced their language learning. She encouraged students to express their thoughts, but always with some limitations. "I respected their thoughts. Sometimes I told them you can propose anything you want, but I am the final decision maker…I know what is best for you." The balance of the instruction reflected sufficient language input by the teacher and language output by the students.

Summary

The four teachers utilized similar instructional strategies to increase student comprehension of content knowledge, such as body languages, writing or drawing on the board, language modification, contextual clues, and connection to students' lives. With different level and age of their students, their preference to using certain strategies distinguished their differences.

A Laoshi and B Laoshi conducted inquisitive forms of comprehension check, whereas C Laoshi and D Laoshi assessed student comprehension through their presentation. Except A Laoshi, all other teachers encouraged autonomous learning and provided opportunities for peer learning. A Laoshi favored maximum teacher's input for more language exposure; B Laoshi and C Laosh favored maximum student output for more language production; D Laoshi favored both.

(2) Patterns of Teacher-Student Interaction

2. What are the patterns of teacher-student interaction in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

This question seeks to explore how teachers implement various interactions with

students and to what extent students produce their language in these interactions. Second language acquisition is not successful without comprehensible output by the learners, as proposed by Swain's "Comprehensible Output" hypothesis (Swain, 1986). In the Chinese immersion classrooms I observed, teacher-student interaction was frequent. However, an analysis of the patterns of interaction shows a discrepancy among classrooms.

A: Teacher-Guided Interaction in A Laoshi's Classroom

A Laoshi's interaction with her students was carefully organized and guided to ensure accurate language generation. Much of the interaction was initiated by teacher, which limited students to produce accurate forms, intended vocabulary, or simply "yes" or "no" responses. Various patterns were exhibited in the interaction.

1)   drills.

A Laoshi frequently utilized formatted questions to solicit formatted response from her students. This became a routine to which the students responded habitually. Before she started a new topic, she usually called attention with the format.

> T: 小朋友請看我。
> xiǎo péng yǒu qǐng kàn wǒ
> Little friends, please look at me.
> Class: A 老師我看你。
> lǎo shi wǒ kàn nǐ
> A Laoshi, I look at you.
> T: 小朋友請再看我。
> xiǎo péng yǒu qǐng zài kàn wǒ
> Little friends, please look at me again.
> Class: A 老師我再看你。
> lǎo shi wǒ zài kàn nǐ
> A Laoshi, I look at you again.

When she was teaching students to use synonyms for new vocabulary, she used a similar format again. Not only did she steer students to answer identical forms, but she expected students to memorize the forms and synonyms.

T: 大概，大概是什麼？
dà gài　dà gài shì shé mo

What is 大概，大概?
dà gài　dà gài

Class: 大概，大概是可能。
dà gài　dà gài shì kě néng

大概，大概 is possible.
dà gài　dà gài

T: 認識，認識是什麼？
rèn shi　rèn shi shì shé mo

What is 認識，認識?
rèn shi　rèn shi

Class:認識，認識是知道。
rèn shi　rèn shi shì zhī dào

認識，認識 is to know.
rèn shi　rèn shi

2) yes/no, either/or questions and guided response.

Many of A Laoshi's questions aimed to solicit one or the other answer, which was already included in her inquisition already. Students frequently chose one or the other to respond accordingly. The language production was guided and controlled.

T: 會不會做？ *huì bū huì zuò*	Class: 會。 *huì*
T: Can you do it?	Class: Can.
T: 清楚了嗎？ *qīng chū le ma*	Class: 清楚了。 *qīng chū le*
T: Is it clear?	Class: Clear
T: 懂不懂？ *dǒng bū dǒng*	Class: 懂。 *dǒng*
T: Do you understand?	Class: Understand.

***

T: 請問天黑是白天還是晚上？
qǐng wèn tiān hēi shi bái tiān hái shi wǎn shāng

Is getting dark day time or night time?

Class: 晚上。
wǎn shāng

Night time.

T: 這是分散還是合起來？
zhè shi fēn sàn hái shi hé qǐ lái

Is this scatter or get together?

Class: 分散。
fēn sàn

Scatter

3) open-ended questions and unguided response.

In this pattern of interaction, the teacher still took initiative to induce language generation. However it aimed to retrieve students' vocabulary knowledge and invited students to share their experience, which increased students' speech time and speech forms.

T: 有沒有人怕黑?
yǒu méi yǒu rén pà hēi
Is anyone afraid of darkness?

S1: 我膽子很小。
wǒ dǎn zi hěn xiǎo
I have little gut.

T: 以前，我天一黑，我也不敢出去。
yǐ qián wǒ tiān yì hēi wǒ yě bù gǎn chū qù
In the past, when it was dark, I was scared to go outside.

S2: 跟你爸爸媽媽走啊。
gēn nǐ bà bà mā mā zǒu ā
Walk with your parents!

***

T: 我要告訴你們一件事，猜猜看，老師要告訴你們哪一件事?
wǒ yào gào sù nǐ men yí jiàn shì cāi cāi kàn lǎo shī yào gào sù nǐ men nǎ yí jiàn shì
I want to tell you one thing. Take a guess, which thing does teacher want to tell you?

S1: 你們做得很好。
nǐ men zuò dé hěn hǎo
You are doing great.

T: 好，那我就寫，你們做得很棒。
hǎo nà wǒ jiù xiě nǐ men zuò dé hěn bàng
Good, then I'll write, you've done it fantastically.

S2: 你們很棒。
nǐ men hěn bàng
You are fantastic.

S3: 數學。
shù xué
Math.

S4: 很棒的數學。
hěn bàng de shù xué
Fantastic math.

T: 還有呢?
hái yǒu nē
Anything else?

S5: 功課。
gōng kè
Homework.

4) error correction and response.

The pattern of correction aligned with A Laoshi's preference for guided interaction and her insistence of language accuracy. She explicitly fed students with the correct forms of speech and expected them to correct them immediately.

> S: 這個很好。
>   zhè ge hěn hǎo
>   This one is good.
> T: 你說這枝很清楚。
>   nǐ shuō zhè zhī hěn qīng chǔ
>   You say this one writes clearly.
> S: 這枝很清楚。
>   zhè zhī hěn qīng chǔ
>   This one writes clearly.
> ***
> S: 我五號。
>   wǒ wǔ hào
>   I number 5.
> T: 我是五號。
>   wǒ shì wǔ hào
>   I am number 5.
> S: 我是五號。
>   wǒ shì wǔ hào
>   I am number 5.

Mechanical drills and teacher-guided interaction not only minimize students' language generation but may possibly affect students' motivation to learn. Surprisingly I did not see the negative impact of the interaction. Her students were mostly concentrated and engaged in the process of learning. After I interviewed A Laoshi and analyzing the data, I found the explanations.

For A Laoshi, the major purpose of interaction is not to promote linguistic production, but to reinforce close teacher-student relationship in classroom. Students' motivation and interest to learn Chinese language relies on the teacher's careful manipulation of the interaction. She said affection between teacher and students is of great importance. "For me, interaction is a way to build up affectionate relationship

between teacher and students…When you are stricter and demand them to do something, they won't be frightened and unwilling to do it." She exemplified her belief when I observed her attending to students' questions. She always responded to their questions and confirmed their understanding of her explanation afterwards. She was patient to listen to students' talk and she constantly involved students in the process of instruction so students would not feel bored. Her students were comfortable around her.

Amazingly students' output was not just a single word or short phrase when they took the initiative to make inquisitive statements to clarify their confusion or express their feelings. The structures were mostly complete sentences, though sometimes words were placed in a strange order.

> S: 老師，第一組跟第二組都有四顆星。
> lǎo shī   dì yī zǔ gēn dì èr zǔ dōu yǒu sì kē xīng
> Teacher, first group and second group both have 4 stars.
> S: 我不懂要做什麼。
> wǒ bù dǒng yào zuò shé mo
> I don't know what to do.
> S: 老師，但是你不要寫國字，你就寫拼音嗎?
> lǎo shī   dàn shì nǐ bù yào xiě guó zì   nǐ jiù xiě pīn yīn ma
> Teacher, but you don't want to write characters, do you just write pinyins?
> S: 你要不要寫親愛的，要不要寫我要告訴你 blah blah?
> nǐ yào bù yào xiě qīn ài de   yào bù yào xiě wǒ yào gào sù nǐ
> Do you need to write Dear, do you write I want to tell you blah blah?

The teacher's maximum input and a low-anxiety immersion environment may contribute to natural language production, as hypothesized by Krashen (1983).

B: Comprehension-Focused Interaction in B Laoshi's Classroom

B Laoshi's emphasis on autonomous learning was reflected in extensive peer interaction implemented by the teacher. Small group interaction frequently preceded teacher-student interaction, which aimed to promote students' language generation. However both teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction similarly

concentrated on content and phrase comprehension. Peer interaction served to check an individual member's comprehension of content knowledge and phrase usage through mutual help; whereas whole class teacher-student interaction served to re-check the effectiveness of peer help. In the process of peer interaction, teacher-student interaction was limited to an individual group. Various patterns of teacher-student interaction were demonstrated in the classroom.

1)   *elicitation to retrieve students' content knowledge.*

B Laoshi seldom supplied yes/no, either/or questions. Most of the questions she imposed on her students were who, what, when, where, why and how. For examples: 作者是誰呀? (Who is the author?) 到底怎麼回事? (What happened?) 為什麼? (Why?) The questions encouraged generation of more lengthy sentences from students, though they inclined to answer succinctly if not urged to by the teacher.

> T:　鼬鼠的家怎麼了?
> What happened to weasel's house?
> S:　有一部機器把鼬鼠的家弄倒了。
> A machine knocked down the weasel's house.
> ***
> T:　故事結果是怎麼樣的呢?
> What is the ending of the story?
> S1:　小凡差一百元，於是爸爸贊助他一百元，小凡不好意思，媽媽說他有孝心。
> Xiaofan was $100 less, so his dad offered to help with the $100.
> Xiaofan was embarrassed. His mom said he has a heart of filial piety.
> ***
> T:　她說什麼?
> What did she say?

S:　她不需要別人提醒她餵魚。
　　tā bù xū yào bié rén tí xǐng tā wèi yú
　　She didn't need people to remind her feeding fish.

B Laoshi frequently utilized incomplete sentences as clues to coerce students'
response so they could produce expected answers. Most of the time, the technique was
successful to induce a certain response from students with linguistic accuracy.

T:　前夕是…. ，前夕是….
　　qián xī shì　　qián xī shì
　　Eve is…, eve is…
S:　是像前一天晚上。
　　shì xiàng qián yī tiàn wǎn shàng
　　Like the night before.
***
S:　他是贊助錢。
　　tā shì zàn zhù qián
　　He sponsors with money.
T:　那就是爸爸…
　　nà jiù shì bà bā
　　This means the father…
S:　幫他付錢。
　　bāng tā fù qián
　　Help him pay the money.
***
T:　這說明動物在互相…
　　zhè shuō míng dòng wù zài hù xiāng
　　This infers that animals are doing mutual…
S:　幫忙。
　　bāng máng
　　Help.

2) self-repair or peer-repair for error correction.

Aligning with her belief of learning autonomy, the teacher seldom explicitly
reformulated the students' erroneous speech. She usually repeated students' utterance and
invited self repair or peer repair.

S:　我可以拿起來我的哥哥。
　　wǒ kě yǐ ná qǐ lái wǒ de gē gē
　　I can take up my brother.

T: 什麼叫拿起來?是不是拿起來我的哥哥?
　　shé mo jiào ná qi lái shi bú shi ná qi lái wǒ de gē gē

What is take up? Is it taking up my brother?

S: 抱起來。
　　bào qi lái

Pick up.

T: 抱起來我的哥哥。是嗎?
　　bào qi lái wǒ de gē gē shì ma

Pick up my brother, is it?

S: 不是。
　　bú shì

No.

T: 這個句子應該怎麼說?
　　zhè ge jù zi yīng gāi zěn mo shuō

How do you say this sentence?

S: 把我哥哥抱起來。
　　bǎ wǒ gē gē bào qi lái

I can hold my brother up high.

T: 好,再說一遍。
　　hǎo zài shuō yī biàn

Good, say it again.

S: 把我哥哥抱起來。
　　bǎ wǒ gē gē bào qi lái

I can hold my brother up high.

***

S: 他會吵架跟他的弟弟。
　　tā hui chǎo jià gēn tā de dì dì

He will fight with his brother.

T: 小朋友,吵架跟他的弟弟,我們應該怎麼說?
　　xiǎo péng yǒu chǎo jià gēn tā de dì dì wǒ men yīng gāi zěn mo shuō

Everyone, fight with his brother, what should we say?

Ss: 跟他的弟弟吵架。
　　gēn tā de dì dì chǎo jià

With his brother fight. (*Chinese structure*)

All the above-mentioned patterns of interaction illustrated content-focus communication between teacher and students. The teacher took the initiative to ask questions and students responded with expected answers. Even peer interaction was restricted to the pattern of comprehension check. The interaction was rarely conducted to discuss content relevant topics from personal viewpoints or to communicate in various simulated contexts. In peer interaction, the students learned to make inquisitive statements about content knowledge, but did not engage in genuine communication to use the language meaningfully. Students seldom inquired of the teacher to clarify her

instruction or their confusion because the teacher rarely attended to their questions. She frequently asked them instead to inquire of their group members, to look up words in the dictionary, or simply to ask other students for help.

In the interview, B Laoshi clearly stated her belief in peer interaction. "The emphasis is on interaction when I want them to understand the context of a lesson. Through interaction, I want them to learn to fluently express their thoughts in Chinese and make use of prior vocabulary knowledge." She considered teacher-student interaction to be less effective than peer interaction in speech production.

> If there is only teacher-student interaction, their speech opportunity
> is far less. In small group activity,they do not have pressure and even
> less competent students could participate. When interact with teacher,
> they usually feel the pressure that they have to speak well and correctly.
> But not among peers.

She was a true believer of Swain's "comprehensible output", but she implemented the suggestion in a limited way.

C: Function-Focus Interaction in C Laoshi's Classroom

Akin to B Laoshi's belief in autonomous learning, C Laoshi organized numerous peer interactions as well. However, unlike the small activities in B Laoshi's classroom, the interactions were implemented to serve different purposes. The peer interaction was to produce new information and new concepts, and to interpret content knowledge so as to share with the class. Teacher-student interaction was equivalently essential for C Laoshi. It aimed to offer guidance, to reinforce content comprehension, and to invite students' input to the process of instruction.

C Laoshi seldom did comprehension checks. Students' content comprehension was explicitly reflected in their group presentation. In small group activities, students were

frequently required to share their experience and thoughts, to discuss and debate what and how to present their works, or to clearly demonstrate their comprehension of content knowledge with performance or visual aides. Teacher-student interaction was conducted as supplementary interaction that supported peer interaction. Various patterns occurred in the classroom.

1) *interaction to elicit response from students*.

The pattern of interaction was usually initiated by the teacher to elicit response from students for various purposes: to confirm students' acknowledgement of teacher's guidance, to clarify, to stimulate students' thinking process, and to construct contexts. Frequently preceding students' small group activity and presentation, C Laoshi gave lengthy instruction on how to proceed with the activity and presentation properly. At the same time, she elicited her students to describe proper manners in the activities and what needed to be accomplished by individual group to check student acknowledgement.

> T: 請問一組裡面只有一張白紙，我要怎麼用？
> qǐng wèn yì zǔ lǐ miàn zhǐ yǒu yì zhāng bái zhǐ wǒ yào zěn mo yòng
> May I ask if each group gets only one piece of paper, how do we use it?
>
> Ss: 都要討論。
> dōu yào tǎo lùn
> Everyone discusses.
>
> T: 每個人都要討論，是不是我搶過來，我知道什麼最好，我來寫，是
> měi ge rén dōu yào tǎo lùn shì bú shì wǒ qiǎng guò lái wǒ zhī dào shě mo zuì hǎo wǒ lái xiě shì
> 這樣嗎？
> zhè yàng ma
> Every one has to participate. Is it that I grab the paper and write what I think is the best, it that so?
>
> Ss: 不是。
> bú shì
> No.
>
> T: 那應該怎麼樣?誰可以告訴我?
> nà yīng gāi zěn mo yàng shéi kě yǐ gào sù wǒ
> What should you do? Any one wants to tell me.
>
> Ss: 你要聽別人說的話。
> nǐ yào tīng bié rén shuō de huà
> You have to listen to others' speech.

***

T: 有問題怎麼辦?不會先找什麼?
_{yǒu wèn tí zěn mo bàn bú huì xiān zhǎo shé mo}

If you have questions, what should you do? Who should you look for first?

Ss: 同伴。
_{tóng bàn}

Partners

T: 同伴,然後再….
_{tóng bàn rán hòu zài}

Partners, then…

Ss: 查字典。
_{chá zì diǎn}

Look up dictionary.

T: 字典,再找不到,怎麼辦?
_{zì diǎn zài zhǎo bú dào zěn mo bàn}

Dictionary, if you could not solve it, then?

Ss: 問老師。
_{wèn lǎo shi}

Ask teacher.

Like B Laoshi, she utilized who, what, when, where, why, and how extensively to induce students' response, but these questions sought to stimulate their imagination and to produce their own language.

T: 你們最後的答案是什麼?
_{ní men zuì hòu de dá àn shì shé mo}

What is your final answer?

S: 怎麼你背著你的家到處走。
_{zěn mo ní bèi zhe ní de jiā dào chù zǒu}

Why do you carry your home to everywhere?

***

T: 你們再想想,你們可以想像它穿衣服…
_{ní men zài xiǎng xiǎng ní men kě yí xiǎng xiǎng tā chuān yí fú}

Think again, you can imagine it wears clothes…

S: 漂亮。 Beautifully
_{piǎo liàng}

***

T: 你們可以解釋一下嗎?你們畫的圖。
_{ní men kě yí jiě shì yí xià ma ní men huà de tú}

Can you explain it? Your drawing.

S1: 這是高樓大廈。
_{zhè shì gāo lóu dà xià}

This is a tall building.

S2: 這是樹。
<small>zhè shì shù</small>

There are trees.

S3: 這是雲，因為這個大廈太高了。
<small>zhè shì yún　　yīn wèi zhè ge dà xià tài gāo le</small>

This is cloud. Because the building it too tall.

When she was narrating a lengthy story, she constantly stopped to elicit students to create a context with her and checked if they followed her narration. The interaction was frequent to ensure students' participation.

T: 如果你是一個國家的國王，你會穿著什麼樣的衣服?有沒有想到?
<small>rú guǒ nǐ shì yī ge guó jiā de guó wáng　　nǐ huì chuān zhe shé mo yàng de yī fú　　yǒu méi yǒu xiǎng dào</small>

If you were a kingdom's king, what kind of clothes were you wearing? Have you thought of it?

Ss: 有。
<small>yǒu</small>

Yes.

T: 你希望帶什麼動物進去裡面跟你一起住?有沒有大象?
<small>nǐ xī wàng dài shé mo dòng wù jìn qù lǐ miàn gēn nǐ yī qǐ zhù　　yǒu méi yǒu dà xiàng</small>

What animals do you prefer to live with you? Are there any elephants?

Ss: 沒有。
<small>méi yǒu</small>

No.

T: 有沒有狗?
<small>yǒu méi yǒu gǒu</small>

Are there any dogs?

Ss: 有。
<small>yǒu</small>

Yes.

T: 有沒有在想像你在跟別人說這些事情的樣子?
<small>yǒu méi yǒu zài xiǎng xiàng nǐ zài gēn bié rén shuō zhè xiē shì qíng de yàng zi</small>

Are you imagining the way you speak to others?

Some: 有。
<small>yǒu</small>

Yes.

Some: 沒有。
<small>méi yǒu</small>

No.

2) interaction to share

This pattern of interaction was mostly initiated by students in small group activity, where students shared their experience and feelings. Sometimes the teacher participated

in the activity to offer her thoughts. The students were required to contribute their ideas,

to discuss expected topics, and to make decisions on how to present their works. This

pattern maximized the opportunity for meaningful speech production.

S1: 一個。
yǐ ge
One

S2: 一棵美麗的大樹。
yì kē měi lì de dà shù
One beautiful big tree

S3: 一棵又美又大的大樹。
yì kē yòu měi yòu dà de dà shù
A tree beautiful and big

S2: 寫一隻又小又可愛的松鼠。
xiě yì zhī yòu xiǎo yòu kě ài de sōng shǔ
Write a little and cute squirrel

***

S1: 他在說謊，然後他又做一次。
tā zài shuō huǎng rán hòu tā yòu zuò yí cì
He was lying, then he did it again.

S2: 因為他覺得太好玩了。
yīn wèi tā juē dé tài hǎo wán le
Because he thought it was fun

S1: 真的有一個野狼跑出來。他說野狼！野狼！可是每個人都想他在
zhēn de yòu yí ge yě láng pǎo chū lái tā shuō yě láng yě láng kě shì měi ge rén dōu xiǎng tā zài
騙，他們所以都沒有跑出來救他。
piàn tā men suǒ yǐ dōu méi yòu pǎo chū lái jiù tā
A wolf appeared. He said wolf !wolf ! But everyone thoughts he was
lying, they did not run to rescue him.

S3: 他就被吃掉了。
tā jiù bèi chī diào le
He was eaten.

Group activities were frequently followed by group presentation to share with the

whole class. The audience was encouraged to inquire about the presentation or about the

presenters' speech. The teacher usually watched, listened, and asked questions along with

the audience. The presenters could impose questions to check the audience's

comprehension of their performance or their speech. The interaction was mutual and

active.

(*After a presentation*)

T: 有沒有問題?
_{yǒu mēi yǒu wèn tí}

    Do you have any questions?

Audience: 什麼是彎下腰?
_{shē mo shì wān xià yāo}

        What is 彎下腰?
_{wān xià yāo}

(*Presenter bent her waist to show what it meant.*)

One of the presenter: 還有沒有問題?
_{hāi yǒu mēi yǒu wèn tí}

             Do you have any more questions?

Audience: 什麼是銀河?
_{shē mo shì yín hé}

        What is 銀河?
_{yín hé}

3)   *interaction to carry out meaningful communication in contexts.*

For their group presentation, the students were very creative to design communicative contexts based on the content knowledge. These contexts were usually related to their life experience. They might be a conversation between two friends, a conversation between parents and children, a sad situation like they lost their pets, or a happy situation like they received a gift from their parents. The communication thus was meaningful in the created contexts.

S1: 小麗，你看我媽媽買了我一張有一百個哈哈笑的貼紙。
_{xiǎo lì　　　ni kān wǒ mā mā mǎi le wǒ yì zhāng yǒu yì bǎi ge hā hā xiào de tiē zhí}
Xiaoli, Look at this, my mom bought me a sheet with 100 smiling-face stickers.

S2: 你要把它放在哪兒?
_{ni yāo bǎ tā fāng zài nǎ ēr}
Where are you going to put them?

S1: 我可以找一百個地方把它們貼，你有意見嗎?
_{wǒ kě yǐ zhǎo yì bǎi ge dì fāng bǎ tā men tiē　ni yǒu yì jiàn ma}
I can find 100 places to stick them on. Do you have any suggestions?

S2: 有，你可以貼在鏡子上，讓照鏡子的人瞧瞧。
_{yǒu　　ni kě yǐ tiē zài jìng zi shāng　　ràng zhào jìng zi de rēn qiāo qiāo}
Yes, you may stick one on mirror, and let those who look at the mirror see it.

S1: 好辦法，我們就做。
_{hǎo bàn fǎ　wǒ men jiù zuò}
Good idea. Let's do it.

The most impressive interaction is the Kickball project. The students communicated in Chinese to play in the field. The communication was real and authentic. C Laoshi was there to watch and support the project. The students used the language without any problem and did not need any help from the teacher. There it was the teacher who was learning the rules of the game there, reflecting a true model of student-centered instruction.

> (*In the field*)
> Ss: 發球！ 發球！ 發球！
>   fā qiú   fā qiú   fā qiú
>   Kick the ball, kick the ball, kick the ball.
> S: 安全上壘！
>   ān quán shàng lěi
>   Safe!
> T: 他有得分嗎?
>   tā yǒu dé fēn ma
>   Did he score?
> S: 有，得兩分。
>   yǒu   dé liǎng fēn
>   Yes, two points.
> Ss: 快點跑！ 跑！ 跑！
>   kuài diǎn pǎo   pǎo   pǎo
>   Run fast! Run! Run!
> S: 界外球。
>   jiè wài qiú
>   Out-of-bounds.

4) infrequent error correction.

C Laoshi seldom did error correction when students were engaged in discussion or presentation. When she did, she would rephrase the erroneous ones or repeat erroneous ones to invite self-repair or peer-repair.

> S1: 什麼是銀河?
>   shě mo shì yín hé
>   What is a silver river?
> S2: 是我們冬天要演的，那個天上的。
>   shì wǒ men dōng tiān yào yǎn de   nà ge tiān shàng de
>   It's the one we are going to perform in the winter, the one in the sky.

S3: 噢，那個牛奶河。

ōu　　　nà　ge　niú　nǎi　hé

Oh, the milky river.

T: 牛奶河，牛奶河聽得懂嗎?不是叫牛奶河，它是什麼?

niú　nǎi　hé　　　niú　nǎi　hé　tīng　dé　dǒng　ma　bú　shì　jiào　niú　nǎi　hé　　　tā　shì　shě　mo

Milky river, do you understand milky river? It is not called milky river, what is it called?

Ss: 銀河。

yín　hé

Silver river.

She emphasized developing students' ability to express and to present, rather than constantly correcting their imperfect structures. If errors were repeatedly made by several students, she would correct them with the whole class, but not with individual students. "I do not want to correct their errors all the time. If you are discussing with them and you correct three sentences out of five sentences they speak, that would be frustrating for them to continue to speak."

The various patterns of interaction reflected C Laoshi's belief of student-centered instruction and her avoidance of overt grammar instruction and correction. She highly regarded the essentiality of activating students' motivation to learn Chinese. For her, interaction should aim to encourage students to speak fearlessly, to reflect their thoughts, and to learn from each other. In the interview, she said, "It helps them realize that speaking is not difficult, not at all. It is not difficult to make people understand what you say, either, as long as you have the courage to speak." She believed that comprehensible output could be achieved if learners are courageous and confident enough to speak the second language. Thus C Laoshi dedicated much of her effort to implement various interactions to maximize the opportunity for meaningful communication. The results were students were comfortable to generate their language, but less concerned with linguistic accuracy.

D: Form- and Function-Focused Interactions in D Laoshi's Classroom

In D Laoshi's classroom, interaction aimed to produce comprehensible output that was both meaningful and accurate. Thus teacher-student interaction and peer interaction were equally conducted to achieve students' language proficiency and cognitive development. On the one hand, like B Laoshi, she constantly checked students' comprehension of content and vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, like C Laoshi, she arranged various group activities to ensure meaningful language generation. How she was distinguishable from both teachers was that she frequently invited students to participate in the process of her instruction and she participated in the process of their learning. She and her students shared and exchanged viewpoints on equal status. She emphasized, "Students are our teachers." Various patterns of interaction occurred in her classroom.

1) interaction to check comprehension of content knowledge.

This is a teacher-guided interaction to check student comprehension of content and vocabulary knowledge. As Social Studies contained much new vocabulary, D Laoshi utilized a great portion of class time to explain and interpret the vocabulary. In the process of instruction, she constantly invited her students' expression of their viewpoints, explanation or examples to support her instruction. The interaction was active and interesting.

D Laoshi seldom offered answers to the students when carrying out comprehension check. She similarly used who, what, when, where, why and how to elicit her students to respond. The students frequently included their opinions in their response, in addition to content knowledge.

(*To explain* 委曲)

T: 這一枝筆，明明不是我犯的錯，卻被老師給暫時保管了，心裡覺得好委曲噢。

This pen, though not my fault, was confiscated by teacher. You feel misunderstood and frustrated.

S: 很可憐。

Very sad.

T: 你覺得這件事太不合理，很難過。

You feel this is too unreasonable, feel sad.

S: 生氣。

Angry

T: 不見得是生氣。

Not exactly angry

(*To explain* 慫恿)

T: 把所有的好處通通說出來，一直勸人家，鼓勵人家做什麼事，就叫慫恿。

You mention all kinds of advantages and kept persuading and encouraging others to do something. That is called instigation

S1: 他慫恿我跟他們去上海，因為有很好吃的，

He instigated me to go with them to Shanghai, because it has delicious

S2: 食物。

Food

T: 上海的小籠包很好吃，上海的點心很好吃，上海有美麗的風景。

Little steam buns in Shanghai are scrumptious, their snacks are delicious, and it has beautiful scenery.

S3: 台灣最好。

Taiwan is the best.

S4: 台灣有一零一。

Taiwan has 101.

2) *interaction to elicit new knowledge.*

As D Laoshi stressed cognitive development at this stage of learning, she frequently required the students to interpret content knowledge from their own perspectives, to

express their feelings, or to describe their experience. The students gathered in small

groups to first discuss and then present their conclusion subsequently to the whole class.

The peer interaction allowed for brainstorming among peers, whereas the presentation

allowed the teacher to evaluate their language generation and their conceptualization.

Whenever the teacher was confused by their performance or word usage, she would

request clarification immediately after the performance. Otherwise she would elicit

audience to show their agreement or disagreement (同不同意? Do you agree or not), to

inquire presenters, to give supportive information, to make revision of presenter's speech,

or to express their own thoughts.

你們有沒有補充?他講的地方有沒要修正的?
Do you have more information to supply? Is there any revision be made
from what he said?

剛才 xx 報告的時候，他的語詞有沒什需要修正的?
Just now xx was reporting, does his speech need amendment?

你們都同意第一組和第二組的看法了嗎?
Do you all agree to the viewpoints of group 1 and group 2?

Even though the questions were posted as yes/no questions, the students were articulate

to explain why they thought it was either yes or no.

S1: 我有一個要說的，如果你是爸爸媽媽，你要先關心孩子，
再關心自己。
I have one thing to say. If you are parents, you should care for your
children first, then yourself.

S2: 為什麼?
Why?

S1: 因為孩子是最寶貝的。
Because children are the most precious

T: 剛才有一個不一樣的意見。
gāng cái yǒu yí ge bù yí yàng de yì jiàn
Just now we have one different opinion.

When a student was struggling to write a composition about her experience of learning a skill, she tactfully elicited him/her to reflect her experience as occurring a long time ago. Bit by bit, the student retrieved most of his/her memory about the event.

T: 你什麼時候開始練習?
ni shé mo shi hòu kāi shi liàn xi
When did you begin the practice?

S: 五歲。
wǔ sui
Five.

T: 你怎麼會想到要練習?
ni zèn mo hui xiǎng dào yào liàn xi
Why did you think of practicing it?

S: 媽媽的朋友教我的。
mā mā de péng yǒu jiào wǒ de
A friend of my mom's taught me.

T: 你記得穿上這鞋子怎樣?
ni ji dé chuān shàng zhè xié zi zèn yàng
Do you remember after you wore the shoe, what happened?

S: 我記得要爬上 hill 的時候好難上，然後太快下去，在下面摔跤。
wǒ ji dé yào pá shàng de shi hòu hǎo nán shàng rán hòu tài kuài xià qù zài xià miàn shuāi jiāo
I remembered it was very hard to climb up a hill, then came down so fast that I fell at the bottom.

T: 那你會怎麼樣?
nà ni hui zèn mo yàng
How did you feel?

S: 我好害怕。
wǒ hǎo hài pà
I was so frightened.

After almost 18 exchanges between the teacher and the student, a picture of her experience finally appeared. The writing became increasingly easier.

3) interaction to share.

For D Laoshi, sharing was essential in small group activity, which demanded much discussion. The students contributed their thoughts and addressed required topics together. In the process of sharing, they helped each other to generate comprehensible language.

The teacher insisted that helping others to learn would eventually help oneself reinforce language proficiency.

She further addressed more advantages of peer interaction. Students learned how to inquire, to negotiate with others, to tolerate, and to make decisions. Overall it was a good measure to develop students' independence and responsibility. In addition peer interaction offered an opportunity for students to learn from each other, not just from their teacher. But she had to monitor them closely and evaluate their learning from time to time.

4)   interaction to carry out meaningful communication in contexts.

An impressive part of observing D Laoshi's classroom was that through their performance, students never failed to create contexts to communicate meaningfully. They role played in many simulated social situations related mostly to their life experience, such as interaction between siblings, parents and children, classmates, and friends.

An unforgettable performance was the Chinese version of the play "Romeo & Juliet" based on students' own scripts adapted from the English version. They changed the context from Italy's two families to two rival high schools in their own city. Their dialogue authentically reflected their life experience.

Romeo: 舞會在哪裡?
        wǔ hui zāi nǎ li
        Where is the dance event held?

S: 是在我的學校。
        shì zāi wǒ de xuē xiāo
        In my school

Romeo: 你上哪個學校?
        ni shāng nǎ ge xuē xiāo
        Which school do you go to?

S: 我的學校是一所最好的學校,如果你不是 xx 學校的學生,我
        wǒ de xuē xiāo shì yí suǒ zui hǎo de xuē xiāo   rú guō ni bū shì   xuē xiāo de xuē shēng   wǒ
        就邀請你來。
        jiū yāo qing ni lái
        My school is the best school. If you are not a student from xx high
        school, I will invite you to the event.

Friend: 舞會上你會看到很多漂亮的女孩，看到別的女孩，就不會愛上
她了。

In the dance event, you will meet a lot of beautiful girls. After you
meet them, you will not love her any more.

Romeo: 我再也不會愛別的女生，朱麗葉是世界上最美麗的女孩。

I will never fall for other girls. Juliet is the most beautiful girl in
the world.

Students' creativity was limitless if the teacher allowed them to develop it.

5) *frequent error correction*.

D Laoshi rarely ignored students' errors. She insisted on accurate language
generation accomplish effective communication. Thus whenever students made an
erroneous utterance, she would ensure that they reformulated it correctly. Sometimes she
repeated students' erroneous forms to invite self-repair or peer-repair.

T: 不要說穿眼鏡，要說什麼?

Don't say 穿(wear) eyeglasses, what do you say?

Ss: 戴眼鏡。

戴(wear) eyeglasses.

T: 要說戴眼鏡，眼鏡是用戴的。

You have to say 戴(wear) eyeglasses.

Sometimes she explicitly offered correct forms and invited students to repeat after her.

S: 不要做清潔人。Don't want to be a cleaning man.

T: 不要做清潔工。Don't want to be a cleaning worker.

S: 不要做清潔工。Don't want to be a cleaning worker.

The approach she utilized frequently was eliciting students to add or erase some ill
expressions or simply suggesting this or that part needed to be changed. Students had to

do self-repair from her elicitation or suggestions. "I help them notice their errors and do self-repair."

S1: 很多中國人紛紛的移民到
　　hěn duō zhōng guó rén fēn fēn de yí mín dào
Many Chinese immigrated continuously to

T: 你紛紛之前要加個原因，什麼原因讓他們紛紛的移民。
　　nǐ fēn fēn zhī qián yào jiā ge yuán yīn　shé mo yuán yīn ràng tā men fēn fēn de yí mín
You have to add a cause if you are using 紛紛. What caused them to
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　fēn fēn
immigrate continuously?

S1: 為了淘金。
　　wèi le táo jīn
For gold digging

S2: 為了淘金，很多中國人紛紛移民來美國。
　　wèi le táo jīn　hěn duō zhōng guó rén fēn fēn yí mín lái měi guó
For gold digging, many Chinese immigrated to the U.S.

As most of her students were in the advanced level, she demanded them to use accurate language to speak and write. D Laoshi believed that accurate speech was closely related to accurate writing. "If you speak accurately, you will write correct structures. When a student wrote it wrong, I said read this sentence, then she would realize she did not write it correctly." Though she believed teachers should correct students' errors, they should not overdo it to intimidate their students. Maintaining students' interest in learning Chinese was still of primary importance.

The patterns of interaction in D Laoshi's classrooms took various forms. They reflected the teacher's belief that students were the center of a teacher's instruction. These interactions all focused on stimulating and maintaining their interest in the learning process. From what I observed, D Laoshi respected her students' input and exchanged her viewpoints with them as if they were equal to her. She seldom ignored students' opinions, no matter how incomprehensible or silly they were. "Do not ignore their potentiality. Even though they do not have Chinese background, they are capable of learning the

language very well. So we have to stimulate them as much as we can, develop their potentiality. Encourage them!"

Summary

The teacher-student interactions in these four classrooms reflected a variety of non-traditional forms. Although these interactions served different purposes in different classrooms, they importantly created numerous opportunities for students to produce their own language. A Laoshi guided her students to produce repetitive phrases or sentences after her and invited them to communicate with her in the process of instruction. B Laoshi focused more on content comprehension. The teacher-student interaction and peer interaction were limited in the comprehension check. Though the teacher encouraged the students to generate their language, the interactions were mostly formal and the content of communication was confined to lesson themes.

On the contrary, C Laoshi developed a variety of activities to encourage students to produce language authentically and naturally. Thus she de-emphasized error correction to allow for smooth communication. Her interaction with them was active and mutual. Like A Laoshi and B Laoshi, D Laoshi sometimes adopted teacher-guided interaction to assess student content comprehension. Nevertheless she balanced it by providing sufficient time for students to generate their language through various presentations and performances. She stressed linguistic accuracy in students' language production, but was acute in finding good timing to make correction without interrupting the flow of student communication.

(3) Patterns of Language Use

3. What are the patterns of language use in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

To immerse students in a Chinese language environment, these teachers decorated

their classroom walls with all sorts of word cards, phrases, student writing products in Chinese language only. In addition, Chinese pictures, drawings, and posters were hung on the walls to remind students that the classrooms represented a Chinese-speaking community.

Students understood clearly that once they stepped into the classrooms, they had to speak Chinese as if they stepped into a Chinese-speaking society. However, it was not easy to develop the habit when surrounded by their English-speaking classmates. Being the only language model in their classrooms, the teachers similarly had to be persistent to speak the language without the temptation to use translation to facilitate comprehension. This research question aims to investigate what patterns of language use were reflected in the immersion classrooms, how they related to teaching practice, and how they affected students' language development.

For the teachers, as bi-linguals, it was a challenge not to use students' first language to guide and to instruct. They had to utilize the aforementioned strategies to communicate with their students and to ensure their comprehension. When observing, I heard these teachers frequently reminding their students to speak Chinese. All four teachers told me that they required their students to speak Chinese all the time: responding to teachers' questions, asking questions, discussing with their peers, doing presentation, commenting, singing, and playing in the classrooms. The findings of the patterns of language use in each classroom are as follows.

A: *Language Use in A Laoshi's Classroom*

  1) *Mandarin Chinese only by the teacher.*

As a language model, A Laoshi used Chinese as a medium of communication in her classrooms on all occasions: formal instruction, group interaction, one-on-one interaction.

To confirm her students' comprehension of her talk, she frequently asked the questions "清楚了嗎(Is it clear)?" "懂了嗎(Do you understand)?", sometimes, invited the students to demonstrate their comprehension through gestures, body movements, or simple answer.

To make her or her students' Chinese speech audible, she frequently repeated her own statements as well as her students'. On the one hand, the repetition of her statements promoted her students' listening comprehension of her statements; on the other hand, the repetition of her students' speech presented an accurate language model.

> T:　這一課發生什麼事情?
> What happened in this lesson?
> S:　從前他的膽子很小。
> In the past, he had small guts.
> T:　從前他的膽子很小,那他的膽子很小,他不敢做什麼事?他不敢做什麼事?
> In the past he had small guts. He had small guts. What was he afraid of?
> What was he afraid of?
> S:　他不敢出去走走。
> He was afraid of strolling outside.
> T:　他不敢出去走走。
> He was afraid of strolling outside.

As her students' vocabulary capacity was limited at this stage, they frequently responded to the teacher in English. A Laoshi simply echoed their expressions in Chinese to expand their word capacity.

> T:　有什麼東西可以吃?
> Do you have anything to eat?
> S1:　hot dog.

T:　吃熱狗。
　　chī　rè　gōu
S2:　popcorns.
T:　爆米花。
　　bào　mǐ　huā

To develop students' habit of Chinese speech, she awarded those who spoke Chinese by adding stars to their groups and discouraged those who spoke English by erasing stars from their groups. Her insistence of single language use affected students' language use to a great extent.

2) a mixture of language use by the students.

Most of the time, the students made efforts to speak Chinese in the classroom. They responded to A Laoshi's inquiry in Chinese as best they could unless they did not know the words of expression. Interestingly, code switching became a pattern of their language use. As they were limited in Chinese vocabulary, they mixed English with Chinese to make their output comprehensible when they interacted with the teacher.

S:　那個 plant，沒有那個 plant，我們會死。
　　nà　ge　　　　　　mēi　yǒu　nà　ge　　　　　wǒ　men　huì　sǐ
　　The plant, without the plant, we will die.
S:　它們給我們 air。
　　tā　men　gěi　wǒ　men
　　They give us air.
S:　他們說 disgusting。
　　tā　men　shuō
　　They said disgusting.
S:　我要綁我的 shoe。
　　wǒ　yào　bǎng　wǒ　de
　　I want to tie my shoe.

Whenever the students code switched their languages, A Laoshi never failed to replace their expressions with proper Chinese expressions. Occasionally she expected the students to reformulate them in Chinese, but she did not insist that the students repeat her corresponding Chinese expressions every time.

S:　他 afraid of 黑。
　　　tā　　　　　　　hēi
　　　He is afraid of darkness.
T:　他害怕黑，你要說他怕黑。
　　　tā　hài　pà　hēi　　　nǐ　yào　shuō　tā　pà　hēi
　　　他害怕黑。You have to say 他怕黑。
　　　tā　hài　pà　hēi　　　　　　　　　　tā　pà　hēi
S:　他怕黑。
　　　tā　pà　hēi
***
S:　我不 get it.
　　　wǒ　bù
　　　I don't get it.
T:　說我不懂。
　　　shuō　wǒ　bù　dǒng
　　　Say 我不懂。
　　　　　wǒ　bù　dǒng
S:　我不懂。
　　　wǒ　bù　dǒng

When the students interacted with their peers informally, they spoke English casually, but rarely, because of the consequence they might face if English speech was heard by the teacher. The teacher was constantly alert of their language use. She maintained that restraint was necessary to develop their habit of speaking Chinese.

> I told them if it (speaking English) happens the second time,
> I will ask them to stay behind. It means they have to practice
> speaking Chinese more.... They have to sit down and do
> something, like chatting with me, reading story books, or
> reviewing the lesson. Give them a little bit pressure. If they
> cannot do as I told, there will be some consequences.

B:　*Language Use in B Laoshi's Classroom*

1)　*Mandarin Chinese only by B Laoshi.*

Like A Laoshi, B Laoshi used Chinese to communicate with her students at all time. In addition to using the abovementioned strategies to make her input comprehensible, she repeatedly stated her questions and echoed her students' response to enhance audibility and to present language accuracy. The repetition was excessive to the extent that her

questions were frequently repeated more than three times and she inclined to echo much of students' response.

> T: 巨型是什麼意思? 誰能告訴我，巨型是什麼意思? 巨型是什麼意思?
>
> What does 巨型 mean? Who can tell me what 巨型 means? What does 巨型 mean?
>
> ***
>
> S1: 爸爸媽媽吃了愛吃的東西。
>
> Father and mother ate what they loved best.
>
> T: 吃了他們愛吃的東西。
>
> Ate what they loved best.
>
> S2: 爸爸媽媽和小凡都要了很多好吃的點心。
>
> Father, mother and little Fan all ordered many tasty Dim Sums.
>
> T: 她說都要了很多好吃的點心。
>
> She said all ordered many tasty Dim Sums.
>
> S3: 爸媽他們吃了很多點心。
>
> Father and mother ate a lot of Dim Sums.
>
> T: 爸媽他們吃了很多點心。
>
> Father and mother ate a lot of Dim Sums.

The reiteration might be redundant, but it clearly increased students' exposure to accurate Chinese speech which was spoken audibly by the teacher.

2) a mixture of language use by the students.

Her students were similarly inclined to code switch their language when they were unable to express some words in Chinese. However the frequency was not as high. The students made efforts to retrieve their vocabulary knowledge and used it as much as possible to express their thoughts. Whenever the code switching occurred, B Laoshi seldom responded to their statements, but implied they should use any Chinese expressions they knew to replace the English words.

S1: 你不會 learn anything。
_{ni bú huì}

You cannot learn anything.

T: 你知道不會 Learn anything，中文怎麼說?
_{ni zhī dào bú huì} _{zhōng wén zěn mo shuō}

Do you know how to say cannot learn anything in Chinese?

S1: 你不會學東西。
_{ni bú huì xuē dōng xi}

S2: 你會長大，是你會吃很多的 variety。
_{ni huì cháng dà shì ni huì chī hěn duō de}

You will grow, because you eat a variety of

T: 對不起，老師真的一點英文都聽不懂。
_{duì bù qǐ lǎo shī zhēn de yì diǎn yīng wén dōu tīng bù dǒng}

I am sorry, teacher really doesn't understand English.

S2: 不同的營養。
_{bù tóng de yíng yǎng}

T: 很多不同的營養，謝謝。
_{hěn duō bù tóng de yíng yǎng xiè xiè}

很多不同的營養，thank you。
_{hěn duō bù tóng de yíng yǎng}

The practice aligned with her philosophy of learning autonomy that students needed to become independent in reflecting their speech and revising it thereafter. Thus B Laoshi usually elicited students to self-reflect and self-correct their language use. She recalled utilizing the tactic,

> Today, did you hear me reminding them by saying, Oh, I came
> to the wrong classroom. Is something wrong with my hearing,
> do I hear English when you actually was saying Chinese? Students
> said no, that is because we were speaking English, not Chinese.

It did effectively end students' casual conversation in English. The students changed their language immediately. No reward or punishment was implemented to develop students' habit to use Chinese in the classroom, but promotion of autonomy.

Amazingly, the language use among peers was predominantly Chinese. I rarely heard English exchange between students when they worked with their groups. The students mostly used Chinese to check each other's content or word comprehension, or to make new phrases or stories with their partners.

S1: 我們去酒樓吃點心，然後我說我要請客，然後，
<small>wǒ men qù jiǔ lóu chī diǎn xīn rán hòu wǒ shuō wǒ yào qǐng kè rán hòu</small>

We went to restaurant to eat dim sum, then I said I wanted to treat you the meal, then

S2: 我們吃完點心，
<small>wǒ men chī wán diǎn xīn</small>

We finished eating dim sum,

S1: 我就很神氣的說，
<small>wǒ jiù hěn shén qì de shuō</small>

I said very proudly that

S3: 我請客。
<small>wǒ qǐng kè</small>

My treat.

***

S1: 親手是什麼意思?
<small>qīn shǒu shì shě mo yì sī</small>

What does 親手 mean?
<small>qīn shǒu</small>

S2: 是自己做的。
<small>shì zì jǐ zuò de</small>

Do it by yourself.

Casual exchange was still communicated in English, but the students rarely had the opportunity to engage in casual communication when class was in session.

C: Language Use in C Laoshi's Classroom

1) Mandarin Chinese only by the teacher.

Without exception, C Laoshi used Mandarin Chinese as the only language to instruct, to guide, and to discuss lessons with her students. She inclined to repeating her statements. Furthermore, she constantly checked if the students comprehended teacher's talk by inviting students' questions or eliciting them to rephrase her statements. To present an accurate language model, she frequently echoed students' response or questions to make them audible or comprehensible to the whole class.

Whenever her students used some English phrases, she either elicited them to self-modify or she said it for them in Chinese. She used a different approach to develop the students' habit of Chinese speech.

S: 我 get grounded for one week.
   wǒ

   I get grounded for one week.

T: 你知道什麼叫 grounded?
   nǐ zhī dào shé mo jiào

   Do you know what grounded is called?

S: 一個星期不能看電視
   yí ge xīng qí bù néng kàn diàn shì

   Cannot watch TV for one week

***

S: 如果有人他們有很多錢，就會 underestimate 沒有很多錢的人。
   rú guǒ yǒu rén tā men yǒu hěn duō qián   jiù huì   méi yǒu hěn duō qián de rén

   If some people are rich, they will underestimate poor people.

T: 就會看不起，看不起沒有錢的人。
   jiù huì kàn bù qǐ   kàn bù qǐ méi yǒu qián de rén

   They will look down upon poor people.

To encourage her students to speak Chinese habitually, she continuously played a game called 中文通 (Chinese language expert) with them. The rule was once students came in the classroom, they had to wear a tag of 中文通 for the entire Chinese language period. Whenever they saw their own tags or those of others, the tags served to remind them to speak Chinese consistently as their teacher did. Every day before the end of the class, B Laoshi would reward the students with beads if they thought they persisted to speak Chinese that day. The students were allowed to exchange collected beads with rewards after a period of time. She seldom reminded her students to speak Chinese in class. The tag represented a reminder instead of her.

She further encouraged her students to wear the tags outside the classrooms playing with their friends. She said, "I want them to communicate fluently with their friends in Chinese and be proud of the Chinese language study. I hope they can maintain this positive attitude all the way to middle high." Her strong belief affected her students' language use greatly.

2) a mixture of language use by the students.

Even though the students were into their 5th year of Chinese language study, code switching was not uncommon when peers spoke casually with each other.

S1: 我有 stuff 我弟弟的 Chihuahua 在我的 closet 裡，
和我的 bed against 我的 closet，I mean 我的床是
against 我的 closet。

I stuffed my younger brother's Chihuahua in my close, and my bed was against my closet.

S2: Chihuahua?

S1: 是一個玩具。

It is a toy.

S3: 我的紙開始 (*he showed others his journal was peeling.*)

My papers begin….

S1: 那是跟我的 Friday journal 一樣。

That is the same as my Friday journal.

However, Chinese remained as the primary language of communication in group activities, a result from the teacher's successful encouragement. They managed to produce the language by mutual help.

S1: How do you say swing?

S2: 你怎麼說 swing?

How do you say swing?

S3: 千，千，Oh，鞦韆。

S1: 他人很好，很 firm，很高興。

He is very nice, very firm, and very happy.

S2: 我是很公平的人，不喜歡打架的人，可以做很好
決定的人。貪婪是什麼意思?

Mine is a fair person who does not like violent people and who makes good decision. What does 貪婪 mean?

S1: Greedy.

When formally interacting with their teacher or with the whole class, they seldom used code switching like the younger students did. With their expanding vocabulary capacity, they were cautious not to use English, but proper Chinese words to express their thoughts or to present their group works. If they were unable to locate a word to express it, they would use gestures or body movement to imply their thoughts.

D: Language Use in D Laoshi's Classroom

1) Mandarin Chinese only by the teacher.

Teaching Chinese Social Studies imposed a big challenge for D Laoshi to consistently use Chinese as the medium of instruction as much difficult vocabulary appeared in the content. The temptation of using English was great, but she maintained firmly that she was the only language model in the classroom. She had to use a single language to teach to allow for students' maximum exposure to Mandarin Chinese. From my observation, never once did she betray her belief.

As students were in the advanced level, she seldom repeated her statements. Occasionally she would echo students' responses. What she frequently utilized was extensive and lengthy narration to increase audibility and listening comprehension. To confirm their acknowledgment, she constantly elicited students to offer examples or rephrase her message. She did not reject students' English response as long as it was related to their comprehension of words, which additionally served as a helper to increase weak learners' comprehension of difficult vocabulary.

T: 什麼是一生?
shē mo shi yí shēng

What is 一生?
yí shēng

S1: 生命。
shēng ming

Life.

S2: Duration.

T: 你的爺爺很老了，他說我這一生去過很多地方。
<small>nǐ de yé yé hěn lǎo le　　tā shuō wǒ zhè yì shēng qù guò hěn duō dì fāng</small>

Your grandfather is very old. He said he has been to many places in his whole life.

S3: Lifetime.

***

T: 什麼是鬆動?
<small>shé mo shì sōng dòng</small>

What does 鬆動 mean?
<small>　　　　　sōng dòng</small>

Ss: Loose.

T: 不緊就叫鬆動。
<small>bù jǐn jiù jiào sōng dòng</small>

Not tight means 鬆動。
<small>　　　　　　　sōng dòng</small>

If students produced code switching, she attended to their language accuracy by eliciting self-repair or offering corresponding Chinese phrases.

S: 如果祝英台告訴梁山伯，我喜歡你，他會 uncomfortable。
<small>rú guǒ zhù yīng tái gào sù liáng shān bó　　wǒ xǐ huān nǐ　　tā huì</small>

If Zhu Ying Tai told Liang Shan Bo, "I like you.", he would be uncomfortable.

T: 什麼是 uncomfortable?
<small>shé mo shì</small>

What is uncomfortable.

S: 不舒服。
<small>bù shū fú</small>

***

S: 關心裡講到一個 sacrifice。
<small>guān xīn lǐ jiǎng dào yī ge</small>

T: 犧牲。
<small>xī shēng</small>

S: 犧牲。
<small>xī shēng</small>

If her goal of instruction was to increase students' cognitive development, her focus was more on their thoughts rather than their language.

S: 老師有一個困難，可不可以說他們 Chinese Exclusion Act?
<small>lǎo shī yǒu yī ge kùn nán　　kě bù kě yǐ shuō tā men</small>

Teacher, I have one problem. Can I say they Chinese Exclusion Act?

T: 什麼?什麼?什麼?
<small>shé mo　 shé mo　 shé mo</small>

What? What? What?

S: 一個 Chinese Exclusion Act。
    _{yí ge}

A Chinese Exclusion Act.

T: 在什情況會這樣呢?
    _{zài shé qíng kuàng huì zhè yàng nê}

What was the cause?

S: 因為他們,嗯,比較努力工作,所以白人覺得他們在 threaten。
    _{yīn wèi tā men ên bǐ jiào nǔ lì gōng zuò suǒ yǐ bái rén juê dê tā men zài}

Because they, um, worked hard, so white people thought they threaten

T: 搶了他們的機會。
    _{qiǎng le tā men de jī huì}

Rob their opportunities.

S: Yeh, yeh, 所以
    _{suǒ yí}

Yeh, yeh, therefore

T: 排斥他們。
    _{pái chì tā men}

Exclude them.

In all various occasions, D Laoshi never gave up her conviction that she was the only language model and used English instead to conveniently teach social studies. Chinese was the one and only language she chose to use for the benefit of students' language development.

2) a mixture of language use by students.

Code switching occurred when students were unable to use Chinese to articulate part of their speech. For advanced level students, it was no exception. Their articulation became longer, but the frequency of code switching was far less than lower level students. Sometimes they noticed their code switching and made efforts to amend it. Sometimes they paused their speech and sought help from the teacher or their peers for Chinese expressions to avoid code switching.

S: 我覺得,因為莊聰明以為侯文詠是,怎麼說 purposely。
    _{wǒ juê dê yīn wèi zhuāng cōng míng yǐ wèi hóu wén yǒng shì zên mo shuō}

I think because 莊聰明 thought 侯文詠, how do you say purposely?
    _{zhuāng cōng míng}   _{hóu wén yǒng}

T: 故意的。
    _{gù yì de}

S1: 故意的推他所以他要故意的去推侯文詠。

Pushed him purposely, so he did the same to 侯文詠.

***

S: 我看過這個電影，有人他們 bet, um,打賭, 如果他們有錢···

I have seen this movie, some people bet if they have money…

Whenever they were engaging in small group discussion, I could hear English spoken by some students. The teacher had to repeatedly remind them to speak Chinese. As the topics they frequently addressed were related to serious issues, such as the difficulties faced by immigrants, the conflicts in Romeo & Juliet, or how to release your anger, using English to discuss might be easier to express their viewpoints clearly. However they managed to produce their results in Chinese when giving presentations to the whole class. D Laoshi said she was hesitant to force them to speak Chinese when group discussion was conducted. She preferred to suggest they use Chinese as much they could. The students acknowledged the teacher's intention and most of the time they did not disappoint her. They made efforts to use Chinese to communicate with the teacher and their classmates if they were engaged in formal learning.

Summary

The findings of language use by the participant teachers indicated that they faithfully practiced one language principle in their classrooms. No translation and code switching were used to allow for easy comprehension. They deliberately created a language environment to immerse their students. I found only a slight difference among the teachers' approaches to coerce students to develop the habit of communicating in a single language.

Though the students' first language frequently interfered with their speech, they made every effort to use Chinese to communicate with their teachers and peers. The fact

that code switching between Chinese and English occurred was due to their limited vocabulary capacity. Teachers' emphasis and encouragement greatly affected their habitual language use. Overall the frequency of using Chinese by the students in each classroom was very high. The teachers were successful in building a Chinese immersion environment to allow for students' language development.

(4) Unique Characteristics of Chinese Language Instruction

4. What unique characteristics of Chinese language instruction are reflected in the teaching practice?

Chinese and English are linguistically unrelated languages. While English is composed of 26 alphabets and has unilateral tone, Mandarin Chinese is composed of monosyllables and has 4 tones. Each monosyllable with a distinguished tone represents a single Chinese character. An error in tone results in incomprehensible or confused message. To learn Chinese pronunciation, one needs to learn the pinyin system developed by Chinese government in 1950s that utilized the sounds of the English alphabet to pronounce Chinese syllables with tone fluctuation. Learning pronunciation and tones is merely the first step to read Chinese characters. The second step is connecting each pronunciation and tone to each Chinese character. The third step is recognizing and reading the character without pinyins, which is an essential goal of proficient Chinese reading a Chinese language teacher attempts to help their students to achieve this third step.

Chinese writing system poses another challenge for English-speaking students. Besides monosyllabic, each character contains different components: a radical and one or more parts. While a radical suggests its meaning, other parts suggest primarily sound, sometimes shapes of objects or animals, or semantic implication. Although Chinese

characters are numbered more than fifty-thousand, the common components of radicals make up of only 214 (Yao & Liu, 2005). For example, 說 (to speak) and 謝 (to thank, or a family name) contain identical radical 言; 打(to hit) and 提(to carry, or to lift) contain identical radical 扌. The characters may look like pictures to non-native speakers, but they actually are formulated by several independent elements. Knowing and memorizing the radicals facilitates recognition of characters.

Learning to write Chinese characters accurately is a further step to study Chinese language. One does not just draw a character like drawing a picture from whichever direction one prefers. Missing one dot or one vertical line will produce an erroneous character. To present legible characters on paper, one needs to understand and follow the rules of stroke order for easy production.

The final step is to study the meanings of different phrases which are combined by various individual characters. Individual characters may carry individual semantic implication. A combination of individual characters making a phrase may convey another message. For instance, 打 indicates hitting objects or people, whereas 打算 indicates intention to do something; 提 indicates to carry something, whereas 提出 indicates to propose something. The more characters one memorizes, the easier one knows how to make phrases. In addition, students need to know how to use these phrases to construct comprehensible language production.

The complexity of Chinese language and its dissociation from alphabetic English demand Chinese language teachers to use particular strategies to teach Chinese to English-speaking students. This research question seeks to investigate the impact of the

language system on the teaching practice reflected in different levels of the Chinese immersion classrooms.

A: Reading and Writing in A Laoshi's Classroom

At this early stage of Chinese study, A Laoshi focused her instruction on the pronunciation, tones, character recognition, and writing sequence of characters. She frequently utilized read-aloud strategy to facilitate and assess students' accuracy in pronunciation and tones. The whole class read aloud pinyin book first, and continued to read aloud corresponding character book to facilitate character recognition. The activity was always lead by A Laoshi to model the pronunciation and tones. She believed that repetitive reading aloud allowed for oral fluency. "After they read aloud more Chinese, their pronunciation and their tongues will become smoother." In math class, read aloud of word problems was used similarly to practice reading skill. Although reading aloud was not an authentic communication, it provided a chance for students to voice the language.

The most impressive teaching practice was character instruction. In addition to dissecting characters into components, A Laoshi thoroughly demonstrated the stroke order of characters for easy language access. In the process of instruction, she frequently invited her students to participate. When she wrote one stroke, her students pronounced the name of the stroke loudly. One stroke after another, the students amazingly knew every name for every stroke. In the process, the students learned to familiarize with the rules of stroke order. Subsequently A Laoshi would ask the students to identify the radical, pronunciation and tone for each character. The interaction between the teacher and the students was frequent and mutual.

(*Teaching* 知)
zhi

T: 你們教我，告訴我第一劃是什麼？

Why don't you teach me? Tell me what is the first stroke?

Ss: 撇。

Downward left

T: 再來，再寫什麼？

Next, what do you write next?

Ss: 橫。

Horizontal line

T: 再來寫什麼？

Next, what you write?

Ss: 橫。

Horizontal line

T: 來看一下，這一橫下面的是長的，上面是短的，寫一樣好看嗎？

Let's take a look. The line underneath is long, the one on top is short. If you write them with same length, do they look good?

Ss: 不好看。

Don't look good.

T: 寫一樣就不好看了，再寫什麼？

If you write with same length, they don't look good. Next what do you write?

Ss: 撇。

Downward left

T: 再來呢？

Next

Ss: 捺。

Downward right

T: 口怎麼寫？

How do you write 口

Ss: 豎橫豎橫。

Vertical horizontal vertical horizontal

T: 你的筆順不對，就會不好看。猜猜看它的部首？

If your stroke order is incorrect, it won't look good. Guess its radical.

S1: 知是口部。

知's radical is 口

T:　她說知是口部。
tā shuō zhī shì kǒu bù

　　She said 知's radical is 口
zhī kǒu

S2:　知是矢部。
zhī shì shǐ bù

　　知's radical is 矢
zhī shǐ

T (*applauded indicating S2 was correct*):
　　告訴我拼音怎麼拼?
gào sù wǒ pīn yīn zěn mo pīn

　　Tell me how to spell it?

Ss:　shi

T:　幾聲?
jǐ shēng

　　What tone?

Ss:　三聲。
sān shēng

　　The third tone.

In the process of instruction, A Laoshi broke down the character to show the individual component. Whenever she taught characters, an identical strategy was used as a routine. The repetition allowed students to memorize the pronunciation, names of strokes, and different radicals.

The final step of instruction is character combination. As different combinations conveyed different meanings, the teacher frequently elicited the students to retrieve their prior character knowledge to make up new phrases. She then demonstrated how to use the phrases in a sentence to communicate a meaningful message.

T:　好，綠，可以造什麼詞?
hǎo lǜ kě yǐ zào shě mo cí

　　OK, green , what phrase can you make?

S1:　綠茶。
lǜ chá

　　Green tea

S2:　綠色。
lǜ sè

　　Green color

S3:　很綠。
hěn lǜ

　　Very green

T: 很綠，這個草很綠。
　　 hěn lǜ　 zhè ge cǎo hěn lǜ
　 Very green, the grass is very green.

S4: 不綠。
　　 bù lǜ
　 Not green

T: 不綠，這顏色不綠。
　　 bù lǜ　 zhè yán sè bù lǜ
　 Not green, this color is not green.

S5: 太綠。
　　 tài lǜ
　 Too green

The instruction of one character was lengthy and thorough. Following the instruction of several characters, students began to practice writing these characters to reinforce their character study. The students became so familiar with the procedure that they were confident to share their knowledge about stroke order and radicals. A Laoshi believed the instruction fundamentally developed students' character analysis skill. "Now I give them the concept of the rules of writing top, bottom, left, right. Even if I have not taught the characters, they know how to analyze them. Gradually they are able to develop the ability of analysis."

B: Reading and Writing in B Laoshi's Classroom

In B Laoshi's 4th grade classroom, the focus of instruction changed to content comprehension. However the teacher continuously utilized read aloud to enhance students' pronunciation, tone, and character recognition. As a matter of fact, a majority of class activities were related to reading aloud. Sometimes students repeatedly read aloud the same language materials in individual group, sometimes they read aloud together as a whole class. B Laoshi seldom led the activity, but supervised them.

She believed that reading aloud fluently had a positive impact on their pronunciation and tone accuracy as well as content comprehension. "Reading aloud fluently helps students realize their tones and the meaning of the content." At the time of

comprehension check, if one or more students were stammering to respond to her questions, she would require them to return to their groups and read aloud again for fluency. When conducting lesson instruction, the teacher first chose individual student to read aloud one paragraph, then she gave explanation and checked comprehension subsequently. The same procedure recurred through different paragraphs to the end of the lesson. The students should be well prepared for reading aloud clearly and audibly.

The method of read aloud was applicable to math instruction as well. At the teacher's command, the students usually read aloud math problems preceding teacher's math instruction or their math exercise. It helped the teacher to assess their comprehension of Chinese math expressions and to facilitate their recognition of these jargons.

With students' intermediate language skill, the teacher's thorough instruction of character formation disappeared. Students were responsible for dissecting new words themselves by looking up dictionary. They had to share with their teacher and the whole class what their analysis was: pinyin spellings, tones, radicals, and stroke numbers. Most importantly they had to demonstrate their comprehension of the characters by making some phrases related to the characters and using them in sentences for meaningful communication.

(*A make-phrase activity leading by a student*)

S1: 誰可以用牆造一個詞?
　　shéi　kě　yǐ　yòng　qiáng　zào　yí　ge　cí

　　Who can use 牆 to make a phrase?
　　　　　　　　　qiáng

S2: 牆壁。
　　qiáng　bì

　　Wall

S1: 牆壁在哪裡?
　　qiáng　bì　zài　nǎ　lì

　　Where is the wall?

S3: 牆壁在白板後面。
　　qiáng bì zài bái bǎn hòu miàn

Wall is behind the white board.

B Laoshi rarely mentioned stroke order or identified separate components of new characters. Sometimes the teacher did not write characters on board, she simply described the formation or usage of these characters and the students understood immediately what characters she was describing. "If I teach the word 抱 I would say it composes of a 手 (indicating hand) radical and 麵包的包 (包 in the phrase 麵包). They knew how to write it right away. I don't have to write it on board to show them the word." As memorization of characters was essential for tests and composition, the teacher believed that the skill to analyze character components would facilitate memorization of various characters.

The skill to write characters was not the focus of students' writing any more. Writing content was emphasized instead. Description of personal feelings and experience was much more important than stroke order. The teacher frequently assessed their character combination and phrase usage in their writing production for accurate expression.

C:　Reading and Writing in C Laoshi's Classroom

Without exception, C Laoshi engaged her students to read aloud lesson passages as did the former two teachers. Fluency and word recognition were continuously the essential goals to achieve. For the teacher, read aloud further developed students' courage to speak the language and confidence in their speaking performance. "Besides teaching language, we are training them to become courageous to speak Chinese in front of others."

Contrary to B Laoshi's belief, she was convinced that content comprehension

resulted in fluent read-aloud, not vice versa. Thus read-aloud per se was a measure to evaluate students' comprehension after lesson instruction. She maintained, "In the beginning, they just read the text mechanically. But after they learn the lesson and understand the text better, their reading becomes quite different…If you understand the text, your feelings would reflect in your demonstration of reading aloud." Thus she frequently engaged her students to read aloud in post lesson activity. She alternated different groups to read aloud different passages like they were chorus performing singing. She stressed clarity, audibility, and identical pace for good read aloud activity.

Like B Laoshi, analysis of character components aimed to facilitate character writing and memorization. Stroke order was not the focus of instruction, either. The teacher frequently elicited her students to retrieve their prior character knowledge to make connection with various radicals and components. In the interview, she addressed how she related different radicals to various implications for easy access.

> Once we talked about a phrase 翱翔. The two characters contain identical radical 羽. I want them to think 羽 indicates flying in the sky. Those animals flying in the sky like birds have feather on their bodies. They can make connections… Yes, make connection or use what they know. Like 心 radical is related to feelings. For 5th graders, I would show them how to make connection between new words and the words they have already learned.

Writing in class was mostly produced by group members. The students utilized small white boards provided by the teacher to write a variety of topics: the formation and pronunciation of new characters, phrases, sentences, and summary of passages. The purpose of the writing was to present to the whole class the product of individual group's

discussion. C Laoshi concentrated on their thought development and method of presentation, not character writing skill.

D: Reading and Writing in D Laoshi's Classroom

In D Laoshi's 8th grade class, the students were continuously engaged in reading aloud, but the time for the practice reduced greatly. When the teacher was reviewing vocabulary, the students read aloud the vocabulary first, followed by the teacher's explanation. An identical procedure was repeated when the teacher was instructing new lesson. The students alternated reading aloud different passages followed by the teacher's passage explanation and comprehension check. In the process of reading aloud, D Laoshi usually took advantage to assess and correct their pronunciation and tones to ensure accurate oral production.

D Laoshi regarded read aloud as a form of oral practice. To read aloud smoothly, the students must practice repeatedly like drills, according to the teacher. She suggested three steps to achieve good read aloud: (1) familiarize with every character in the article and practice reading aloud the article smoothly, (2) beautify reading aloud, and (3) transform reading aloud into reading performance. Reading aloud sought to bring out students' affectionate expression of their thoughts or their personal interpretation of content knowledge.

For her 8th graders, she still assigned reading aloud homework to reinforce oral practice after school. Before she began her instruction, she frequently required the students to read aloud with their partners or by themselves the materials she was going to teach that day. It helped them concentrate and realize what today's instruction was about.

Stressing the importance of proficient writing, D Laoshi regularly engaged her students in a variety of lengthy writings, such as answering essay questions, writing

composition and reports. She evaluated their writing products on sentence structures, word usage, coherence, even legibility and neatness. She contended that writing enhanced correct character production.

> From writing, you develop a certain habit to write neatly…. When
> you type, you don't know if one dot or one stroke is necessary.
> But one dot less or one stroke longer will change the appearance
> and meaning of a character. So when they write, they become aware
> of the difference.

Thus she discouraged her students to use the computer for typing their papers and some of the writing activities were completed in class to avoid computer access. The exercise enhanced students' character writing skill and maintained their character capacity.

Summary

The findings of the characteristics of Chinese reading and wringing instruction in the immersion classrooms reflected the fact that the distinction in instruction was related to the age of the students and the individual teacher's belief about reinforcing reading and writing skills. The practice of read aloud and character formation analysis was commonly enacted by every participant teacher of different grades. However each teacher used a different approach to facilitate and enhance students' oral and character recognition skills.

To offer the English-speaking students more opportunities to speak Mandarin Chinese, the participant teachers from lower to upper grades identically took a substantial portion of class time to engage their students in read aloud. They believed that read aloud effectively developed students' speaking skill in addition to their development of content reading skill. While A Laoshi preferred her students to repeat after her to ensure accurate pronunciation, B Laoshi was inclined to engage her students to read aloud by themselves to allow for the assessment of accurate pronunciation and word comprehension before

lesson instruction. On the contrary, C Laoshi used the read aloud strategy after lesson instruction to assess students' content comprehension and to develop students' speech confidence. In D Laoshi's classroom, the read-aloud sought to beautify the students' oral expression and to encourage proficient reading performance.

The instruction of character formation analysis reflected more distinction among the teachers due to students' linguistic levels. To construct the foundation of Chinese language study, A Laoshi preferred to thoroughly teach her students every component contained in each new character in addition to its pronunciation, tone, and stroke order. Emphasizing learning autonomy from her 4th grade students, B Laoshi inclined to involve her students to discover character formation and pronunciation by themselves and to share their discovery with the whole class. C Laoshi shared the belief of autonomy. Thus there was a lack of thorough instruction of character formation analysis by the teacher as well. In 8th grade classroom, character formation analysis was seldom practiced by the teacher. The students were not required to dissect the formation of characters, either, as they were well into the advanced level and their vocabulary capacity had expanded to a great extent.

The results were impressive. Through repetitive practice, most of the students were comfortable to read aloud. Though their tones were still less like native-speakers, they made efforts to correct the tones when exercising read aloud. As character formation analysis developed their skill to look up words in the dictionary, the students were capable of using more new phrases from the dictionary to produce their writing products independently. Occasionally they would approach the teacher for help, but mostly they made good use of the tool to write correct sentences.

(5) Teachers' Perceptions

5. What are teachers' perceptions of their roles in these Chinese immersion classrooms?

Although all four participant teachers came from Mandarin Chinese speaking societies, their teaching practices reflected a non-traditional student-centered focus. An exploration of their perceptions of their role as teachers in the Chinese immersion classrooms might illuminate their changes, their innovative instructional strategies, and their challenges.

A: A Laoshi's Perceptions

1) from a commander to a flexible controller.

A Laoshi had been a kindergarten teacher in Taiwan for five years. She considered her old teacher's role as a commander. She was self-centered and expected her students to obey her commands without further questions. In a society where the teacher was well-respected, teacher-fronted instruction was adequate and proper. After she entered the Chinese immersion school, she said she changed greatly from working as a teaching assistant and from acknowledging her students' different cultural behavior. She began to think from the students' perspectives and view her instruction from a different angle.

She perceived herself as a controller of students' learning, but flexible to allow students to question her or to develop their imagination. Frequently she would patiently listen to their opinions or attend to their questions. However she placed her limits on her students. She maintained, "If their opinions do not change my instructional topic, if they are still able to learn what I want them to learn, they are allowed to create." She further insisted that she was responsible to control students' learning in the right direction. "If they go sidetracked, I will pull them back to the right path."

She was also flexible with students' language achievement. If students gave their

utmost effort but still could not follow her teaching pace or reach her expectation, she would adjust her pace or her standards. "If they were unable to remember all ten Chinese phrases, at least they remembered six of them. That was a minimum achievement. Then I would let go. I would not press them too hard to achieve the maximum. They might not withstand the pressure."

2) *a provider of secure language environment.*

As a language teacher, she believed that teachers should provide a secure environment for effective language learning. Thus teachers should find it important to establish affectionate relationship with their students so they feel secure with their teachers. If they trusted their teachers, the impact for their learning was positive. On the one hand, the students would not hesitate to come forward to their teachers whenever they were encountering certain problems. On the other hand, the teachers were easy to convince their students to engage in some activities without frightening them.

> For me, interaction is a way to build up affection between teachers
> and students. If you let them feel that you are safe and trustworthy,
> they will come to you to ask questions and they will develop interest
> in learning the language. Sometimes when you are stricter and demand
> them to do something, they won't be frightened and unwilling to do it.

3) *a model of proper behavior.*

A Laoshi exemplified herself as a model of proper behavior in her classroom. She frequently told her students that if she made a mistake, they should reveal it to her immediately. She would not be annoyed by the revelation; on the contrary, she would thank them for the correction and make remedy in that instance. She said teachers should set a good example for their students and expect them to follow similar proper behavior.

> I want them to know if I write something wrong and students correct
> my mistakes, I would say, oh, thank you for telling me, or sorry, I
> made a mistake. I always act as a model, like apologize, I make a
> mistake and I will apologize. Similarly when you make a mistake,
> you have to apologize, too.

4)   *a culture bridge*.

A Laoshi did not purposely teach culture in her classroom. She perceived herself as a

bridge connecting Chinese culture and American culture for her students. To increase

culture awareness, she mentioned the importance of Chinese etiquette in interpersonal

communication, described traditional Chinese teachers' absolute authority when she was

young, or exchanged personal experience with her students to reflect culture or customs

distinction. What she emphasized was mutual respect for different cultures. "When I said

I took shower at night time, the students responded I washed in the morning….I said

because I am a Chinese and we accustomed to do that. There is nothing wrong you take

shower in the morning. That is quite all right."

She said her biggest challenge as an immersion teacher was she could not locate

suitable reading materials for her 2nd grade students. Many existent language books were

too advanced for young non-native learners. They found the books too difficult to

comprehend and became frustrated from reading them. Reading resources were

constrained due to the publisher's ignorance of the feasibility of content for this group of

learners.

B: *B Laoshi's Perceptions*

1) from an authority figure to a flexible facilitator.

When teaching in China, B Laoshi performed what a traditional teacher was

responsible for: to teach designated curriculum, follow a set schedule, and ignore

students' needs. Teaching in the immersion school transformed her from an authoritative

instructor to a flexible facilitator. She mentioned her transformation from the teaching experience. "I found it was totally different here. Students don't respect you unless you work hard to earn their respect. You have to truly express your concern and care for your students and their learning progress. It is not because you are a teacher, students should respect you completely." Students' learning needs and interest were foremost in her curriculum planning and instruction. To facilitate their speech proficiency, she frequently engaged them in group discussion. To facilitate their reading comprehension, she utilized study groups to involve students in collaborative learning. She said, "You have to understand what interest them most and where their levels are. You have to be flexible with your teaching materials."

Acutely acknowledging her students' level of concentration, mood, and linguistic capability, she was responsive to their learning needs and changed her teaching strategy compliantly. She contended, "whenever I think students need more help on certain subject, I would focus more on that subject and change my schedule accordingly….I do not want to continue teaching one subject and bore the students too much." Emphasizing student-centered instruction, she adopted different strategies to meet different classes' learning style. Thus she did not favor one specific teaching method over another. "One class is quieter. Its students may be good listeners and they may understand more from listening, then I would talk more. The other class has more kinetic learners and they learn more through actions. Then I would engage them in group activities more."

2) *a supervisor.*

B Laoshi frequently reiterated the importance of autonomous learning. She believed it facilitated students' learning progress more than the teacher's instruction did. Therefore she arranged for a variety of group activities to involve the students to study new

vocabulary, new lesson content, or to review prior lessons with their peers. She became a supervisor to monitor their interaction and their study. She said she seldom taught language lessons, but instead organized them to be done by study groups. She maintained, "If depending on me, students might just sit there and day dream. They want you to give them answers and not use their brains. But in study group, each one is responsible for the learning results of the group. They have the responsibility to help each other."

From discussing new vocabulary to reading new lesson to helping each other with new phrases to discussing content, the students studied the language autonomously. If they had questions, they should do their best to search for answers from their friends or dictionary before they went to their teacher. B Laoshi revealed that her responsibility was to supervise and to check their comprehension and discussion results after group activities.

3) a cultivator of learning autonomy.

Dedicating herself to cultivate students' learning autonomy, the teacher frequently reminded her students of its essentiality in their academic success. She reiterated their responsibility for their own learning whenever she felt necessary to enlighten her students.

> I always tell my students they have to be responsible. I told them
> they are already in 4th grade. They can choose if they want to learn
> or not. What is their purpose of coming to this school? I told them
> not to waste time in school. They know the importance of learning
> Chinese.

From my class observation, I found she frequently advised her students not to waste time whenever they were engaging in group activities and they had to participate intently. After group activities, she occasionally inquired if anyone felt they made good use of the

time or they thought they wasted their time. Even in the process of comprehension check, she would extend content knowledge to self reliance. For her, the students' poor performance was positively related to their time management and their inertness on study. As a cultivator, she lectured and reiterated her philosophy of learning autonomy to a great extent.

C: C Laoshi's Perceptions

1) an empathy exerciser.

C Laoshi had never been a teacher in Taiwan. However, being a student there, she was thoroughly aware that Chinese teachers lectured incessantly with their students passively listening during the whole class period. She said she seldom interacted with her teachers, and the teachers seldom concerned about her personally. Being a teaching assistant in this immersion school enlightened her that students should be the center of a teacher's instruction. She learned how to teach effectively and how to interact actively with students. Most importantly, she empathized with students and planned her curriculum from their perspectives.

She encouraged her students to express their opinions for more contribution. She would listen intently and patiently. Sometimes she inquired about their preference for different activities or their expectation. Students' opinions were taken into consideration whenever she was planning group or class activities. She described how she empathized with her students, "when I was designing these activities, I would imagine if my students will be interested in the activities. Will they find language learning fun or will they just sit there and listen to me talking all the time?" Students' journals were another resource for her to understand her students' reaction toward her instruction. She said, "Sometimes they gave me good suggestions. I would accept their suggestions and integrated them in

my instruction. I always tried to discover their interest from their opinions."

2) a facilitator.

To facilitate her students' speaking proficiency, she provided numerous opportunities for her students to exercise Chinese speech. She assigned students to different groups to discuss a variety of topics from vocabulary, sentence making, content knowledge or personal experience. Different groups were required to present their results afterwards. Students became the main actors, whereas the teacher was the supporting actor in the process of language learning. She offered her reason for implementing the group activity. "(Students) will learn how to communicate with others in Chinese and they will understand their speech is meaningful and useful." C Laoshi intended the students to learn how to communicate meaningfully and comprehensibly with others in Chinese through group interaction. She believed language was produced naturally in contexts, not from being pressured by teachers.

Sometimes she allowed the students to choose whichever communicative context they were interested in. She supplied them with relevant vocabulary for them to speak competently in this context. She monitored their language use and acted as a bystander to watch how they communicated with their peers. For C Laoshi the eventual goal of group activities aimed to develop students' critical thoughts and their oral expression for these in-depth thoughts. She acknowledged that students were intimidated to express their thoughts due to limited vocabulary capacity. Thus she guided them from inquiring simple questions like "why?" to "what if?" for expansion. The process promoted students to expand their vocabulary to address complicated issues and facilitated their speech proficiency.

She believed it was greatly important to design student-centered activities. "If they

are not student-centered, students will lose interest." She suggested teachers do not just

說書 (to teach the book) and do not talk all the time. They needed to interact with their
shuō shū

students and allow their students to develop critical thoughts by themselves.

3)   *a stimulator*.

Sympathizing with her students, C Laoshi frequently prioritized students' interest

and needs when she planned her curriculum. The questions of how to stimulate them and

how to change her teaching materials to meet their interest and needs were constantly

taken into consideration. These became her inevitable challenges.

> Finding suitable materials for my students is always challenging.
> How do you transform existing materials into something suitable
> for your students? That is another challenge for me…Another one
> is how you design your lesson to stimulate their interest so they find
> that language learning is fun, not boring.

For her students to learn language effectively in a low anxiety and interesting

environment, she had to implement a variety of activities to assess their level of interest

and make changes accordingly. Students' reactions determined her implementation of

some activities and disposition of some others. "Sometimes I think this should be fun,..,

but after the activity, their reaction is umn, then I would adjust the activity from their

reaction. Sometimes students would say 'yeh, we like it.' Then I will continue the same

activity." As long as the teacher incessantly made the effort to stimulate their students,

she deemed it possible to accomplish three goals for students: becoming interested in

learning Chinese, developing proficiency in and falling in love with the language.

4)   *an inspirer*.

As a passionate teacher for her students' language attainment, B Laoshi constantly

inspired her students for their performance. Acknowledging her students' intimidation

over Chinese speech in public, she not only provided numerous opportunities for oral presentation, but she applauded them every time they finished their presentation by inviting all the audience to cheer for them. "我們給這一組兩次愛的鼓勵 (Let's give this group twice support of love.)" The class would respond to her encouragement by applauding rhythmically and loudly. On the students' reading aloud their own creative poems, she said, "I want them to know that they did a good job and I want them to share their works with others. They are happy to do the performance so others could appreciate their works as well. It is like an encouragement."

C Laoshi was never stingy on her language of compliment. After her students played kickball in the field using Chinese to communicate with each other, she thanked them to show her how to play the game and she learned a lot from their demonstration. After the whole class intently expanded one short sentence into a long descriptive sentence, she invited the class to applaud for themselves. She cheerfully spoke, "you are wonderful. They are all your production and creation." The students were so proud of their work that they requested the teacher not to erase their creation on board. Her cheerfulness and passion solidly established a close relationship between her and the students that positively affected her students' interests to learn Chinese.

D: *D Laoshi's Perceptions*

   1)   *from an absolute authority to a facilitator*.

D Laoshi was the most experienced teacher among the four participants. She had been teaching for eighteen years in Taiwan before she moved to the U.S. She was authoritative in her own classroom. Her parents respected her extremely and her students listened intently to her instruction and obeyed her command with awe. The sole

responsibility of a high school teacher back then was to increase students' competitiveness to pass the university exam. She said even when teachers adopted student-centered instruction, if it did not help the students to enter good university, the parents would not appreciate what the teachers had done to their children. Her role as a teacher was defined by the society, not by herself.

Teaching in this immersion school illuminated her to make adjustments and she evolved into a facilitator by continuously attending teacher's workshops and conferences. Stressing the importance of writing skills, she constantly engaged her students in writing all sorts of paper. Guiding the students through different stages of writing, she acted as a facilitator to conference with them and help them notice their errors, inadequate information, or incoherence in the writing.

Through teacher-student conference, she realized what messages students intended to convey. Viewing from the students' perspective, she then suggested "how about using this phrase, or changing some phrases." She insisted teacher ask students' opinions and do not write the composition for them. The students were expected to correct their errors or make revision after conference. "It is not my composition, it is theirs. But if he did not do it well, I will tell them." She said if she were in Taiwan, she would just use red pens to correct students' errors and required them to copy her correction and rewrite the paper. It became teacher's production, not students' creation.

2)   a feeder.

Designing her own teaching materials and curriculum enabled her to customize the materials for her students. Expanding and revising the materials every year to meet different students' needs and interests occupied much of her summer vacation. Because she did not necessarily know her new students for the coming year, she would prepare a

variety of materials and chose feasible ones after school started. Even if she were well prepared for the week, she would change the materials at the last minutes provided something unexpected took precedence to her original planning. She described herself as a feeder with a variety of tasty food,

> My principle is I have to prepare a variety of materials. When my students enter this classroom, it is like they are very hungry and I have to feed them a lot of food. I have prepared different kinds of flavor for them. I have to be very flexible. So I have numerous materials.

The task of feeding posed a tremendous challenge for D Laoshi. Time constraints prevented her from compiling all feasible materials and designing various useful supplementary worksheets to challenge her students. She explained why the task was necessary. "When you prepare your teaching materials, one hour of class time, you have to prepare the materials to cover five hours of class time. You don't know what will happen in class."

With sufficient materials in hand, she was capable of supplying her students with profuse information to facilitate their content comprehension and develop their cognitive development by utilizing numerous examples, inferences, and explanations. The effort maximized teacher's input and increased students' exposure to Chinese language.

3)   a stimulator.

In addition to being a feeder of sufficient input, D Laoshi perceived herself as a stimulator to students' learning. She stressed that a teacher should be constantly attentive to her students' interests when she implemented instruction. She said in the beginning students might find it interesting to learn the Chinese language, but when it became difficult, they were inclined to give up their study. If a teacher intended to maintain their

interests, she should stimulate them frequently.

No matter what her teaching topics, she was able to connect the topics to her students' life experience or their culture. She advised not to detach the content of instruction from students' experience; otherwise students would lose interest in the language study.

> Even when I teach Confucius teaching, I would find something he said and connect it with students' experience. How can his teaching fit today's lives? I usually teach a small part of his teachings, but I would find many articles relevant to students' lives and his teachings. If detachment occurs, the language learning will become dull and lifeless.

She managed to arrange a variety of activities to engage her students to use the language and to participate in the process of learning. These activities aimed to stimulate their thought process and elicit fluent speech production, such as interviewing Chinese immigrants, creating Chinese script for "Romeo and Juliet", performing the play in Chinese, or conducting the discussion of some articles.

For D Laoshi, stimulating her students incessantly became another big challenge. She confided that every day she endeavored to think of different methods to surprise them or to increase their interest. It was not an easy task. As these non-native learners relied on formal classroom learning, she was convinced that with teacher's stimulation and encouragement, these students would eventually become proficient in the Chinese language. "Do not ignore their potentiality. Even they do not have Chinese language background, they are capable of learning the language very well. So we have to stimulate them as much as we can. Develop their potentiality! Encourage them!"

4)   an inspirer.

Encouragement was indeed a frequent act performed by D Laoshi. She was never

restrained in her praise for her students. In the interview, she repeatedly complimented her students and their efforts to study the Chinese language. From my classroom observation, she consistently praised her students for their response, their presentation, and their performance. Anything generated by them was invaluable to her. She inspired her students to be confident and be proud of their own production in many occasions.

After students' read-aloud performance, she invited the whole class to cheer for itself.

> T:　你們今天表現得很好，來，做一次。
> ni men jīn tiān biǎo xiàn dē hěn hǎo　lái　zuò yǐ cì
> You were doing such a job. Come, let's cheer.
> (*The whole class stood up, held up thumbs, and cheered loudly.*)
> Class:　我真的很不錯，我真的很不錯，我真的真的真的
> wǒ zhēn de hěn bú cuò　wǒ zhēn de hěn bú cuò　wǒ zhēn de zhēn de zhēn de
> 真的很不錯。
> zhēn de hěn bú cuò
> I am really good, I am really good, I am really, really,
> really, really good.

After the discussion of an article, she concluded the lesson by saying, "Wonderful. I have never thought of that. Very good. I think your every answer was correct and wonderful. It is very creative. The questions you made up to check comprehension were better than mine. How clever!" Sometimes she would give humorous comments to compliment her students. After a group rehearsed their part of "Romeo and Juliet", she commented, "It was so touching. If I were Juliet, I would say I love you, too."

Furthermore, she encouraged her students to do the same as her. She said she made a list of Chinese expressions related to praising and encouraging others for her students to use in group activities. She maintained that learning these expressions would be helpful to student's communication with others. It took passion and enthusiasm to play the dynamic roles D Laoshi assumed.

Summary

All the teachers perceived the role of a teacher as anything but the traditional role assumed by many teachers in Chinese societies. Teaching in this immersion school transformed them into facilitators, stimulators, and inspirers who were genuinely concerned for their students' language development. Depending on students' age and linguistic level, they performed different roles to effectuate students' learning. The roles they assumed were greatly related to the challenges they faced. Although coming from Chinese-speaking societies, these teachers demonstrated a change of attitude and perceptions towards teaching the Chinese language to non-native learners and endeavored to teach their students effectively and enthusiastically.

Conclusion

The data analysis distinguished instructional strategies, patterns of interaction, patterns of language use, and teachers' perceptions between the four participant teachers. Although all four teachers identically emphasized student-centered instruction, comprehensible input by teachers and comprehensible output by students, a thorough investigation revealed a discrepancy in their teaching practice. The distinction thus presented a unique culture in each classroom.

(1) A Culture of Routine in A Laoshi's Classroom

As compared to other participant teachers, A Laoshi was inclined to use more teacher-fronted instruction due to the young age of her students. The process of her instruction and classroom activities was undertaken on a routine basis under her total guidance and command. When she was teaching characters, her method of instruction involved routinely analyzing the characters, modeling writing sequence, introducing pronunciation and tone, and inviting phrase making. The students knew they could help

their teacher finish each stroke of a character by saying loudly each stroke's name. When reading aloud, the students would point with their index fingers at each word in the text they were reading. Before a quiz, they knew they had to take out a divider to make a cubicle for themselves. As the students were familiar with the procedure, they developed a habitual response to their teacher's instruction and command without any confusion.

A Laoshi purposely modified her language of input and constantly recycled prior vocabulary and content knowledge to allow for easy comprehension from her students. The repetition familiarized her students with her language of instruction, command, inquiry, and proper interaction. The cognizance and predictability stabilized students' restlessness and confusion. The sense of security maintained a smooth flow of instructional and learning process.

(2) A Culture of Autonomy in B Laoshi's Classroom

For her 4th graders, B Laoshi emphasized self-learning and expansion of students' speech production, but her practice was distinguishable from that of C Laoshi and D Laoshi. In her classroom, many activities focused on promoting students' learning autonomy. She purposely reduced her instruction to enforce the practice whenever she considered it necessary to elevate students' level of concentration and energy. Sometimes these activities were impromptu, demanding students' active involvement. She either required her students to read aloud lesson passages in their study groups, or to check each other's vocabulary and content comprehension, or teach each other new vocabulary.

She frequently explained succinctly what was expected of students in the activities and proceeded immediately with the activities. Her students were sometimes confused by the brief instruction. The results of autonomous learning were assessed by the teacher through a series of questions, not through students' production of the activities. Only in

the process of comprehension check did the teacher begin her advice on how to conduct the previous activity properly and become critical of some students' lack of autonomy. The autonomy cultivation minimized her input of content knowledge, but maximized the input of critical language seeking to promote action from her students. Though numerous peer interactions were implemented, few presentations and performances by students were conducted to determine the results of autonomous learning.

(3) A Culture of Sharing in C Laoshi's Classroom

Similarly stressing the essentiality of student-centered instruction, C Laoshi practiced with a completely different approach. In her classroom, sharing weighed more than autonomy. She frequently invited her students to share their thoughts and ideas when she was instructing. She further encouraged them to address their feelings about her instruction in their journals to allow for acknowledgment of their frustration or interests.

Unlike B Laoshi's flexibility, C Laoshi thoroughly prepared each group activity. None were impromptu or inconsequential. Every activity invited students to share their interpretation of certain content-related topics and expected them to present with their own language. Thus in the process of group interaction, the students needed to make contributions and collaborate to construct group production. First, they shared with group members their personal experience, feelings, and ideas. Subsequently they shared their final products with the whole class. Each group made an effort to generate unique product. The exchange of thoughts and feelings created meaningful and genuine communication between students.

Preceding each task, the teacher would clearly explain the procedure and the expected results as well as advise the students to conduct proper interaction. After the presentation of their works, compliments rather than critical comments were given by the

teacher. The language of encouragement promoted students to endeavor to create and share the best products they could construct in the next activity. The fact that the teacher formulated a culture of sharing in her classroom did create less anxiety and frustration in the learning environment.

(4) A Culture of Dynamism in D Laoshi's Classroom

Weighing both the teacher's input and students' output equally, D Laoshi presented a completely different teaching practice. On the one hand, the teacher spent a substantial portion of time to introduce new vocabulary, to teach social studies content, to give examples, and to relate to students' lives. Her instruction was thorough and well-prepared. On the other hand, in the process of teaching, the students were equally eager to offer their own examples, feelings, and thoughts about the topics. The exchange of dialogue was frequent and casual.

Like A Laoshi, D Laoshi was experienced in classroom management, but she never used routines or commands to appease her hyperactive teenage students. In the beginning of every class meeting, a lot of noise came from students' restless tapping or small talk, but the teacher managed to invite full participation from the students by attending to their restlessness. The class was interrupted several times, but her humorous comments on their behavior were usually successful to reenergize her students to concentrate on her instruction. Sometimes she even related students' restlessness to her instruction to increase students' interest and to expand their learning to their own experience. Usually in the middle of the class, the whole class was concentrated and quiet.

The classroom activities were dynamic in nature. Like C Laoshi, D Laoshi thoroughly prepared and arranged a variety of activities to develop students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. From the creation of scripts, to group performance,

to writing reports, the students were engaged in producing both collective and individual works in the classroom. Sometimes they shared them with the whole class, other times with their group members, and other times with the teacher individually. The teacher would always offer comments and suggestions to both productions for further refinement. Her language of cheerfulness and praise positively developed the students' confidence in generating more output either by speaking or by writing.

Summary

The findings of the teaching strategies, classroom interaction, and language use in the four Chinese immersion classrooms revealed a vividly distinct picture of the process of Chinese language instruction and learning from many Chinese language classrooms. Most importantly, these findings reflected a change of perceptions and practices of four native Chinese teachers who were determined to undertake untraditional approaches to meet non-native learners' needs and to achieve their language proficiency successfully.

With the similarities and differences found among the four teachers' teaching practices, some major themes emerge across the classrooms. In the next chapter, I summarize these themes and explore the extent of coherence with some fundamental second language theories and rationales advocated by immersion educators. The discussion seeks to define the meanings of this study in the immersion education and its implications for the field of the Chinese language instruction.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emerging from the findings, several major themes appeared to cut across the

individual distinct teaching practices and classroom interactions in the context of the

Chinese immersion program. In this chapter, I use these themes to summarize the

findings for an organized discussion on how they match major second language

acquisition theories and immersion education rationales. In this summary, I also include

my interpretation of the results. Finally I discuss the implications of this study for the

Chinese language teachers and the Chinese language instructional strategies in both

second and foreign language education in the U.S.

Summary

During the analysis of data collected from each classroom, some distinctive features

of the instructional practices recurred which matched those proposed by second language

acquisition and immersion educators. These major themes emerged: 1) a naturalistic

communicative language community, 2) comprehensible input and comprehensible

output, 3) constructive and meaningful interaction, 4) content-based instruction, 5)

innovative and assiduous teachers, 6) students' almost native-like language performance,

and 7) reading aloud and Chinese character analysis. I next discuss each of these themes

separately.

1) A Naturalistic Communicative Language Community

In the four Chinese immersion classrooms, the teachers purposefully created a

language community for their students, such as Chinese paintings on the walls, various

Chinese expressions posted next to different items of furniture and stationary, Chinese

posters displaying classroom behavior norms, and the use of Chinese as the only

language for communication. Immersed in the community, the students communicated naturally in the Chinese language with their teachers and peers. Their community encouraged natural language generation as if the students were acquiring a first language.

In the simulated language community, all four teachers endeavored to formulate a low-anxiety learning environment. A Laoshi provided a secure learning setting for her young students. B Laoshi, though sometimes critical of her students' performance, was supportive of her students' learning. C Laoshi and D Laoshi encouraged, stimulated, and inspired their students' language learning as caring parents would do with their own children's language development.

2) *Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output*

In this naturalistic language community, the teachers played the role of Chinese native speakers to expose their students to the Chinese language. They used only one language to communicate with them to allow for maximum exposure. The single language use demanded a variety of instructional strategies to make the teacher's speech comprehensible to the students. A Laoshi utilized more of repetition, routines, body languages and modified languages to increase student comprehension, whereas the other teachers utilized more of visual aides, modified language, contextual clues, repetition, and elaborated examples connecting to students' life experience.

In addition to maximizing their comprehensible input, these teachers dedicated a great portion of class time to maximize the students' language production. They deemed students' language output imperative in their language acquisition. A Laoshi frequently initiated teacher-guided questions to induce her students to produce correct forms of language and drilled her students to read aloud synonyms for the acknowledgement of various words use. In other classrooms, the teachers not only elicited their older students

to respond to various comprehension-check questions, but also invited them to express their feelings and arranged a variety of small group activities to allow for more language production.

Although grammar instruction was rarely the focus of their teaching, they closely attended to the students' errors, especially A Laoshi and D Laoshi who stressed the positive impact of speech accuracy on writing accuracy. As B Laoshi focused more on content comprehension and C Laoshi focused more on smooth communication, they both employed less corrective feedback to their students' erroneous production. When conducting error correction, sometimes these teachers explicitly corrected the errors; other times they did so implicitly to invite self-repair. D Laoshi, in particular, rarely ignored her students' errors unless the students' were in the middle of a presentation or showed anxiety over repeated correction. Whenever it was the right timing, she would respond to the students' errors.

3) Constructive and Meaningful Interaction

For these immersion teachers, teacher-student interaction and peer interaction were indispensable to the process of language instruction and learning. Compared to the rare teacher-student interaction in traditional Chinese classrooms, the Chinese immersion teachers interacted frequently with their students, though the purposes to interact differed among individual classrooms.

For A Laoshi, the teacher-student interaction aimed more to foster teacher-student relationship than to promote language production. She seldom engaged her students in peer interaction due to the young age of her students. B Laoshi focused more on content comprehension and offered more questions on comprehension check. C Laoshi interacted with her students to offer guidance, to invite the students' opinions, and to stimulate their

thinking. She stressed meaningful communication by designing various communicative contexts for her students to produce meaningful utterance. For D Laoshi, content comprehension and functional language use were equally important. In the teacher-student interaction, she frequently checked vocabulary and content comprehension, invited students to express their comments, and induced new knowledge.

For these teachers, in the process of instruction, they all constantly connected content knowledge with the students' lives and invited them to express their feelings and opinions to reinforce meaningful learning. The language learning was thus seldom de-contextualized and detached from realistic language use. The constructive interaction aimed to guide the students to content cognition, to stimulate their critical thoughts, and to facilitate speech fluency.

Except for A Laoshi, the other three teachers arranged small group activities for frequent peer interaction and collaborative learning. The peer interaction sought to increase student language production, to create meaningful communication among peers, to promote peer learning and cooperation, to encourage autonomous learning, to stimulate personal thoughts, and to foster speech confidence.

4) Content-Based Instruction

In the context of the Chinese immersion program, the teachers integrated subject matter and second language in their instruction, which is a distinctive feature of the immersion education. When they were teaching the subject matter, the Chinese language was not the content of communication, but math concepts, calculation procedures, histories, societies, or sciences. The teachers often planned their subject curriculum with English teachers to ensure the students' bilingual and academic competence.

To increase their students' content comprehension of Math, Social Studies, and

Sciences, they wrote and drew extensively on the board demonstrating important jargons and key words for different subjects. They repeatedly used subject-appropriate language to reinforce student cognitive and linguistic development. The repetitive use of the key words fostered the memorization and expansion of the students' Chinese language capacity in various academic subjects, in addition to communicative language. In the process of content-based instruction, communication using the Chinese language became meaningful in transmitting the subject knowledge, in inquiring subject relevant questions, and in interpreting the academic content. It created a meaningful and purposeful learning context allowing for a total immersion of the Chinese language.

5) Innovative and Assiduous Teachers

Without doubt, these immersion teachers were innovative in implementing various teaching strategies to facilitate their students' language acquisition. Unlike traditional teachers, they endeavored to create a comfortable learning setting, to prepare sufficient and appropriate teaching materials, to flexibly plan their instruction to meet the students' needs, and to actively interact with their students. They forsook the old perceptions of the roles of teachers as authoritative figures and assumed the new roles as facilitators, stimulators, and inspirers. They recognized that the students – not the teachers themselves -- were now the center of instruction.

To increase the students' interest in learning the Chinese language, the teachers intently developed a variety of classroom activities for full participation and frequently encouraged and inspired their students. They cautiously chose modified language, such as paraphrases and synonyms, to communicate with their students in a single language. They were persistent to use the language and rarely utilized the students' first language for easy comprehension. Their language use supported the rationale of immersion

education that favored the separation of language use in immersion classrooms.

Although all of the teachers came from Chinese-speaking societies, their transformation was tremendous. After practicing one or two years as teaching assistants in the Chinese immersion school, A Laoshi, B Laoshi, and C Laoshi recognized the necessity to make changes when they faced their English-speaking students of diverse backgrounds. Though never been a teaching assistant, D Laoshi similarly realized the importance of adjustment for adequate instruction. These teachers all understood student-centered instruction was more appropriate than teacher-fronted instruction in the second language classrooms. Thus meeting the students' learning needs and maintaining their learning interest were the focuses of their instruction. Their perception changes enabled them to choose innovative strategies for use in their classrooms.

6) Students' Almost Native-Like Language Performance

I had no intention to evaluate how students' language performance was affected by the innovative teaching strategies and interactions. I examined their language performance for better understanding of their language use in the context of the immersion setting. From my observations, the students were mostly relaxed and eager to learn. In the formal classroom learning setting, they were comfortable to use the Chinese language in asking the teachers' questions and expressing their feelings and opinions. In the small group activities, they endeavored to communicate with their peers in the Chinese language. Under the effort of the teachers to purposefully provide numerous opportunities for speech production and to inspire them frequently, the students spoke Chinese in a more natural and comfortable manner.

Interestingly, their language performance was inclined towards code-switching or being less proficient than the native speakers. The interference of the first language on

their second language performance was evident. From the 2nd graders to the 8th graders, code switching was common, whereas less-than-native-like production was more common in the lower grades. In the upper grades, the students paid more attention to language form when they produced the language, but their tones still reflected an English accent. Some teachers told me if the students paid more attention to the tones, they were able to perform self-repair and pronounce them accurately. Because the students focused more on content production, the tone accuracy was frequently ignored. Fortunately the off-key pronunciation did not seriously interrupt their communication in the classrooms.

7) Reading Aloud and Chinese Character Analysis

As accurate tones were difficult to develop, all four teachers adopted the strategy of reading aloud to improve and reinforce their students' Chinese pronunciation. The strategy reflected a traditional Chinese teaching method. As traditional Chinese teachers believed in the effectiveness of recitation on content memorization, the use of reading aloud in Chinese classrooms was commonly practiced (Yang, 2008; Cao, 1999). The method aimed to enhance student concentration and to reinforce text comprehension and memorization. Cao (1999) stated, "Reciting has played a key role from ancient Chinese home schools to modern time primary and junior secondary schools" (p. 16).

In the Chinese immersion classrooms, the method was extensively used in vocabulary and text instruction, small group activities, and student performance. These teachers recognized that it was necessary to drill their English-speaking students for tone and pronunciation accuracy. To meet the students' learning needs, they were flexible to use traditional methods to increase students' speech proficiency. In addition to fostering concentration and memory, the purpose of reading aloud in these classrooms expanded to help the immersion teachers assess the students' pronunciation accuracy and to build up

the students' confidence in speaking the Chinese language.

Similarly as the Chinese writing system is unrelated to the English writing system, the immersion teachers adopted a particular strategy to facilitate the recognition of Chinese vocabulary: dissecting the Chinese characters into individual elements for easy recognition and memorization. Learning the skill of character analysis enabled the students to efficiently use the dictionary to expand their vocabulary capacity and to study independently.

In the 2nd grade classroom, learning the writing system was similar to rote learning. The students memorized the sequence of stroke order and the names for each stroke. They memorized and distinguished the radicals for different characters. In the 4th, 5th, and 8th grade classrooms, rote learning changed into autonomous learning. The teachers frequently required the students to analyze the new vocabulary individually or in a group.

Using the strategies of reading aloud and character analysis was akin to a form of rote learning. To achieve fluent speech and accurate pronunciation, the students were repeatedly engaged in reading aloud passages and articles. To increase the memorization of Chinese characters and the attainment of smooth character writing, the teachers repeatedly used the strategy of character analysis in the process of instructing new vocabulary. Although rote learning was not recommended in second language learning, these two particular strategies were useful to help non-Chinese learners become proficient in pronouncing accurate tones and recognizing numerous graphic-like characters. These immersion teachers were acute in adopting traditional but effective strategies to facilitate the students' language progress.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the teaching practices in the Chinese immersion classrooms were coherent with second language acquisition theories, such as Krashen's "comprehensible input" (1983) and Swain's "comprehensible output" (1986), and the rationales of immersion education (Genesee, 1987) encouraging alternative second language instruction. These findings demonstrated a genuine immersion model for the Chinese language instruction and learning. The implications of their teaching practice on the Chinese language instruction and the Chinese language teachers are worthy of in-depth discussion.

The natural-like learning environment created by these teachers has been strongly recommended by immersion educators who believe in the positive impact of a natural learning setting on students' second language acquisition (Genesee, 1984). Krashen's "affective filter" (1983, p. 38) suggested that a low anxiety environment facilitates learners' language acquisition due to learners' comfortable accessibility to an unfamiliar language. Here in the four immersion classrooms, because of the teachers' concerned and inspiring attitude, their students appeared relaxed in the language immersion settings. Thus they were comfortable to ask their teachers questions and to express themselves in the Chinese language without showing any anxiety over inaccurate speech.

Chao (1993), de Courcy (2002) and Liu (1992) similarly suggested the importance of a supportive learning context in successful language learning. Their studies about the learning experience in some Chinese language classrooms revealed that the English-speaking learners were frequently frustrated over the Chinese language teachers' unsupportive response to their learning.

The issue of the learning context has been often ignored by many Chinese teachers due to the influence of the Chinese culture of learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). They believe that students should be responsible for working hard and performing their duties as studious learners. Students should respect their teachers, obediently absorb their teachings, and maintain harmonious teacher-student relationship by not challenging their teachers. The teachers' duties are to transmit knowledge and evaluate the learning results of their students. What occurs in the process of learning is dismissed as irrelevant matters. Thus Chinese teachers become more critical of their students' performance because they believe students should value learning and conduct frequent self-reflection. Students' anxiety is seldom taken into consideration in their instruction and criticism.

These Chinese immersion teachers created a completely different learning environment because they understood that their English-speaking students perceived learning differently. These students questioned their teachers frequently and expected reasonable explanations from them. They easily revealed their feelings and anxiety in the classrooms. These teachers did not ignore their frustration but earnestly negotiated with and pacified them. In my view, it was not easy for these Chinese language teachers to maintain a low-anxiety learning environment, given they had studied and taught in traditional Chinese classrooms for a long time. They needed to exercise keen observation, empathy, and patience to maintain this.

In conjunction with the learning context, the language input by the teachers and output by the students are importantly related to the students' learning progress. The Chinese immersion teachers consciously followed Krashen's (1983) "Input Hypothesis" (p. 32) to maximize their accessible input. The hypothesis contends that only when students comprehend the input content are they able to acquire the new language. He

further proposes that teachers should maximize their input to sufficiently facilitate the students' language development. According to Krashen, good second language teachers should use contextual support and life experience familiar to the learners to transmit meaningful linguistic knowledge. He states, "Good second language teachers do this by adding visual aids, by using extra-linguistic context. The Input Hypothesis thus claims that we use meaning to help us acquire language." (p. 32) The hypothesis greatly affected these teachers' instructional approaches.

The various strategies used by these teachers to make their input comprehensible are enlightening. From my past communication with many Chinese language teachers, using native language as the medium of instruction in a language classroom was mistakenly deemed easy by the teachers who taught in Chinese heritage classrooms or difficult in foreign language classrooms. In the heritage classrooms, they assumed that they could conveniently use the native language to teach because their students were Chinese descendants. What they did not take into consideration was that these students spoke English mostly and their language ability was similar to non-Chinese students. On the contrary, in the foreign language classrooms, using the Chinese language to teach non-Chinese students was considered too difficult to achieve. An easy method was using English to teach the Chinese language. The adoption thus deprived the students of target language exposure and the students complained of too much use of English by their Chinese language teachers (de Courcy, 2002).

In contrast, the immersion teachers demonstrated various helpful strategies to effectively use the Chinese language to teach the English-speaking students of Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds. The practice implies that it is possible to make the Chinese input comprehensible to the second language and foreign language learners. It

importantly reflects that language teachers should carefully make much effort to modify their language, to choose their word use carefully, and to select numerous meaningful examples to transmit the content knowledge. Chinese language teachers should not carelessly utilize native-like and level inappropriate speech to communicate with the learners. They should acknowledge what vocabulary and content the students have learned previously and what new knowledge they are going to learn in order to reinforce and facilitate the students' language development.

After observing the use of these strategies in these immersion classrooms and the response from the immersion students, I attempted to experiment them in my own college-level language classroom. I found it was not an easy task to modify the language, to search for appropriate synonyms, to connect previously learned knowledge to current content, and to use more examples for content comprehension. Nevertheless the results were encouraging. My students became more responsive and focused on their learning. From my own experience, these strategies do effectively promote language students' comprehension and learning.

Contrary to Krashen's (1983) de-emphasis of student speech, these teachers dedicated a great portion of class time to maximize the students' language production. They deemed students' language output imperative in their language acquisition. Thus they frequently elicited their students to respond to various questions, checked their comprehension, invited them to express their feelings, and arranged a variety of small group activities to allow for more language production.

The practice reflected coherence with Swain's (1986) theory of "comprehensible output" (p. 117), emphasizing learners' sufficient speech production, in addition to the teachers' comprehensible input, for successful language acquisition. Swain proposed that

teachers should push their students to generate new language, rather than awaiting their natural language progression. She claimed that in the process of meaning negotiation and interactions, the students would make efforts to communicate a clear and correct message. The endeavor made them attentive to grammatical structures. Thus comprehensible output facilitated language competency.

For these Chinese immersion teachers, it took much effort and planning to orchestrate for comprehensible output. Traditionally only when the teachers initiated questions were the students allowed to speak in the classrooms. The students mostly listened silently. They seldom asked the teachers questions because the behavior indicated disrespect for the teachers and revelation of incompetence (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). However, the students in the U.S. behaved contrarily. They were active and inquisitive learners, not passive learners. Adjusting to the students' spontaneous inquisition and self expression, the immersion teachers practiced more interactions with their students to satisfy their learning needs. They continuously arranged numerous group interactions and presentations for more student-fronted activities, because they recognized the essentiality of language production in the process of learning and the needs of adjustment to meet their students' different learning style.

Many Chinese language teachers, myself included, thought offering the opportunity for the students to speak meant requiring them to respond to the teachers' comprehension check questions or asking them to make text relevant sentences. They often undertook teacher-fronted communication with their students. In Swain's (1986) study, the findings similarly indicated that French immersion teachers tended to maximize their input and initiate the questions with limited answers from the students. They did not sufficiently offer the opportunities for the students to produce more complex and lengthy language.

The practice reduced the students' language production to the minimum.

The Chinese immersion teachers provided a new perspective to optimize the speech opportunity. They planned purposeful group activities promoting meaningful communication among peers. They demanded the students to offer their opinions, to reach an agreeable conclusion among group members, to question their peers about content relevant topics, or to produce a group presentation.

In the process of the production, the teachers acted as advisors and monitors. They assumed the supportive roles that were inconceivable in the traditional Chinese classrooms. To many Chinese language teachers, the change of roles might imply the loss of teacher's control over their students and thus their authority, especially when the students are engaging in group activities. In my opinion, careful planning was necessary for good language production and skilled classroom management at the time of group activities. The immersion teachers demonstrated that these well-prepared group activities were worthy of implementation as they were beneficial to the students' speech progress.

For these immersion teachers, small group activities engaged the students in frequent peer interaction. The interaction sought to increase student language production, to create meaningful communication among peers, to promote peer learning and cooperation, to encourage autonomous learning, to stimulate personal thoughts, and to foster speech confidence. The practice coherently reflected Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" (p. 84), proposing that the assistance of more competent adults or peers, such as teachers' guidance and peer collaborative learning, significantly affected students' learning and cognitive development.

When arranging the group activities, these teachers frequently grouped the strong students with the weak ones to encourage collaborative learning. They believed that when

the strong students offered help to the weak students, they benefited themselves by acting as teachers, whereas the weak ones inclined to be more willing to speak and inquire in front of their peers. The benefits were mutual. In the process of the collaborative learning, the students further learned to socialize and interact properly with their peers to achieve the goals of the group activities. The communication between peers was meaningful and realistic.

The practice thus importantly reflected the interaction hypothesis suggested by Long (1985), who contended that language competency was positively related to interactive communication, not grammar instruction and rote learning. The hypothesis was supported by Swain (1986) in describing the significance of interaction for comprehensible output in learners' second language acquisition. As rare studies examined the classroom interactions in the Chinese language learning settings, this process study offers an insight of useful and meaningful interactions in the Chinese immersion classrooms that facilitate students' language acquisition.

The revelation of various interactions between the teachers and the students and among the peers offers a necessary direction for the Chinese language teachers to follow. As the communicative approach and learners' needs have been increasingly emphasized by many language educators, classroom interactions deserve attention because they are closely related to the students' communicative language development. In the literature review, I found few studies about the interaction between Chinese language teachers and students (Liang, 2004 & 2005). In these few studies, the focus was limited to either the interaction in one-on-one instruction or the interaction in reading instruction.

Coming from traditional classrooms with infrequent interactions, many Chinese language teachers are inadequate in regards to implementing meaningful and purposeful

interactions with their students. The classroom interactions practiced by these immersion teachers promote an understanding of the implementation and offer a guide to effective interactions in the Chinese language classrooms. The content and purposes of the interactions interested me mostly.

Besides error correction and comprehension checks, I was eager to examine how these teachers elicited their students to express their feelings and opinions, how they responded to their students' inquiry, and how they supported their students' learning. The findings were illuminating. The patterns of interactions ranged from regular comprehension check, to inviting opinions, to sharing and exchanging ideas and feelings. The exercise of the various patterns increased the students' communicative competence. Acknowledging these patterns is beneficial to many Chinese language teachers who are at a loss on how to interact effectively with their students.

While many French immersion educators shifted their focus on form-focused instruction and error correction to encourage "the push" (Swain, 1986, p. 133) of accurate language production, these Chinese immersion teachers did not focus their instruction on grammatical structures, a feature supported by Krashen (1983) who discouraged grammar instruction in the language classrooms. The de-emphasis of grammar instruction might be closely related to the issues of code-switching and almost native-like speech in the Chinese immersion students' language performance.

To enhance immersion students' less proficient speech, some immersion researchers (Lyster, 2001, 2002; Day & Shapson, 2001) suggested the significance of formal grammar instruction in students' accurate language development. The suggestion might be a solution to the students' language performance in the Chinese immersion classrooms.

As Chinese language structures are dissimilar to English language structures, the grammar instruction might distinguish the differences and similarities between the two structures. It could enable the students to identify the distinctions and develop accurate Chinese language production. However, the teachers had to be cautious in choosing appropriate strategies for the form-focused instruction. In many Chinese language classrooms, grammar instruction too often becomes tedious drills that result in rote learning, thus lowering students' learning interest (Loke, 2002).

My suggestion of formal grammar instruction does not advocate a total dedication to structural instruction and pattern exercises, a traditional practice, in the Chinese language classrooms. Depending on their students' learning needs, the teachers should be flexible enough to adopt the grammar teaching. They are encouraged to equally integrate the form-focused instruction and function-focused instruction to make the learning more effective.

Avoiding traditional one-way communication and stressing mutual communication, these immersion teachers truly created a communicative language community. The integration of subject courses and language instruction further reinforced a meaningful communicative community. Teaching the subject matter using the target language created meaningful learning, but it demanded the teachers to be creative in their teaching strategies as well.

Before my observations, I was dubious about using a second language to teach subject courses. I thought it was too difficult for second language learners to comprehend the academic language used in various subject courses. Through this research project, I found out I was wrong. The students in the immersion classrooms seldom were frustrated over the teachers' instruction. These teachers used visual aides, modified languages,

repetition, and interesting examples to enhance student comprehension. The students'

vocabulary capacity was broader than I imagined. I was impressed that these teachers

never considered the integration of the subjects and the language a challenge to them.

With these helpful strategies, they were confident and competent to teach various subjects

other than the second language.

In other Chinese language classrooms, as the teachers do not teach subject matter

but language, how to make learning more meaningful is challenging for many teachers.

Understanding the content-based instruction used by these teachers may encourage other

Chinese language teachers to choose good teaching materials promoting meaningful and

purposeful communication in various communicative contexts designed to achieve the

goal of second language learning.

In the literature review, few studies carried out the investigation of the process of

instruction and learning in both immersion and two-way immersion classrooms. Research

studies of Chinese language classrooms were even more scarce. This classroom process

study illuminated the actual teaching practice and classroom activities in four Chinese

immersion classrooms. As more attention and interest are paid to the implementation of

Chinese immersion programs, growing in recent years, this study increases an

understanding of the instruction and learning in the classrooms of this rarely examined

program. This alternative program for Chinese language learning may present a new

direction for Chinese language instruction in both Chinese heritage classrooms and

Chinese as-a-foreign-language classrooms.

From the above discussion, the teaching practices in the Chinese immersion

classrooms are solidly based on leading second language acquisition theories and the

rationales of immersion education. Their instruction is realistic, meaningful, and adequate

to develop the students' language competency. Thus the results of the study present a solid theoretical-based communicative model of language instruction for other Chinese language teachers to adopt if they are willing to develop new perceptions and to change their traditional roles to meet their students' needs.

In traditional Chinese language classrooms, grammar and vocabulary instruction have been the focuses of the teaching (de Courcy, 2002; Loke, 2002). The implementation of the instruction is often teacher-fronted and teacher-focused. Loke attributed this teacher-centered practice to a lack of teacher training, convenient adoption of the strategies used by their previous teachers, misconception of some language acquisition theories, and non-theoretical based innovative strategies (p. 77). Thus many Chinese language teachers ignore students' needs to develop communicative language to interact successfully with native speakers. Instead they reiterate the importance of teaching rather than learning.

The student-centered instruction practiced by the Chinese immersion teachers reflects the shift of the focus of instruction and rationalizes their purposes of using non-traditional strategies to develop students' autonomous learning and language competence. In these immersion classrooms, the teachers' talk, the students' talk, the classroom interactions, and the group activities were all carefully planned and implemented for successful learning. This new Chinese language instructional model could offer a solution to the inadequate instruction in many Chinese language classrooms, just like the French immersion program was first experimented in the 1960s in response to the ineffective French instruction to English-speaking students in Canada.

Two contextual factors were importantly related to the shift to student-centered instruction: one was the role of the immersion school, the other was the role of the

students. Adopting the educational philosophy and pedagogical principles of language immersion when established more than two decades ago, the immersion school endeavored to educate its students for bilingual proficiency and academic accomplishment. It trained its native Chinese teachers in many ways to promote better instruction. In particular, the new teachers unfamiliar with immersion education, students, and non-traditional strategies were required to gain experience first as assistant teachers. This requirement increased the teachers' awareness of culturally different classrooms and facilitated change in their teaching practice. Except D Laoshi, the other teachers, no matter how many years they had taught in Chinese traditional classrooms, had to work as teaching assistants in the school for over a year.

The school's training and support allowed the teachers to become aware of the English-speaking students' different culture of learning, to acknowledge the effective use of skillful teaching strategies for the students, and to develop various new strategies to meet the students' learning needs. A Laoshi described her earlier experience in the school's Spring 2006 newsletter. "In my early years in this school, from the school's training, I learned how to communicate with the parents and students, how to develop interesting and efficient lesson plans, and how to teach multi-level class. It was challenging but beneficial to me greatly." The school's role affected the teachers' practice to a great extent.

The immersion students played a similarly important role in determining these teachers' use of various new teaching strategies. Each year, the teachers taught different students with distinct characteristics. They had to alter their strategies to effectuate their instruction. My interviews with the teachers revealed the necessity to change their teaching approaches with each new school year. B Laoshi said she changed her strategies

every year to meet the new students' learning styles. C Laoshi said even some of her effective strategies accepted by one year's students failed to attract the students in the following year, because different students had different preferences. D Laoshi accumulated teaching materials every year in order to have sufficient materials to feed different students' needs. They all reiterated the importance of being flexible to use various teaching strategies and meet their students' various needs each year.

However, without the teachers' change of perception of their role as language teachers and the change of attitude towards language instruction, the practice of the new instructional strategies may fail. The findings of this study indicate that the change in the teachers' perception is importantly related to their teaching strategies. It is a difficult task to modify when the teacher has to perform the role of a facilitator, an inspirer, and a supporter by endeavoring to design incessantly innovative strategies to engage students in the process of learning. It is much easier to perform as an authoritative figure and a knowledge transmitter, ignoring various students' needs in the classrooms. The immersion teachers demonstrated that the change is possible and the effort they made is well rewarded by the students' successful learning.

Lastly, these teachers revealed the quality of good Chinese language teachers, as contrary to traditional Chinese language teachers attentive to instruction and critical of learning results. In addition to using non-traditional and useful strategies to teach effectively, they were genuinely concerned about their students' learning process and outcome. In the process of student learning, the teachers made efforts to increase and maintain the students' interests. They also closely attended to the students' learning results by inspiring and encouraging their learning performance. Most importantly, they believed in their students' potentiality in achieving language proficiency and competency.

Their beliefs and efforts sustained them to be successful language teachers and offered a new image for Chinese language teachers.

Recommendations

The results of this research study indicated that these Chinese immersion teachers' teaching practice reiterated the significance of Krashen's (1983) "comprehensible input" and Swain's (1986) "comprehensible output" for the language immersion classrooms. They also faithfully practiced the rationales of language immersion education in their classrooms: the creation of a language community, the single language use, the integrated instruction of subject matters and language, and the encouragement of collaborative learning. Their classrooms exemplified a true Chinese immersion model on the basis of theories and rationales of immersion education. Nevertheless, this study was limited in its time and scope. Future expanded studies could offer more support for the current results. I would like to suggest some future studies in the field of Chinese language education.

1) Because the study was carried out in an independent school, I would suggest some future studies be conducted in public schools to further explore the process of instruction and learning in Chinese immersion programs and two-way Chinese immersion programs. The scope of these future studies could extend to the implementation of the program, the instructional strategies, and the students' academic and linguistic performances to allow for the exploration of the impact of public schools' support on teachers' successful instruction and for better understanding of the Chinese immersion education in the U.S.

2) These teachers represented the models of good Chinese language teachers demonstrating non-traditional instructional strategies. They seldom acted as traditional Chinese teachers standing in front of the classrooms, teaching textbooks, and drilling

incessantly their students without engaging many interactions with them. Their change of perceptions and attitudes about the teachers' roles and second language instruction greatly affected the nature of their teaching practice.

However the findings of their practices might not extend to other Chinese immersion classrooms due to the limited nature of this study. As the participant teachers were approached and selected by the administrators of the immersion school, they endeavored to use a variety of strategies whenever I was present. These teachers might not use the innovative strategies commonly and regularly.

In the first few weeks of my observation, I heard some teachers asking their students to listen carefully before they began a completely new group activity. In the middle of the activities, I found many students were confused with the procedures and had to inquire repeatedly what they were supposed to do. The situation prompted me to suspect that the teachers might try to present some innovative and impressive but fairly new teaching practices unfamiliar to their students because they might be anxious over the results of my research findings. In this case, though I collected the data in a natural-like environment, the teachers might present their practices in an unnatural manner.

In addition, ninety minutes per class per week limited me to observe their instruction on a daily basis. The data might not accurately reflect the daily teaching practices of these teachers. I would suggest a daily data collection over four to six weeks to confirm the use of the instructional strategies in the Chinese immersion classrooms.

3)   Nonetheless, these teachers manifested many useful and non-traditional instructional strategies that could be implemented not just in Chinese immersion classrooms, but also in classrooms for the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language and as a heritage language. These strategies were applicable to the students of different levels

and ages, presuming that the teachers were flexible enough to adopt them to meet their students' needs. Further studies might be necessary to understand the adaptation of these non-traditional instructional strategies in different Chinese language programs and the impact of the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of these strategies.

Conclusion

The results of this study not only revealed the actual process of instruction and learning in Chinese immersion classrooms, but also importantly reflected a new image of Chinese language teachers. Their theory-based instructional strategies and their interactions with their students reflected a new model for the Chinese language instruction. I hope the findings can enlighten many other Chinese language teachers who are seeking new approaches to effectively teach their non-Chinese students and who are willing to change their perceptions and attitudes about language instruction.

Personally I benefited tremendously from conducting this research study. During the period of observation, I often made use of the aforementioned strategies to enhance my own teaching. However, utilizing these strategies without making some adjustments to meet my own students' needs may create instructional chaos. I had to first assess my own teaching materials and my students' learning styles, and then adopt new teaching approaches feasible for my adult students. I found that shifting the instructional focus from teaching to learning enabled me to easily practice these strategies without difficulty and frustration.

Changing, especially methods of instruction, has always been hard for many teachers, including myself. Student-centered instruction is comparatively new. How to interact with the students, how to empathize with the students, how to recognize the students' needs, and how to implement proper strategies to meet these needs are not easy

to put into practice. In particular, many Chinese language teachers come from traditional Chinese societies. It is quite difficult for them to culturally understand their students of diverse backgrounds in the U.S.

Loke (2002) reported that many Chinese language teachers still resist the notion of using communicative approach to teach the Chinese language and favor the use of grammar and vocabulary instruction (p. 69). In my opinion, the resistance may result in the unfamiliarity with non-traditional strategies and easy performance of traditional instruction. Adequate teacher education could play a catalyst in the process of the change. From the interviews, it was evident that most of these Chinese immersion teachers were required to practice as teaching assistants in the immersion school for more than one year. This practice seemed successful in bridging them to culturally different classrooms, thus making eventual change in instructional concentration.

The offer of a specific Chinese Methods course in the burgeoning Chinese teacher education programs could address the significance of practicing useful and non-traditional teaching methods in the Chinese language classrooms. Additionally it helps increase culture and learner awareness in many prospective Chinese language teachers and thus benefits numerous future students in the process of the Chinese language learning.

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