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Author(s)	Leung, Lai-ting, Stephany; 梁禮婷
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The University of Hong Kong

Faculty of Education

**“Move your desks and chairs”: Primary students
working in groups in the English classroom**

by

LEUNG Lai Ting Stephany

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Bachelor of Education in Language Education

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“Move your desks and chairs”: Primary students working in groups in the English classroom

A dissertation by LEUNG Lai Ting Stephany (2010571667)

Bachelor of Education in Language Education (Primary English) Year 4

The University of Hong Kong

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted to this University or any other institution in application for admission to a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

Group work, has long been promoted by scholars as well as the Education Bureau, is believed to be beneficial to students' learning, especially in equipping them with language knowledge as well as generic skills needed in the 21st knowledge-based society such as collaboration skills. Although an ample amount of researches have indicated the merits of using group work to facilitate students' second language acquisition, limited is heard from students regarding their opinions towards the use of group work in English lessons.

The current research aims at investigating Hong Kong primary students' perceptions towards the use of group work during English lessons. It also targets at exploring some teaching strategies that English teachers could implement in lessons for the sake of assisting students to work and learn effectively in groups.

This research was done in a local CMI Primary school with students from Primary 2 and 5. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected through a variety of means such as conducting observations, distributing questionnaires, writing teaching journals and doing interviews with teachers and students etc. The data collected was then analyzed through tabulation and transcription.

The results indicated that students generally demonstrated positive attitude towards the use of group work in English lessons and they held the belief that group work is an effective tool for facilitating English learning. It also reflected the essentiality of teaching students some communication strategies before engaging them in group work, which may have long been neglected by practitioners.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Move your desks and chairs” is a common phrase used for indicating students to work in groups during English lessons. Based on my observation from the previous three teaching practicum (TP), students reacted differently towards this instruction. Some students were highly enthusiastic and could not wait to begin the group work whereas other students raised their eyebrows after the instructions and looked anxious or worried. Students’ performance during group work varied too. While some students took the role as a leader, guided every member to participate and enjoyed the laughter brought by working in groups, students in other groups raised their hands and made complaints about ‘free-riders’ (i.e. members who were not devoting effort in the group work) or domination. In addition to my observation, surprisingly, all the mentors I have met during the three TPs maintained the same position that there must be some students who were left-behind during group work. This response contradicts to scholars’ opinions that group work is beneficial to English-learning because students can participate more and have ample opportunities to interact and communicate with peers (Davis, 1997; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Liang et al., 1998; Lord, 2007; Pattanpichet, 2011; Savignon, 2007). The Education Bureau under the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region also supports the integration of group work, such as group reading or writing, into English lessons so as to strengthen students’ both language skills as well as generic skills, particularly collaboration skills (CDC, 2004). However, the Curriculum Guide does not provide a clear definition towards the term ‘collaboration’ and tends to use it interchangeably with ‘cooperation’, which may confuse teachers.

While there is a vast amount of research studying the benefits and effectiveness of using group work in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms, regrettably, there is limited study in Hong Kong investigating primary students’ perceptions towards the use of group work in English lessons. Students’ voices are essential because they would facilitate teachers to understand how students think or feel about group work and hence, provide clues for teachers to improve their practice. Most importantly, students are the ones who ‘live the language learning experience’ (Liang et al., 1998, p.19) and thus, teachers are strongly advised to hear their voices and create an optimal learning climate for them.

To fill in the research gap, this Action Research (AR) aims at examining primary students' perceptions towards the use of group work in English lessons during my last TP from February to April 2014. Three research questions would be addressed in this AR:

(1) What happens when students are engaged in group work? Does their behavior change in any way following the interventions?

(2) How do students like group work in the English classroom? Does their perception change in any way following the interventions?

(3) How do I, as a teacher, facilitate students to learn in groups?

This paper will be divided into five chapters. While Chapter 1 is the *Introduction*, Chapter 2 is a *Literature Review* that aims at providing information in relations to English Language learning in Hong Kong educational context as well as the theoretical basis for the implementation of group work in ESL classrooms; Chapter 3, named *Methodology*, provides the details of the AR; Chapter 4, which is the *Findings and Discussion*, reports and critically analyzes the data collected; last but not least, Chapter 5 is the *Conclusion* that suggests some implications and limitations of the current study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 English learning in Hong Kong educational context

According to a report published by the Census and Statistics Department (CSD), in the year of 2011, the population of Hong Kong has exceeded seven millions and approximately 96% of the population can speak Cantonese and use it as the major language at home as well as in most of the situations such as communication with family, friends and other people in the society (CSD, 2011). Therefore, Chinese (specifically Cantonese) can be considered as the first language (L1) of most of the people in Hong Kong. Given that Hong Kong is a former colony of the United Kingdom as well as an international financial center, the status of English in Hong Kong cannot be underestimated. In addition, the Hong Kong Basic Law states that both Chinese and English are official languages of Hong Kong (National People's Congress of The People's Republic of China, 1990). Based on these circumstances, the learning of English as a second language (L2) or even third language has been promoted since colonial period (Evans, 1998).

2.1.1 Hong Kong students speaking English in groups: First Language Interference in Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the process that an individual learns a language other than his/ her mother tongue (Ellis, 1985; Nunan, 2001). The learning process can be either conscious (i.e. through explicit teaching of the language in a formal setting such as classroom) or subconscious (i.e. learning naturally such as interacting with others in daily situations) (Ellis, 1985).

L2 learners do not enter the classroom as blank paper. They begin learning L2 with prior knowledge of L1 (Cook, 1993). Lightbown & Spada (2006) proposed that L1 is influential in learning L2. Whether the influence is positive or negative, it depends on the similarity between the two language systems: similar features enjoyed by L1 and L2 would lead to positive progression in L2 whereas differences in the two language

systems may result in inhibition of L2 development (Ellis, 1985; Ringbom, 1987). Take Chinese and English as an example. They are different in areas such as directionality of writing (i.e. from up to down in Chinese whereas from left to right in English), punctuations (e.g. different symbols are used as ‘full-stop’ in Chinese and English-writing), grammar structure (e.g. the concept of using tenses to indicate ‘time’ is absent in Chinese) and vocabulary (e.g. ‘blue’ in English and ‘blue-color’ (*Chinese pinyin: lanse*)). These differences may cause confusion or even mistakes when ESL Chinese learners acquire English by relying on their L1 foundation.

2.1.2 Limited opportunity for students to participate and interact in Hong Kong classrooms

Scholars such as Tweed & Lehman suggested that culture shapes individuals’ thinking and behavior by providing ‘tools, habits, and assumptions’ (2002, p.1). This influence can also be observed in learning. Individuals’ conceptions of their roles as well as behaviors as learners are constructed on a cultural basis (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong is a traditional Confucian society and students’ belief towards learning is also molded by the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) (Nguyen et. al., 2006). For instance, some common characteristics demonstrated by Hong Kong Chinese learners include (i) learn passively and unilaterally from teachers, (ii) prefer rote learning and memorization (Nield, 2007) and (iii) consider teachers as the authority and source of knowledge. Based on these characteristics, it is observed that Hong Kong students seldom express their thoughts, raise problems or challenge teachers during lessons (Biggs, 1991; Bennett, 1994; Nguyen et al., 2005). As a result of this cultural belief, students’ participation and interactions with peers and/or teachers maintain to be low in local classrooms.

The long-established instructional model (i.e. rote learning) and roles of students may no longer be applicable in the 21st century classrooms. In order to cope with the rapid development and unpredictable challenges of the world, nowadays students are expected to move from learning passively to participating actively in their learning process (Kuhlthau et al., 2007). The tendency of equipping students with skills for this change of roles can be observed in the Hong Kong educational context. For

example, nine types of generic skills¹ are included in the Primary English Curriculum. The development of some of the generic skills such as collaboration and/or communication skills, problem-solving skills and self-management skills would be facilitated with the use of task-based approach and group learning (CDC, 2004), which will be discussed later. Furthermore, the Inspection Annual Report 2010-2011 also mentioned the use of peer interactions as well as collaborative learning for promoting the effectiveness of learning (Quality Assurance Division of Education Bureau, 2011).

2.1.3 Low confidence in using English

In general, Hong Kong Chinese learners' performance in receptive skills such as listening and reading tends to be better than their performance in productive skills (i.e. writing and speaking) (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; EDB, 2008; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). The latest Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) Report suggested that primary students in Key Stage 1 and 2 (P.3 and P.6) are weak in elaborating ideas in both writing and speaking; spelling as well as grammar mistakes are commonly found in writing. Also, some of the P.3 students hesitated to respond to examiners and only some of the more-proficient P.6 students were able to interact with examiners clearly and confidently (HKEAA, 2013). These comments serve as clear evidence that Primary students in Hong Kong need to improve their writing and speaking skills, particularly on accuracy of spelling and grammar, elaboration skills and most critically, their confidence in using English.

2.2 Use of group work in English lessons

2.2.1 Definition of group work

Scholars have reached common understandings towards the definition of group work that can be summarized as follow: group work is a face-to-face, student-centered learning process (Smith & MacGregor, 1992) that involves of two or more

¹ Nine types of generic skills include (1) collaboration skills, (2) communication skills, (3) creativity, (4) critical thinking skills, (5) information technology skills, (6) numeracy skills, (7) problem-solving skills, (8) self-management skills and (9) study skills (CDC, 2004, p.131).

participants (Dillenbourg, 1999; Smith & MacGregor, 1992). Group members are expected to maintain and work towards a common goal (Gillies & Ashman, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1994) by engaging in a variety of learning activities or tasks that enable them to explore and/or co-construct knowledge (Dillenbourg, 1999; Smith & MacGregor, 1992). Last but not least, students will be assessed as a group instead of individually (Gillies & Ashman, 2003). Figure 1 summarized the characteristics of group work.

Seven characteristics of group work
• Student-centered
• Face-to-face interactions among group members
• Two or more participants
• Common goal established
• Involves learning activities/ tasks
• Involves discovery or co-construction of knowledge
• Group assessment

Figure 1: Summary of characteristics of group work

2.2.1.1 Collaboration versus Cooperation

As provided in Chapter 1, the terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘cooperation’ are not clearly defined and are sometimes used interchangeably (e.g. in the English Language Curriculum for primary 1-6 (CDC, 2004)), which may confuse or mislead teachers while designing group work. Some scholars maintained the position that collaboration is a concept and an umbrella term that consists of cooperation whereas cooperation is a strategy to achieve collaboration (Chung, 1991; Smith & MacGregor, 1992). In another words, collaboration can only be achieved through the use of cooperation (Chai et al., 2011). Although the distinction between collaboration and cooperation has not been well-defined, some similarities and differences are identified.

Collaboration and cooperation are similar in the way that both of them involve students working with their peers for the same task. However, cooperation is slightly

different because it usually involves division of labor that students are provided with different roles and responsible for a part of the entire task (Lai, 2011). Smith and MacGregor (1992) submitted that cooperation is developed based on the interdependence theories proposed by Deutsch and Lewin (Deutsch, 1949; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Lewin, 1935). Through cooperation, students interact with each other and interdependent on each other positively for the achievement of learning objectives. Some examples of group work such as Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978) and Group Investigation (Johnson & Johnson, 1975) fulfill this underlying principle in the sense that students have to 'rely on each other to complete the demand of the task' (Bennett, 1994, p.55).

2.2.2 Developing literacy through working in groups

2.2.2.1 Theoretical framework

Social constructivists such as Vygotsky (1978) proposed that children develop both cognitively and linguistically through interacting with some more-able people such as adults and/or peers in social contexts. Through interpersonal interactions with others, children would be able to 'internalize and transform' (Gillies & Ashman, 2003) the content of interactions to intra-personal knowledge (i.e. the acquisition of new knowledge and skills). In addition, learning would be more significant if it takes place within students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) (i.e. a level that is slightly beyond their current capacity). By engaging students in heterogeneous group work (group that consists of students with diverse abilities), it allows less-proficient students to receive scaffoldings from more-able ones and ultimately, narrows down the discrepancy between students' current and expected capacity as well as boosts task achievement. Dewey (1966) also agreed that learning takes place through interacting and receiving feedback from others. By doing so, children would be able to equip themselves with some social-appropriate behaviors and cooperation skills.

Another scholar Piaget introduced the Theory of sociocognitive conflict (Dillenborg, et al., 1996) that, by arranging students to work in groups, they are encouraged to discuss and negotiate their knowledge with peers. When contradictions arise, students would be motivated to clarify and/or confirm their understandings by self-reflection

and exploration of the topic.

2.2.2.2 Benefits of group work

Vast amount of scholars have recognized the positive impacts of using group work for enhancing students' SLA (Davis, 1997; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Liang et al., 1998; Lord, 2007; Savignon, 2007; Thornbury, 2005). The major advantages of group work include (i) providing more exposure to the targeted language, (ii) increasing students' participation, (iii) allowing authentic interactions and (iv) creating a positive learning atmosphere.

Providing more exposure to the targeted language

Through the use of group work, students would be exposed to the targeted language more frequently through listening and speaking (i.e. receiving input and producing output) (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2005). The input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) and the input and interaction hypothesis (Long, 1985; Pica et al., 1987) concluded that the more comprehensible input an individual receives, the more facilitated his/her SLA will be. While frequent input does not necessarily promote SLA, input at comprehensible level (i+1) would aid learners' understanding of the speech and hopefully, encourage the production of comprehensible output (Foster, 1998). Group work serves as a platform for listeners to have negotiation of meaning and seek for clarification instantly if the input is not comprehensible to them. For speakers, they are also responsible for modifying their speech to comprehensible level by using synonyms, rephrasing and/or providing explanations so as to maintain communication (Long & Porter, 1985).

Increasing students' participation

Students' participation towards the lesson would be promoted (Davis, 1997; Long & Porter, 1985). As suggested earlier, the classroom culture in Hong Kong is perceived to be teacher-centered that teachers take a dominant role in lessons by lecturing (i.e. unilateral transmission of knowledge from teachers to students) (Long & Porter, 1985). Under this mode of instructions, students can only participate by answering teachers' questions and the amount of participation is also restricted to the number of times teachers calls on students (Davis, 1997). With group work, the authority is

dispersed from teachers to students. By involving in discussion and exploration of problems with peers, students now become autonomous and active participants in learning (Davis, 1997; Long & Porter, 1985; Taylor, 2002), which enables them to learn best (Gross,1993).

Allowing authentic interactions

Group work serves as a simulation of real-life conversations that encourages students to have genuine interactions with peers and teachers (Davis, 1997; Long & Porter, 1985; Taylor, 2002; Bejarano et al., 1997). In addition to the fact that working in groups establishes an authentic and meaningful context for students to communicate, it also involves students in unplanned speech as well as the development of conversational management skills such as turn-taking, responding to others, showing disagreement, interrupting, and/or clarifying etc. (Davis, 1997; Gibbons, 2002; Long & Porter, 1985). These skills would be particular useful in daily conversations that are less structured. By providing opportunity for students to explore and practice these skills during group work, hopefully it prepares them for using English as a means for communication in daily life.

Creating a positive learning atmosphere

It is widely believed that the use of group work can create a positive learning atmosphere. Both the TSA report (HKEAA, 2013) as well as scholars such as Foster (1998) have commented that students are anxious about the use of spoken English for communication. Scholars such as Pattanpichet (2007) provided that frequent exposure to group work helps familiarize students with tasks as well as their peers, which consequently lowers students' affective filter and reduces anxiety. This argument is supported by the findings in Koch and others' (1991) research: students reported that they feel most comfortable while working in groups. Thus, the use of group work is regarded as an effective tool for creating a non-threatening learning climate, building students' confidence in using the language and motivating students (Long & Porter, 1985; Taylor, 2002).

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Types of research

An action research (AR) was conducted for investigating students' perceptions towards the use of group-work during English lessons. An AR is a cyclic process that involves elements of 'action' and 'research' (Burns, 1999). While 'action' emphasizes on planning and implementing the plan, 'research' goes beyond mere actions. It brings practitioners to observing and reflecting upon the implementation of the plan and ultimately, provides insights on how the plan can be improved (Burns, 1999; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). AR is also a 'self-reflective enquiry' process that aims at raising teachers' awareness towards their own teaching in terms of promoting 'rationality' and 'justice' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.162).

For this study, the AR was conducted over the 8-week teaching practicum and was divided into two research cycles (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2). Each of the cycles lasted for four weeks (Cycle 1 from Week 1-4; Cycle 2 from Week 5-8). Stages such as planning, implementing, observing and reflecting were included in every cycle. Figure 2 helps illustrate the two cycles of the AR.

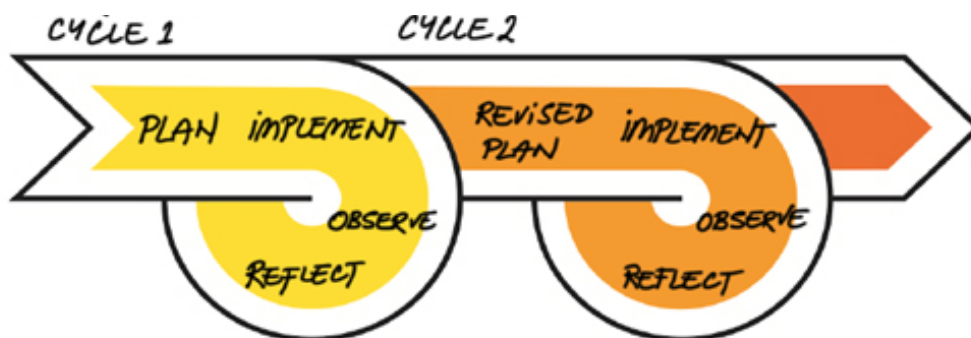


Figure 2: An illustration for AR cycles

Retrieved from <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk>

3.2 Context of the Action Research

3.2.1 Research site

The research was conducted in a government-aided Christian primary school located in Kwun Tong. There are 24 teachers in school, including 22 local teachers and two NET teachers. There are approximately 350 students in this school. The school adopts Chinese as its Medium of Instructions (MOI) and teachers use Cantonese to teach most of the subjects (excluding English) and conduct school assemblies and/or extra-curricular activities.

3.2.2 Participants

Data was collected from two classes of Key Stage One and Two respectively (i.e. Primary Two and Five). Both the students and English teachers of the two classes were invited to participate in the research.

3.2.2.1 My roles in the AR

As a student-teacher teaching English to Class 2B and 5B, in this AR, I am taking both the roles as a teacher as well as a researcher. By taking up the two roles, I could identify some rooms of improvement for the use of group work in the two classes, conduct data collection through a variety of means, and most importantly, implement the plan by myself and reflect accordingly. This makes the AR an tailor-made one that fit into classes that I taught and promotes my professional development as a teacher.

3.2.2.2 Basic information of the two classes

My targeted participants are from Class 2B and 5B. For the Class 2B, there are 27 students, including 19 girls and 8 boys aged around 7 to 8 years old. All the students are Chinese and a majority of them speak Cantonese as their first language (while three to four students in the class speak Putonghua as their mother-tongue). Most of them come from lower-socioeconomic background. The English proficiency of this class is below average, having listening slightly better than reading, writing and

speaking. Although most of the students are able to understand short English instructions, they find it difficult to communicate in spoken and written English. In general, students are participative and self-motivated to engage in different learning activities. Students are divided into six groups and each of the groups contains 4 to 5 members of heterogeneous English proficiency (usually 1 more-proficient, 2-3 intermediate and 1 less-proficient). The groups sit and work together not only in English lessons but also lessons of other subjects.

While for the Class 5B, there are 30 students and the proportion of boys and girls is equal. Students are around 10 to 11 years old. All the students are Chinese and speak Cantonese as their first language. Similar to Class 2B, most of the students in this class come from lower-socioeconomic background. The English proficiency of this class is average. A majority of students are able to understand English instructions and communicate in English using complete sentences. However, they are relatively weak in spelling. The class is well-behaved yet passive and quiet during English lessons. Different from the classroom setting of Class 2B, 5B students are arranged to sit in rows and will only form groups under teachers' instructions. All the groups contain 5-6 students of heterogeneous English-proficiency (usually 2 more-proficient, 3 intermediate and 1 less-proficient).

3.2.2.3 Basic information of the teachers interviewed and their use of group-work in English lessons

Before stepping into the classroom and listening to students' voices, I have done two informal one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the English teachers of Class 2B and 5B, Miss. F and Mr. R (pseudonyms) in Week 1 of the first AR cycle, with the purpose of understanding the use of group-work in their English lessons (*See Appendix 1 for the interview protocol*). Both the interviews were conducted in Cantonese and switched to English when I asked questions. Each of the interviews lasted for approximately 15 to 25 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded, one of them was then transcribed as sample in *Appendix 2*. Their responses are summarized in the following figure (Figure 3).

Summary of Miss. F and Mr. R's responses regarding their use of group-work			
	Miss. F	Mr. R	Notes
1. Definition	Students divided into groups; each group consists of students of different abilities; students taking different roles; have a common goal to work on		/
2. Use of group-work	Yes		/
3. Frequency	1-2 times per unit	1 time per unit	/
4. Examples	Discussion and Group-writing		/
5. Observation during group-work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly participative; • Always argue; • Some students left-behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement between group members; • Some students have low participation; • Using Cantonese; • Domination and left-behind; 	<p><u>Miss. F</u>: Students argue because they don't understand their roles;</p> <p><u>Miss. F and Mr. R</u>: Low participation and left-behind due to</p>

		• More-proficient students helping less-proficient students	(1) English proficiency and (2) motivation
6. Class's general perception towards group-work	Like doing group-work	Average	<u>Mr. R:</u> Depending on the design of the task and students' motivation
7. Teaching students some group-work skills	No		<u>Miss. F:</u> Not necessary because it is not the objectives of the lesson

Figure 3: Summary of teachers' responses

3.2.2.3 Basic information of the targeted students

Six students (three from each class) were selected as the targeted students. They are all Chinese and speak Cantonese as their first language. Targeted students from each class were selected according to their English proficiency and participation in class. The descriptions of students are summarized in Figure 4.

Descriptions of students' performance	Class	Names (pseudonyms)
More-proficient; always volunteer to participate	2B	Christy
	5B	Jessica
Intermediate; sometimes participate	2B	Tommy
	5B	Yoshi
Less-proficient; participate only when prompted	2B	Winnie
	5B	Timothy

Figure 4: Summary of targeted students

3.3 Procedures of the data collection

3.3.1 Data collection instruments

A variety of instruments were used for data collection, including (i) questionnaire, (ii) interview, (iii) lesson plans, (iv) observation and observational note and (v) teaching journal.

3.3.1.1 Quantitative data

Questionnaires (*See Appendix 3 for a sample*) were distributed to students in both classes twice (after each group work in the two AR cycles) for collecting quantitative data on the class's general perception towards the use of group-work in English lessons. For both the first and second questionnaire, 17 responses were collected from 2B whereas 30 responses were received from 5B. The results of the questionnaires were summarized, tabulated and will be presented in the forthcoming chapter (i.e. Findings and discussion). By doing questionnaires, it enables researchers to reach and obtain data from a larger population as well as gain a general and objective understanding towards the research questions (Harris & Brown, 2010; Phellas et al., 2011).

3.3.1.2 Qualitative data

I have done two semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the targeted students about their experience of engaging in group work respectively (*See Appendix 4 for the interview protocol*). Both the interviews were conducted in Week 5 or 6 of AR cycle 2. They were conducted in Cantonese, which is the first language of mine as well as the students', and after school in their classrooms. Each of the interviews lasted for approximately 20 to 40 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and one of them was transcribed in Chinese with English translations (*See Appendix 5*). The interviews were semi-structured so that interviewer could enjoy the flexibility to go beyond the interview protocol and ask further questions promptly based on interviewees' responses (e.g. seeking for clarifications and/or details) (Harris and Brown, 2010). Furthermore, a face-to-face interview also allows interviewer to observe both verbal

and non-verbal clues exhibited by the interviewees and hence, provide explanations and/or exemplifications if interviewees are found to be uncertain about the questions (Phellas et al., 2011).

Lesson plans were written while I was planning for the two interventions in Cycle 1 and 2 (*Appendix 6a-6d*). In the lesson plans, information such as learning objectives, procedural stages, class activities and groups' formation was recorded so as to facilitate smooth implementation of the lessons.

During the implementation of interventions, in-class observations were recorded with the use of observational notes (*See Appendix 7 for a sample*). Teacher observed and recorded the behaviors and responses of targeted students while they were working in groups. These data included students' roles in groups, sequence of turn-taking and/or some dialogues within the groups. With the use of an observational note, teachers would be able to scribble and jot down important observations during lessons so as to facilitate the interpretations of data as well as reflections afterwards (Burns, 1999).

Teaching journals were completed after the implementation of interventions (*See Appendix 8 for a sample*). After interventions, by reviewing the observational notes taken during lessons, some reflections such as the strengths and limitations of the interventions were made for assisting future planning. Teaching journals serve as an effective tool that allows teachers to express and explain their thoughts thoroughly, reflect on their own practice constantly, think critically and creatively for developing strategies to improve interventions during AR (Bailey et al., 2001; Lee, 2008; Myers, 2012).

In addition to collecting data, with the use of these methods, it also enabled me to do reflection. By reviewing the lesson plan, observational note and teaching journal in Cycle 1, I could identify the strengths and weaknesses of the first intervention and thus, made improvement accordingly in the second intervention in Cycle 2.

3.3.2 Timeframe for Action Research Cycles

The two AR cycles and the procedures taken in each of the cycle are summarized in the following figures:

Cycle One (Week 1-4)	
Data collection procedures for Class 2B and 5B	
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted interview with teachers; selected 3 targeted students from each class <u>Instruments:</u> Interview protocol for teachers
Week 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed and implemented the first group-work; distributed questionnaires to students; <u>Instruments:</u> Lesson plan, observational note, teaching journal and students' questionnaires
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected students' first questionnaires; analyzed the data and reflected; designed the second group-work <u>Instruments:</u> students' questionnaire, observational notes, teaching journal and lesson plan

Figure 5: Summary of AR Cycle One

Cycle Two (Week 5-8)	
Data collection procedures for Class 2B and 5B	
Week 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented the second group-work; distributed questionnaires to students; conducted interviews with students <u>Instruments:</u> lesson plan, observational note, questionnaires for students, interview protocol for students and teaching journal
Week 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected students' second questionnaires; analyzed the data and reflected; <u>Instruments:</u> students' questionnaire, observational note and teaching journal

Figure 6: Summary of AR Cycle Two

3.4 Ethical considerations

Before the implementation of the AR, consent forms (*See Appendix 9a-9c*) were provided for different parties (including the school principal, the two English teachers Miss. F and Mr. R and parents of students from Class 2B and 5B) to read and respond by signing the reply slips attached. The data collected was treated with utmost confidentiality and pseudonyms were used for this study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Description of group work in Cycle 1

4.1.1 Group work with 2B in Cycle 1

According to the interview with Miss. F (*See Figure 3*), students in 2B usually work in groups for producing group writings and thus, it is expected that they are familiar with writing in groups. In the first cycle of AR, I have designed and conducted a group-writing task named '*Promoting our supermarket*' with them. The objectives of this task were to (i) consolidate students' understandings towards vocabulary items related to food and drinks as well as the written expressions of prices and (ii) expose students to written advertisement as a text type. To achieve the task, students were expected to work in their groups (each consists of 4 to 5 members), discuss and negotiate for at least three issues: (1) choices of food and/or drinks, (2) prices of the food and/or drinks selected and (3) the design of the advertisement. Students had to draw and name the food/drinks as well as write down the prices. This task provided students with full autonomy and judgment was only made to the accuracy of language (i.e. spelling and expressions of price) (*See Appendix 6a for the lesson plan*).

4.1.2 Group work with 5B in Cycle 1

As from the interview with Mr. R (*See Figure 3*), students in 5B have done group discussions previously and therefore, I have planned and implemented a short discussion task '*Differences between 'so' and 'so that'*' for them in Cycle 1 of the AR. The purposes of the task included (i) exposing students to the use of connectives 'so' and 'so that' to form complex sentences (connecting main clauses with connectives and subordinate clauses so as to provide either a result or purpose) and (ii) enabling students to notice the difference in terms of the functions of the two connectives. During the task, students had to (1) work in groups of 5 to 6, (2) read and understand the sentences, (3) discuss, negotiate and match the connectives as well as the subordinate clauses with the main clauses, (4) read the sentences again and identify the functions of each of the connectives. There was limited autonomy in this

task since a definite answer was expected. Judgments were made towards the correctness of matching and explanation of the functions of ‘so’ and ‘so that’ (*See Appendix 6b for the lesson plan*).

4.2 Evaluation of the intervention and data analysis of Cycle 1

A few procedures were taken for collecting data and evaluating the two group work tasks implemented in 2B and 5B respectively during Cycle 1. These measures included conducting observations (with the use of observational notes), distributing questionnaires to students as well as writing reflections in teaching journals. By analyzing the data collected and doing reflections, some deficiencies of the two group work done in Cycle 1 were identified. The findings of Cycle 1 were summarized in Table 1.

By analyzing and reflecting on the data collected from AR Cycle 1, surprisingly, the group work tasks implemented in both 2B and 5B demonstrated similar weaknesses including: (i) the communicative purposes of the tasks were not strong which led to imbalance participation among group members and arguments in groups and (ii) failed to serve as a means for encouraging students to communicate in English and/or to learn English.

4.3 Description of group work in Cycle 2

To repair the deficiencies mentioned earlier, some teaching strategies such as improving the communicative purposes of tasks, assigning roles for students and providing language inputs (both targeted language as well as language for interactions) were integrated into the group work in Cycle 2.

4.3.1 Group work with 2B in Cycle 2

In Cycle 2, I have planned another group writing task ‘*Our robot helper*’ and conducted it with Class 2B. The objectives of this writing task included consolidating students’ understanding towards lexis related to daily routines and/or housework as well as familiarizing students with one of the functions of Simple Present Tense for

telling habits/ routines. In this task, students were required to work in groups and design a group robot helper as well as its timetable (i.e. daily duties). The robot helper was expected to help every individual in the group for something that they have to do everyday. Therefore, at the beginning of the task, students were expected to take turns to share their everyday duties or routines with their group members, which was followed by discussion and selection of a few duties for their group robot. In order to improve the limitations identified in Cycle 1, before starting the task, I have assigned roles for every student in the group. These roles included: 1 writer, 1 designer, 1-2 presenter(s) and 1 checker. Furthermore, apart from eliciting and providing ‘content’ language (i.e. lexis related to daily routines/ duties) to students, during pre-task stage, I have also suggested the use of polite phrases for indicating agreement and disagreement, wrote them down on the blackboard and told students that they could use these phrases during discussion (*See Appendix 6c for the lesson plan*).

4.3.2 Group work with 5B in Cycle 2

For the group work that I have planned for Class 5B in Cycle 2, it was an integrated speaking and writing task named ‘*What should/ should we do?*’. The objectives of this group work were to consolidate students’ understanding towards the use of (i) modal verbs ‘should’ and ‘shouldn’t’ to give suggestions and (ii) connective ‘so that’ to state purposes. To achieve the group work, students were required to work in groups, read the scenario provided, discuss and brainstorm two suggestions (i.e. one ‘should’ and one ‘shouldn’t’) for the scenario. The group discussion was followed by a group presentation. During the presentation, 2 students from each group acted out the given scenario and invited the audience (i.e. the rest of the class) to guess the scenario as well as provide some suggestions. Before starting the task, similar to the strategies adopted in Class 2B in Cycle 2, I have assigned some roles (i.e. 2 actors, 1 writer, 2 checkers and 1 time-keeper) and introduced some phrases for suggesting ideas and/or showing agreement and/disagreement to this class (*See Appendix 6d for lesson plan*).

4.4 Evaluation of the intervention and data analysis of Cycle 2

In the second AR cycle, data was collected by observation, distribution of questionnaires to students as well as interviews. Findings were summarized in the Table 2.

Based on the findings, the two group work done in Class 2B and 5B in Cycle 2 possessed different limitations. For the one in 2B, it may not be personalized and motivating enough for some of the students because their ideas may not be included in the product (i.e. the routines of the robot). Also, due to their limited English resources, they relied heavily on using the two polite phrases taught during pre-task stage for indicating agreement/disagreement, which consequently reduced the authenticity of the group interactions; while for the one done in 5B, the allocation of roles was not perfect. As observed, one to two students in the class who took the role as a time-keeper did not contribute at all and went daydreaming. Moreover, students did not receive sufficient inputs for preparing them to discuss about the acting part of the task. Consequently, students code-switched to use Cantonese to discuss how the actors should act. In future lessons, it is recommended that the allocation of roles and teaching of communicative language during pre-task stage can carry on with some modifications (e.g. the design of roles) whilst efforts have to be made in improving task-design and providing scaffoldings.

4.5 Discussion

In this section, the three research questions specified in Chapter 1 will be addressed based on the findings.

4.5.1 Research Question 1: What happens when students are engaged in group work? Does their behavior change in any way following the interventions?

From my observation during the implementation of group work in both classes in Cycle 1, situations such as students dominating or being left-behind as well as code-mixing of Cantonese and English were identified.

4.5.1.1 Students dominating the task or being left-behind

In Cycle 1, imbalanced participation among group members was not rare in both Class 2B and 5B. It was found in half of the groups (3 out of 6) in Class 2B and more disappointedly, all groups in 5B. For example, in the 2B class, at the beginning of the task, all students put their heads together and tried to brainstorm what food and/or drinks to be included in the advertisement. However, after three minutes when most of the groups were constructing their advertisement, it was observed in some of the groups that only 1-2 more proficient group-members were working whilst others (i.e. intermediate and less-proficient learners) were either chatting or daydreaming. Among the three targeted participants in 2B, only Christy and her group were working together whereas Tommy and Winnie were found to be daydreaming and thus, left-behind in their own groups. While in Class 5B, as suggested earlier, dominations existed in all groups right at the beginning of the task and consequently, arguments within groups arose. Similar to the situation in Class 2B, students who dominated the task were mostly more-proficient ones. The three targeted students performed differently in this group work. For instance, Jessica was trying to match the paper strips and occasionally asked for opinions from her group members; Yoshi did not participate nor give opinions at all since the beginning of the task, she sat there and observed others; while for Timothy, he tried to participate by moving the paper strips and giving opinions (e.g. he told his group-members '*I think is 'so'.*'). However, the more-proficient learners in his group ignored his contribution by taking away the paper strips from his hand without asking and not responding to his opinions.

Based on the above observations, one of the interventions made in Cycle 2 was to assign roles for every student. By assigning roles, hopefully, every member in the group would have their responsibilities and could make contributions to the final product (Gillies, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Encouragingly, the problem of imbalanced participation among group members was alleviated. For the 2B class, domination was observed in only one of the groups whereas it was not found in any of the groups in Class 5B. Furthermore, only 1-2 students from each class were found to be left-behind.

This positive change in terms of students' participation in group work can also be observed in the findings of the questionnaires. Compared to the findings derived from Cycle 1, in Cycle 2, the number of students reported themselves to be 'always contributing' has raised in both Class 2B and 5B (See Table 3 & 4 for summary of 2B's findings and 5B's findings).

Reasons for students dominating or being left-behind during group work

Some of the potential reasons behind the imbalanced participation among group members during group work were investigated. To begin with, the imbalanced participation may be caused by the lack of group work practice. Given that students in both classes do not have much experience in doing group work, they may find themselves unfamiliar with how group work works. This can be improved by providing students with more exposure to group work since Pattanpichet (2011) submitted that by raising students' familiarity towards the use of group work, it helps boosting the effectiveness of group work.

In addition, the imbalance could also be a negative consequence brought by unsatisfactory task design. Take the first group work done with 5B as an example. Although rooms were provided and students were encouraged to discuss and negotiate the formation of sentences, after reflection, I realized that on one hand the cognitive demand for the task was too high, on the other hand, the social demand of the task was too low (Bennett, 1994). Before deciding which connective to be used, students were required to identify the relationships between the main and subordinate clauses as well as distinguish the functions of the two connectives. These demands may be cognitively and linguistically appropriate for more-proficient learners but at the same time, too challenging and beyond the ZPD of some less-proficient learners, which may consequently demotivate them (Krashen, 1981). In addition, as suggested earlier, the social demand of the task was considered to be low. Bennett (1994) proposed that a task used in group work has to be cooperatively-appropriate, meaning that it will achieve best by working with peers. Bejarano et al. (1997) commented that inherent motivation that encourages group members to interact is absent in one-way tasks such as discussions because the need to have information exchange among group members is not strong. Based on this opinion, the group work that I have done with 5B in Cycle

I may not be cooperatively-appropriate and thus, failed to promote interactions among group members.

In addition, students indicated that their proficiency in English also influences their degree of participation during group work. For example, Winnie and Timothy who are considered to be less-proficient and relatively passive in learning English, they expressed that they sometimes do not want to participate because of their limited English proficiency (Excerpt 1 & 2).

Excerpt 1

W (Winnie):	<i>Sometimes I would ignore people because I am too afraid...because I am afraid... and...and don't know how to pronounce the words, and...and...not able to help others...</i>
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Excerpt 2

Timothy:	My English is bad...my English is bad so I rarely help. To be honest, I sometimes would remind people, sometimes will read the passage, and if I can identify some mistakes, I would tell them...[I]usually check[their work]...[I]rarely suggest ideas...[my role in group] maybe is to check their work
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Their opinions echoed with scholars' findings that individuals' personality as well as language proficiency would affect their participations in groups (Bejarano et al.,1997). Therefore, in order to encourage students who are less-proficient to participate in groups, at the beginning of the use of group work (when students are not familiar with learning in groups), roles that required less production of language may be suitable for less-proficient learners.

4.5.1.2 Code-mixing and code-switching of Cantonese and English

Although scholars have pointed out that SLA learners may demonstrate mistakes caused by L1 interference (as suggested in 2.1.1), these mistakes were not obvious in students' group performance. Yet, code-mixing and code-switching of Cantonese and English were found during group work in both classes. For instance, as observed in

Cycle 1, groups in both classes used Cantonese for discussion but students occasionally mixed some English words or phrases (e.g. for students in 2B, these lexis included names of food/ drinks; while for 5B, the connectives ‘so’ and ‘so that’) into a sentence delivered in Cantonese. Another interesting observation was that, students were aware of the fact that they were expected to communicate in English during group work and thus, whenever I walked by, they switched to discuss in English and switched back to Cantonese later.

While both code-mixing and code-switching are common phenomena in Hong Kong ESL classrooms (Poon, 2010), one of the catalysts behind could be the uneven development in Cantonese and English (Bernardini & Schlyter, 2004). Students may find it more convenient to ‘borrow’ a word from English (e.g. in the current context, vocabulary related to food/ drinks and the connectives ‘so’ and ‘so that’) and use it as a gap-filler to fill-in the lexical gaps (Bernardini & Schlyter, 2004) and/or switch to their L1 when they lack language resources of L2 so as to maintain the fluency of interactions (Cipriani, 2001). Therefore, in order to maximize students’ use of English during group work, it is necessary to improve students’ discourse competence and strategic competence² by providing inputs of both content-language (i.e. targeted vocabulary or grammar) as well as interactional strategies (i.e. language needed for maintaining interactions) (Murcia & Dörnyei, 1995).

In Cycle 2, before the beginning of the group work, I revisited the targeted vocabulary and exposed students from both classes to some polite phrases for showing agreement and disagreement such as ‘That’s good!’ and/or ‘I don’t think so.’ By observation, although code-switching and code-mixing still existed during group work in Cycle 2, the use of English in groups has increased. For instance, in contrast to their performance in Cycle 1, all the groups in both classes had the attempt to use English for discussion. I also observed that almost all the groups (5 out of 6) in 2B and all groups in 5B used English (either the polite phrases taught during pre-task stage or students’ own language resources) for indicating agreement/ disagreement, which was

² Murcia & Dörnyei (1995) proposed that communicative competence refers to an individual’s capability to communicate with others and it is consisted of five elements, namely (i) discourse, (ii) linguistic, (iii) actional, (iv) sociocultural and (v) strategic competence. The better development of one’s communicative competence, the more fluent he/she can communicate with others.

never observed in Cycle 1. Furthermore, the use of Cantonese (whether it was code-mixing or code-switching) in 5B was only found when students were discussing and preparing for the acting, which was a process that required high demand of students' own language resources.

Regarding the use of code-switching and code-mixing, apart from Christy, all the interviewees from 2B and 5B suggested that they used both Cantonese and English during group work due to insufficient English knowledge (Excerpt 3-5); whilst for Christy, she indicated that her language choice depends on the 'importance' of language (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 3

Interviewer:	<i>Uh huh, then why... Tommy and Winnie, [why do] you use Cantonese occasionally?)</i>
Winnie:	<i>Something... Umm...</i>
Tommy:	<i>Don't know how to say [it in English].</i>

Excerpt 4

Interviewer:	<i>For example, take Winnie as an example, Angel... For <u>example</u>, when Angel has written a word, and you think 'Umm... this is not so good', then you... then are you going to use Cantonese or English to express it?</i>
Winnie:	<i>Cantonese.</i>
Interviewer:	<i>Cantonese, you will say 'this is not good' (in Cantonese). What about you, Tommy?</i>
Tommy:	<i>Cantonese too.</i>
Interviewer:	<i>Why would you use Cantonese?</i>
Tommy:	<i>Don't know how to express.</i>
Interviewer:	<i>How about Winnie? Is it [the same reason]?</i>
Winnie:	<i>Kind of.</i>

Excerpt 5

Interviewer:	<i>When do you use Cantonese?</i>
Timothy:	<i>When I don't understand after listening.</i>
Jessica:	<i>To express something that is hard to express... When it is too complicated, I don't know how to say...some difficult words...it's unclear to express in body language.</i>
Yoshi:	<i>[I use Cantonese when] I don't know the word.</i>

Excerpt 6

Interviewer:	<i>Then do you use Cantonese completely or sometimes English, sometimes Cantonese [during group work]?</i>
Tommy:	<i>Sometimes English, sometimes Cantonese</i>
Winnie:	<i>For me...I mainly use...use...English too, or Cantonese</i>
Christy:	<i>Partly English, use Cantonese for something that is more important</i>

These excerpts confirmed both my observations in the two cycles as well as Cipriani's (2001) opinions that students adopt code-mixing and/or code-switching because of the lack of L2. However, Christy's response sheds lights on another possibility, which is using L1 to achieve a particular purpose. Christy suggested that she would use Cantonese for something that is 'important'. My interpretation to this line is that, she would use Cantonese to achieve the purpose of making sure everyone in the group understands (since there are multiple less-proficient learners in her group). With this particular communicative purpose, the introduction of polite phrases in Cycle 2 may not encourage her to use more English whereas it may be effective to other students such as Tommy and Winnie. As from Hancock (1997), awareness-raising activities or teaching strategies are only useful to students who used L1 'by default' (i.e. due to limited L2) (p.233) and do not necessarily promote the use of L2 for students who used L1 purposely. Therefore, due to the uneven L1 and L2 development within a person and across individuals, code-mixing and code-switching still exist occasionally during group work.

4.5.2 Research Question 2: **How do students like group work in the English classroom? Does their perception change in any way following the interventions?**

The analysis of students' perceptions towards the use of group work in English lessons was done based on the data collected, mainly from questionnaires and interviews, and will be discussed in two dimensions: Experience strand and Belief Strand. The results of questionnaires from each class were tabulated and presented in Table 3 & 4.

4.5.2.1 Experience Strand

Under the experience strand, questions were asked for inviting students to reflect on and share about their previous group work experience (e.g. Questions 2,4 and 8 of the questionnaires).

“I am happy when I work in groups”

In general, students from both classes reported positively towards their experience of using group work in English lessons. For instance, in Cycle 1, a majority of students from 2B and 5B reported that they are happy when they work in groups during English lessons. Encouragingly, after the interventions in Cycle 2, a growing number of students who indicated themselves to be happy during group work was observed in both classes. However, some of the interviewed students also admitted that they have encountered some undesirable experience while working with peers (Excerpt 7-8).

Excerpt 7

Interviewer:	<i>...What was the [undesirable] experience about?</i>
Timothy:	<i>I didn't know what to do...and I asked them...they didn't tell me...</i>

Excerpt 8

Interviewer:	<i>Have you encountered some unhappy experience during group work?</i>
Jessica:	<i>Sometimes group members argued because they maintained different opinions, and they ignored each other. I found it very embarrassing and didn't know what to do. ...Then, I worked with other group members, and the arguing ones did not contribute.</i>

“I think working in groups is interesting”

Furthermore, a majority of students from both classes expressed their opinions that they find working in groups an interesting experience in the first cycle. After the interventions in Cycle 2, a greater number of students who shared the same opinion was observed. This may be due to the fact that, the two group work implemented in Cycle 2 engaged students’ use of creativity and imagination (e.g. for 2B, they had to imagine the existence of a household robot and for 5B, they had to make use of dramatic elements for acting), which served as a means to lower students’ affective filter (Dulay & Burt, 1977). Also, compared to the tasks done in Cycle 1, the two tasks implemented in Cycle 2 involved real audiences as students were required to either present their robots to the class or act the scenarios and give suggestions. This makes the two tasks more authentic and hence, students’ motivation may have increased (Davis, 1997).

“I always contribute during group work”

In addition, the percentages of students reporting themselves to be ‘always contribute during group work’ were average in both classes (approximately 70%) in the first questionnaire. My observation in Section 4.5.1.1 also revealed the fact that, uneven participation existed in both classes. Fortunately, after the interventions in Cycle 2, a slight increase was observed in both classes in terms the number of students regarding themselves as ‘always contribute’. This may be a positive impact brought by the allocation of roles. By allocating roles to students, it increases students’ responsibility towards working in groups and hence, facilitates the development of personal as well as group accountability (the sense that students in groups will be assessed individually and their performance will be influential to their group’s performance), which may eventually promote the standards of students’ work too (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Matsui et al., 1987).

4.5.2.2 Belief Strand

While for questions under the Belief Strand (e.g. Questions 1,6-7 & 10 of the questionnaire), they aim at investigating students’ perceptions and belief towards the use of group work in English lessons.

“I like doing group work”

To begin with, a lion share of students from both classes has indicated that they like doing group work during English lessons and the numbers have increased after the interventions in Cycle 2. Interviewed students from Class 2B have suggested a variety of reasons explaining why they like doing group work (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

Interviewer:	<i>Then...do you like doing group work?</i>
Tommy:	<i>Yes.</i>
Winnie:	<i>Yes.</i>
Christy:	<i>Yes.</i>
Interviewer:	<i>Like? Why do you like?</i>
Tommy:	<i>[Because I] can gain knowledge.</i>
Winnie:	<i>Can...<u>Er</u>...learn a <u>lot</u>.</i>
Christy:	<i>[I] <u>can</u> listen to many people's opinions</i>

While many potential reasons could explain why students like doing group work, one of the reasons could be cultural influence. Scholars such as Reid (1987) has done researches towards how foreign students like doing group work and the result was shocking since none of her participants responded positively on this issue. Flowerdew (1998) commented that Hong Kong students are living in a society that is filled with CHC (as discussed in Section 2.1.2), which emphasizes on social relationships, harmony and cooperation among members in the society. Having these features of CHC embedded into students' bodies, compared to foreign learners, Hong Kong students may exhibit higher degree of acceptance and welcome towards the use of group work

Although a majority of students in Class 5B have reported themselves in favour of the use of group work in English lessons, the three interviewees maintained a neutral stance. They expressed their opinions that, whether they like doing a group work, largely depends on the task design as well as their group members' attitudes during the task (Excerpt 9).

Excerpt 9

Interviewer:	What makes you like doing group work?
Jessica:	Peers participate enthusiastically, task is interesting, and classmates are doing it seriously.
Yoshi:	Peers participate enthusiastically and they want to participate.
Timothy:	Peers participate enthusiastically and task is interesting.

Their comments reflected that both task design and fairness in groups are their priorities in valuing group work. While task design will be discussed in Section 4.5.3.1, the issue of fairness (which has not been raised by any of the P.2 students) may be due to biological change. As suggested by Cole & Cole (1996), children at the age of Middle Childhood would begin to develop their thinking towards fairness. Potentially, this may explain why division of labor is embraced by the P.5 interviewees.

“Working in groups helps me learn English”

A preponderance of students from both classes has indicated that they agreed that the use of group work is facilitative in terms of helping them to learn English. The amounts of students have even risen slightly after the interventions in Cycle 2. Some of the interviewed students also shared identical opinions (Excerpt 10-12).

Excerpt 10

Christy:	<i>Umm...Smart students...Just like for me, when I don't understand, I can ask him/her; some students who are not smart, they may have other strengths, and I can ask them too.</i>
	<i>Umm...group work allows me...<u>can[to]</u>...have clearer understanding [towards the subject content].</i>

Excerpt 11

Winnie:	<i>Before I was not smart, and she always comes first in every subject, then I knew her, and started to...some...learn some English, now begin to...[I am] able to get 80 something in English examinations.)</i>
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Excerpt 12

Jessica:	[I] can...hear what people are thinking...and...learn some good sentences [from others]...when I spell a word wrong, my friends will tell me...but it [group work] is not useful if we speak in Cantonese.
Yoshi:	I can see how people think...everyone's English ability is different, [I] can learn from others.
Timothy	Everyone teaching each others, consolidating the knowledge

These excerpts reflected students' stance clearly: they believe that the use of group work can help improve their English proficiency because it allows them to gain assistance from peers. Bennett (1994) proposed that, by engaging students in group work, it allows negotiation of meaning as well as clarifications to take place between individuals of diverse English proficiency (i.e. the concept of comprehensible input and output (Foster, 1998; Krashen, 1982). Two of the interviewees, Jessica and Yoshi, pointed out that by engaging in group work, it enables them to 'see and hear' what people are thinking. This may imply that, with the purpose of communication, group work can serve as a platform for encouraging students to 'think aloud' (i.e. verbalize their thinking process) and eventually, promoting information exchange and learning among group members (McLoughlin & Oliver, 1998).

4.5.3 *Research Question 3: How do I, as a teacher, facilitate students to learn in groups?*

By reflecting upon the AR that I have done, some implications were identified for facilitating students to learn in groups more effectively. These implications include the (i) use of authentic and communicative tasks, (ii) enhancing students' communicative competence as well as (iii) promoting allocation of roles.

4.5.3.1 *Use of authentic and communicative tasks*

While one of the characteristics of group work illustrated in Figure 1 is students' involvement in a task, in order to promote interactions among students and motivate them to learn English in groups, authentic and communicative tasks are recommended (Davis, 1997; Lee, 1995). Teachers have to be aware of the fact that simply organizing students to sit in groups never guarantees interactions nor learning, the only catalyst that stimulates the advantages of learning in groups is a meaningful task that involves strong degrees of social demand (i.e. a communicative purpose) as well as authenticity. A task is considered to be 'authentic' if it could engage students in contexts and language that simulate real-life situations (Davis, 1997; Lee, 1995). In addition, a group-work task has to be 'communicative', meaning that the need for group members to have information exchange is embedded (Bejarano et al., 1997; Prabhu, 1987;).

The benefits of using authentic and communicative tasks are well-recorded by a wide range of scholars (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Widdowson, 2003). First of all, a well-designed authentic task allows the integration of both receptive (i.e. reading and listening) and productive (i.e. speaking and writing) skills that facilitates students' language development as a whole instead of as isolated skills (Oxford, 2011). Also, an authentic task itself is a stimulus directing students to have genuine interactions and experience many real-world interactional elements such as negotiation of meaning, interrupting, seeking for clarification or explanation, showing agreement and/or disagreement, making instant decisions, changing of topics or ideas as well as providing feedback to other participants. While these elements are usually absent in structured interactions, the use of authentic task in group work can serve as

a simulation of real-world interactions that allows students to have a taste of the complexity of real-world interactions and ultimately, provide them with ample chances to build and consolidate skills for communications outside classrooms (Lee, 1995). Most critically, the use of authentic task focuses students on meaning-making rather than accuracy of language. This helps lower students' affective filters as well as reduce their anxiety in learning English. With the frequent use of authentic tasks, together with the benefits brought by group work, hopefully, it raises students' motivation, interests and confidence in learning English (Shomoossi & Ketabi, 2007).

As observed from both Class 2B and 5B that the motivation of learning English for some of the students maintained to be low, and as provided in Chapter 2 that ESL learners are relatively weak in production skills and lack the confidence of maintaining genuine interactions, the use of authentic tasks in groups or in classrooms may facilitate them to overcome these difficulties and make improvement.

4.5.3.2 Enhancing students' communicative competence

From my observation during the implementation of group work in Cycle 1 and 2, it was noticed that some students were not familiar with the manner of doing group work (e.g. argued during group work, did not engage everyone in the group and/or code-switched to Cantonese while giving comments to peers' work) and thus, influenced the effectiveness of group work.

Although one of the teachers (i.e. Miss. F) has mentioned in the interview (*Appendix 2*) that there is no need for teachers to equip students with skills for doing group work, many scholars have suggested that the teaching of interactional skills is necessary (Bejarano et.al, 1997; Bennett, 1994; Murica & Dörnyei, 1995) for preparing students to become mature communicators. These scholars may have used different terms for describing the social skills needed for interaction (e.g. 'communicative competence', 'social skills', 'modified-interaction strategies' and/or 'social-interaction strategies'), but in general, they possess identical stance that, in addition to inputs of the targeted language, inputs of language and skills for maintaining communication within the group are also required. For instance, Bejarano et al. (1997) proposed that group work will only be effective when students have acquired both modified-interaction

strategies (i.e. strategies used for assisting comprehension) such as language needed for seeking help and explanations from other group members as well as social-interaction strategies (i.e. participation skills that maintain the flow of interactions), like knowledge of how to interrupt and perform turn-taking.

One of the interventions in Cycle 2 was to introduce two polite phrases to students to show agreement and disagreement in groups and from observation, the teaching of these phrases did not merely reduce students' use of code-switching when they wanted to agree or disagree with their group members, encouragingly, it also raised students' awareness towards how they should respond to others' effort during group work as some of the P.5 students used their own language such as 'No!' or 'Yes, I like it' to show disapproval or appreciation to their peers. This experience affirmed my belief that students' performance in group work will be enhanced progressively when teachers are ready and willing to provide them with some training.

4.5.3.3 Promoting allocation of roles

From my interview with the 5B students, all the three interviewees embraced the division of roles during pre-task stage in Cycle 2. They believe that when roles are assigned to every individual student, the participation among group members would be promoted (Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 13

Interviewer:	<i>What is your opinion towards allocation of roles?</i>
Timothy:	<i>Good. There will be division of labor and everyone shares the workload... [it will be] easier to complete [the task].</i>
Yoshi:	<i>Ok. Everyone will work.</i>
Jessica:	<i>[It will be] better. When roles are assigned for students, everyone will work. But when there is no division of labor, some students may not contribute.</i>
Interviewer:	<i>What would happen if there <u>is</u> no allocation of roles among group members?</i>
Jessica:	<i>Less-clear [on what we have to do]</i>
Interviewer:	<i>So you like clear division of labor?</i>
Timothy:	<i>Yes.</i>

As suggested in 2.2.1.1, one of the major differences between collaboration and cooperation is that, in a cooperative task, roles allocation is usually involved. Although students' achievement of collaboration is an ultimate goal provided in the Curriculum Guide (CDC, 2004), in order to prepare students who are not familiar with group-work practice to learn in groups, the use of cooperative tasks at early stage is considered to be an alternative. Gillies (2007) and Johnson & Johnson (1994) proposed that the use of cooperative tasks boosts students' individual accountability (i.e. the sense of individual responsibility when working in groups) and eventually, cultivate and strengthen the sense of group accountability (i.e. the culture of contributing, encouraging, facilitating and supporting every group member). In this case, the use of cooperative tasks that involves students taking up a variety of roles

can serve as a stepping stone for developing students' capacity for doing group work collaboratively.

To conclude, the allocation of roles does not merely raise students' affection for participating in group work in English lessons, it also prepares students to move from working cooperatively to collaboratively in the future.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Implications of the findings

5.1.1 Primary students' perceptions towards the use of group work

Based on the findings analyzed in the previous chapter, generally my targeted participants in this research responded positively towards the use of group work in English lessons and they indicated favorably for the effectiveness of group work in facilitating their English-learning. Moreover, some of the targeted students from Key Stage 2 suggested two main factors that influence their attitudes towards the use of group work, which is task design and peers' attitudes. They expressed that they would only enjoy participating in group work if the task is interesting and their group members are enthusiastic towards the task. In addition, from my experience in this AR, it is found that by teaching students some communicative strategies such as the use of polite phrases to show agreement/ disagreement, it could promote the quantity of students' use of English. Last but not least, by assigning roles to students, it ensures even participations among group members during task.

5.1.2 Implications for teachers

Given that the use of group work is widely-promoted in the English Curriculum Guide in Hong Kong, in order to facilitate the implementation of group work in classrooms, there is a need for equipping both pre-service and in-service teachers some strategies required for conducting group work. These trainings can be done through professional development workshops or tertiary education.

5.2 Limitations of the research

5.2.1. Small body of research

In this research, participants came from one class in Primary 2 and 5 respectively and only 6 out of 47 participants were invited for interview. Therefore, the scale of this

research is quite small and can merely provide readers with a limited scope of information in relations to the situation of conducting group work in ESL classrooms and students' perception towards the use of group work in English lessons.

5.2.2. The subjective nature of AR

One of the advantages as well as a disadvantage of AR is that it is a problem-based enquiry approach. By doing an AR, it enables teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching, collect data through different measures, reflect on their practice and ultimately, make improvement in a particular field of their practice. This process drives teachers' attention to the situation of their own classrooms. Therefore, the findings are subjective and the interventions are tailor-made to fulfill the need of a particular class, which may not be applicable to other classrooms.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

There are two recommendations for later research. For example, given that the current AR was carried out over a relatively short period of time and consisted of a small pool of participants, interested parties may consider conducting the same research over a longer period of time (e.g. over a school year) with expansion in the scale of research. Hopefully, this allows the implementation of a wide range of group work, the collection of opinions from students of different learning styles and abilities as well as a longer investigation towards students' perceptions (in particular, the change of students' perceptions over a period of time (if any)). By doing so, it increases the objectivity of the research.

Further studies can also be done in relations to teachers' perceptions. Based on my TP experience, I noticed that teachers' perceptions towards the use of group work in English lessons do not align with neither students' nor EDB's. It may be a wise idea for researchers to hear teachers' voices, identify potential reasons and implications for narrowing down the discrepancy. This makes the Curriculum Guide not just rhetoric, but a practical guide informing teaching and learning.

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Appendix 1: Interview Protocol for English teachers

Interview Protocol for English teachers

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for attending this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding on the use of group work in your English lessons and your observation regarding students' performance or responses towards the use of collaborative group work in English classes. I have prepared a set of questions for this interview but you are welcomed to raise any questions or issues that you think are important during the interview. The interview will be audio-taped. The information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. You can choose to stop or end the interview anytime if you are not comfortable with the questions. Do you have any other questions or concerns? If not, shall we start our interview?

Questions

Understanding about 'group work'

1. In your opinion, how would you define 'group work'?

Group work experience with class 2B/ 5B* (Circle as appropriate)

2. Have you ever adopted group work in class _____'s English lessons? (If yes, go to Q.3; if no, go to Q.3a)

3. How often do you use group work in class _____?

3a. What are the reasons behind not trying out group work in this class?

4. What are some examples of collaborative group work that you have tried out with this class?
5. What can you observe during group work? (E.g. in pre-tasks stage while forming groups; during task; after-task)
6. How would you comment on the class's general perception towards the use of group work?
7. Why do you have such comments about the class's general perception towards the use of group work?
8. Have you ever taught the class some collaborative learning skills that they can use during group work? If yes, what are they?; if no, why not?
9. Did children's performance change in any way after the teaching of collaborative learning skills?
10. Are there any individuals that you think he/she is particularly enthusiastic about group work?
11. Are there any individuals that you think he/she is particularly unenthusiastic about group work?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and contribution. Your response would be helpful in facilitating me to gain a better understanding towards students' previous group work experience in English lessons. All the information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will be used for research purposes only. The data will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. You can review the audio-recording of the interview anytime. I can also erase part of or the entire part of the audiotape for you under your request. Data obtained from this interview will be

transcribed into archives with no personal identifiers. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will also be maintained for the transcription. If you have any concerns or questions for this study, please feel free to contact me at 6122 9525 or through email [stepfany@hku.hk]. Thank you so much and your effort is highly appreciated.

Appendix 2: Sample of Transcription for Teachers' Interview

Transcript for Teacher's Interview (Translation)

Date:	28-02-2014
Location:	School's Meeting Room
Time:	10:00 a.m.
Duration:	Approximately 15 minutes
Interviewer:	Miss. Leung Lai Ting Stephany
Interviewee(s):	Miss. F (2B's English teacher)
Language(s):	Interviewer- English and Cantonese Interviewee- Cantonese

Key:

Interviewer: S; Interviewee: F;

Translation in Italic;

S: Er...well, in your opinion, how would you define 'group work'?

F: Group work...我認為將組別裡面分左...即係成班分左唔同既組別，而組別裡面呢，都會有唔同能力既小朋友。佢地都會有一個...即係做 Group work 的時候佢地都會有一個目標，譬如話可能呢一次的 Group work 可能係要講到 d 咩野既，或者係 Speaking 上面有 D objectives，咁佢地...即係要做到呢樣野囉。(Group work...I think divide the groups...meaning the whole class is divided into different groups, each group consists of students of different abilities. They have a...meaning while doing group work, they have an objective. For example, the requirement of the current group work is to say a certain thing, or there are some objectives in terms of speaking, so they...meaning they have to achieve this.)

S: Umm...O.K. Have you ever adopted group work in Class 2B's English lessons?

F: 欸...有既。係啦。(Eh...Yes, yes.)

S: How often do you use group work in Class 2B?

F: 我諗一個 unit 裡面都有一次或者兩次囉，但係個個形式就可能視乎...即係話...欸...有幾複雜。(I think once or twice per unit, but the format may depends on...meaning...eh...how complex it is.)

S: What do you mean by how complex?

F: 欸...譬如話可能好簡單的 Group work，可能即係話...欸...只係可能係一 D 既...欸...對答呀，係啦，可能佢地係一 D 既 discussions 啦，譬如話可能好簡單好似上次既課堂，好簡單有一個 group work 其實佢地先係做左...決定左 Supermarket 既名，其實呢個係好簡單嫁姐，但係佢地都要有個 discussion，佢地都要有其他 communication skills 係度既。(Eh...For example, it may be a very

simple group work, maybe...eh...maybe only...eh...dialogues, yes, maybe some discussions, for example, just like the previous lesson, very simple, there is a group work...actually they have done...decided the name of the supermarket, actually this is very simple but they needed to have discussion, other communication skills were also involved in this task.)

S: Ok...Umm...Ok...What are some examples of group work that you have tried out with this class?

F: 欸...譬如話試過除左上次你睇個個課堂會有 speaking 個個啦，咁譬如話仲有都試過可能係佢地自己譬如冇本 notebook 嫁嘛，咁...佢可能...譬如話有 D 既 questions 佢 list out 左出黎，跟住呢，佢就會可能有一個既同學仔會去另外一個組別度，係啦，佢就可能拎 D 既 data 係其他組別既，譬如話可能問佢「佢叫咩名呀？幾多歲？」跟住可能拎完 D 資料返番去自己個組裡面呢，佢地就可能寫返 D 既...係...Group writing 既形式。(Eh...For example, apart from the lesson that you observed we completed a speaking group work, for example, we have also tried...they have a notebook with them, and he/she may...for example, there are some questions that he/she listed out, then, one of the members in the group would go to another group, yes, and obtain some data that belongs to another group, for example, maybe asking the other group 'what is his/her name? how old?'. Then, after getting some data, he/she goes back to his/her own group, and they may write...is...a group writing format.)

S: Ok... What can you observe during group work? Like...in pre-task stage while forming groups, or during task or after task?

F: 欸...你意思係即係我之前個度既情況，係咪呀？即係譬如話 Before group work 時候，我地有 D 咩... (Eh...You mean...meaning my situation before...? Is it? For example, what did we do before group work?)

S: Or while group work like...

F: 我有 D...我有 D 乜野? (What do I...What do I do?)

S: Yes, yes.

F: 如果係...欸...即係個 Group work...即係個 Pre-task 個時呢，其實都會要...我諗要準備一下其實佢地會...我會觀察下邊 D 小朋友同邊 D 小朋友會夾 D 既，或者有 D 小朋友，邊 D 能力係會...欸...某一方面可能佢英文好 D，但係呢，欸...佢就會可能未必係擺係個個組別裡面既，即係可能佢座位既組別，咁可能要預先同佢調左佢地自己上英文堂既組別個個既位置囉，咁如果係...欸...個個既...做緊既時候呢，你會睇到可能預先安排左佢地個個組別個 D 既學生呢，咁可能佢地角色上面我地都會要留意下，咦，邊 D 學生可能係 Group 裡面能力係高 D 既，以英文科啦下，可能佢會做一 D 比較係 Leadership 個 D 既工作既，係啦，咁或者係可能需要多 D Present 既...工作既，咁至於其他個 D 可能就要視乎...睇下啦...個次既 task 係有 D 乜野啦，如果譬如話有 D task 係真係純粹可

能係...欸...圈低 D 野既，而你會覺得...咦...可能某 D 學生係可以做得到既，咁可能你會安排佢做。咁有 D 直情可能比較「論盡」既，欸...可能你會叫佢...可能就係...咦...睇完個個字，可能叫佢根據返個個 activity 個個活動，佢可能畫返幅畫既，咁呢個都...等佢都知道即係每個學生都有自己個參與囉。*(If it is...Er...well, the group work...Meaning during pre-task stage, actually it is needed to...I think I prepare them...I will observe the children and find out who will work better with whom, or some children, whose ability is...eh... in a certain aspect, maybe he is more proficient in English, but, eh...he/she may not be arranged in that group, meaning his or her original group, and will change their groups to the one in English lessons. If...eh...while during task, having arranged students in groups, we may need to pay attention to their roles. Some students in the group who may have higher ability, in terms of English Language, then he/she may work on some leadership-required duties, yes, or if some duties that require presentation. While for the others, maybe it depends...it depends on the elements of the task, for example, if the task is just...eh...circling something, and you think some students are capable to do so, then maybe you would arrange him/her to do. Some students who are more careless, eh...Maybe you would tell him/her...maybe...after reading a word...maybe asking him/her to draw some pictures according to the activity, so that he/she knows every student is participating.)*

S: But...how...how...how do they perform in different stages?

F: 係成個...個過程裡面，我覺得...欸...睇下其實個老師點樣安排啦。即係其實每個老師都會有個 group work 即係係個課堂裡面度，睇下你點樣去令到佢地每個人都好似好忙，咁越忙呢，但係要忙之中佢都知道自己要做 D 乜野既，咁佢先至可以參與當中囉。咁...我自己，譬如話...欸...二年級啦，2B 個班啦，咁你都見到佢地其實都好高度參與嫁，佢地都好鍾意去參與個個既 group work 啦。*(In the whole...process, I think...eh...it depends on the arrangement of the teacher. Meaning...Actually, every teacher would include group work into the lesson, it depends on how you make every student seems to be very busy. The busier he/she is, but he/she knows what he/she is expected to do while he/she is busy, then he/she can participate. Umm...for me...for example...eh...Primary 2, the 2B class, you can observe that they have highly participative. They are fond of participating in group work.)*

S: How would you comment on the class's general perception towards the use of group work?

F: 意思係預先有 D 乜野...*(Meaning what to have beforehand...)*

S: Umm...佢地...你覺得佢地點樣...對於 group work 係點樣...有咩睇法?
(Umm...they...in your opinion, how do they...towards group work...how is the...the point of view?)

F: 欸...我覺得佢地...係個課堂裡面...欸...點講呢...我覺得佢地鍾意既，同埋佢地都覺得...咦...係個 group work 裡面除左學野，學佢地要學個個課堂裡面既野之外，其實都需要有一 D 既...我覺得係一 D...即係同人地既溝通技巧，同人地

相處既野，譬如有 D 同學比較...欸...覺得自己好叻既，咁佢可能需要...咦，但係每個人都要參於呀嘛，咁佢唔可以自己一個人叻晒，咁即係要同人地講...即係可能「呀，你要做 D 咩工作，你要做 D 咩工作」先至能夠完成成個 task 囉，成個 group work 囉。(Eh...I think they...in a lesson...eh...how to say...I think they like, and they also think...during a group work, in addition to learning, to learn the objectives of that lesson, actually there are also some....I think it is some...meaning skills for communicating with others, getting along with others. For example, some classmates are comparatively...eh...think that they are smart, then they may need to...because everyone has to participate, then they can't be 'the only one who are smart', meaning they have to tell others...probably 'Ah, you have to do this, you have to do this' so as to complete the task, the group work.)

S: Did you observe some students that they are left-behind during group work?

F: 會有陣時既，有陣時會有既，欸...如果有錯配既時候，即係譬如我估計佢能力可以做到某一樣野，但係原來佢未必做得到既，又或者...個 task 呢太容易，令到呢...咦...佢地已經係覺得無乜挑戰性既，可能呢係會落後左，即係可能直情好快就搞掂呀，又或者能力不逮到個個角色既，個 role 既，咁佢可能唔知做 D 乜野囉。(Yes sometimes, sometimes yes. Eh...when there is a mismatch. Meaning for example, I predicted that he/she is able to do a certain thing, but in fact he/she may not be able to do so; or...the task is too easy...leading to... they think it is not challenging, maybe will left-behind, meaning probably they have completed the task quickly; or students' ability is not able to take the role, the role, then he/she may not know what to do.)

S: Do you assign different roles to them...like...for each task?

F: 每一次呀...都盡量會...會盡量會安排個 role，如果唔係呢，佢地會嗌交既(笑)即係佢地會鬧交，同埋都要分得...因為始終細個呢，佢地...好簡單，同一個簡單一個，可能同一個裡面有兩個人做同一個 role 既，咁佢地都會有少少爭拗，欸，「佢做 d 咩野？我做 d 咩野？」咁佢地係有陣時我無特登去話比佢聽，等佢地自己其實要...即係...欸...要...要...要...磨合左，即係要傾囉。(Every time... as long as we can, as long as we can, will arrange the role, if not, they will argue (interviewee laughed), meaning they will argue, and it has to be divided...because they are still young, they are...very simple, for example, two people taking the same role in a task, then they may argue, eh... 'What does he have to do? What do I do?', but sometimes I didn't tell them intentionally, let them...meaning...eh...need...need....need....need to negotiate.)

S: How often do they argue during group work?

F: 我諗每一次都有既。(I think it happens every time.)

S: OK...But...why...why did they argue? Because of...different opinions or the roles?

F: 我覺得呀...Umm...可能係個角色，可能係...噢...可能我比佢既指示唔夠清晰呢，佢可能會有 D 模糊，可能會比較有 D argue，以為我自己係做個個部分但其實唔係既，係啦，又或者有時係頭先咁樣，兩個學生做同一個 role 要分配一下佢做 D 咩野，我做 d 咩野，咁可能呢度會有 D 爭拗。又或者有陣時佢搞掂自己個部分呢，佢又去八卦其他人「噢，你又未做喎！你要做 d 七七七...」咁囉有陣時，但有 d 小朋友未必...欸...接受人地既意見既。(In my opinion...Umm...maybe the role, maybe it is...maybe my instructions to him/her were not clear enough, maybe he/she was confused, maybe there will be some argument, misunderstood that he/she is responsible for this part but in fact, he/she is not. Yes, or sometimes, just like previously, two students taking the same role and need to allocate what he/she is responsible for and what I will be working on, then there may be some arguments here. Or sometimes when he/she finishes his/her part, he/she becomes nosy and tells other 'You haven't finished! You need to do blahblahblah...' yes, sometimes, some students may not...eh...accept others' opinions.)

S: Do you think the passive students in class, like some of the slower-learners, do better during group work or like...other lessons?

F: 欸...我諗視乎佢地自己係邊一科既能力囉，我自己覺得。即係譬如假設某個學生，可能係我個課堂可能佢係...真係可能能力係比較弱既，但係只限於係我個科唔定，但可能其他科佢變左係 high-ability 既小朋友黎既，係啦。(Eh...I think it depends on their abilities in different subjects. I personally think. Meaning for example, a student, maybe in my class, maybe he/she is....comparatively weaker in terms of ability, but this is only limited to subject that I teach, but maybe he/she becomes high-ability student in other subjects. Yes.)

S: Umm...Ok...Err...Have you ever taught the class some collaborative learning skills that they can use during group work?

F: 有無特別去強調...我又無特別去講，即係佢地呢 D 咁既 skills，又無乜特別嫁喎真係。係啦。(Whether I have particularly emphasize...I have not particularly talked about it, meaning these skills...not mentioning it particularly, really, yes.)

S: Ok...If no, why not? Why not telling them quite explicitly?

F: 點解唔講...哈哈哈哈哈，即係我依家話比你聽，依家要同你有 D...欸...欸...溝通...我又...我覺得對小朋友黎講其實唔係佢地...即係...係一 D...欸...唔係係呢個課堂裡面重要既野，我地可能係教學裡面我地希望，期望可以做到既野，但係學生，我又覺得唔需要特別強調呢樣野囉。係啦，即係「我要學呢個 skill」又無，不過可能有 D 野要提佢，可能「你地需要去傾」既，但我唔會話有個字眼上面，「你要有 communication skills, listening skills...」又唔會特別咁樣去強調。(Why not telling....hahahaha, meaning I now tell you, now need to have some...eh...eh...eh...communication with you....I...I think from the children's perspectives, actually not their...meaning...it is some...eh...not something important in this lesson. This may be something we hope to achieve through teaching, expect to achieve, but for students, I don't think it is necessary to emphasize. Yes, like I didn't say 'I have to learn this skills', no, but there may be some reminders for him or her,

maybe 'You guys need to discuss', but I won't use some terms, 'you need to have communication skills, listening skills...', not emphasizing like this.')

S: How...how...how do you usually teach them how to do...like...for example, turn taking?

F: 欸...我地試過一次，試過幾次既唔係一次，即係 turn-taking 既時候，我做完之後，佢一定要清楚自己既角色，即係係第一個呀，第二，第三，第四個，咁你就可以...你就要話佢聽，我做完第一個，我就要 pass 比 number two, number three, number four, 咁我地試過個情況就係，我做緊 number one 既時候，我做完既時候 pass 比下一個既時候呢，咁同時間我會做 D 咩呢，我無野做嫁嘛我做完，因為得一張工作紙，咁我地試過就係話去用 d memo pad 呢，佢地會畫返 D 相關類似既野去做 decoration 返個 group work 既 worksheet 咁樣囉。譬如呢個 activity 我寫完之後到佢咁，完成晒啦，咁就要完成晒成個 worksheet d 野囉。
(Eh... We have tried once, tried for several times, not once, for turn-taking, after I have finished, he/she needs to be clear about his/her role, meaning the first, second, third and forth one, then you can...you need to tell him/ her, after finishing the first one by his/herself, he/she needs to pass to number 2, number 3, number 4, we have experienced a situation that, while I am working for number 1, after I have finished and passed to the next one, what am I going to do at the same time, I have nothing to do since I have finished, because there is only one worksheet, so we have the experience of using some memo pad, they drew pictures that are relevant and decorated the worksheet used in group work. For example, this activity, after I have finished, it will be his/her turn, when everyone has finished, then the worksheet will be completed.)

S: But what about...like discussion? Turn-taking during discussion? Because like they can't talk...like all of them they can't talk at the same time, right? and they have to know when to interrupt or how to interrupt. Did you teach them some skills or give them some language?

F: 呢方面我就教得佢地少既。係啦，其實有既，其實可以教比佢地既，咁就譬如話可能有 D 字呀 'do you agree?' 呢 D 咁既佢地可能係 group work 要講既，譬如話 'this is my turn'，輪到我啦，'this is your turn'，呢個反而係我地既 RP 既堂裡面其實會反而出現多 D，因為佢地可能有時有 D games 呢會玩，譬如話掙骰仔，咁佢地就會比較容易 D 去運用到囉。
(I rarely teach them in this aspect. Yes. Actually, yes, actually it can be taught to them. For example, there may be some words such as 'do you agree?'. They may need to use these words during group work. For example 'this is my turn', it's my turn now, 'this is your turn'. This happens more frequently in our RP lessons because they may engaged in some games such as throwing a dice, then it will be easier for them to exercise the skills.)

S: But this is not quite...not really common during GE lessons?

F: 噃。(Yes.)

S: Ok. Right.

S: Did children performance change in any way after the teaching of some

collaborative learning skills? Like if you have taught them some turn-taking... sentence...did they change in their performance?

F: Umm...我諗，如果即係好強調話比佢聽咁樣呢，我覺得佢地會比較融洽 D，即係會少 D...少 D...少 D 有爭拗既，係啦。(Umm...I think...if it is told very explicitly, I think they will get along with others better, meaning less...less...less...argument. Yes.)

S: Are there any individuals that you think he/she is particularly enthusiastic about group work in the 2B class?

F: Umm...有既，我諗你都...都有既，有 D 都...我即係比較覺得會係，當佢對英文能力係真係佢能力比較高 D，佢明白做 D 乜野，佢就會比較參與...個能力就會好明顯就係會高好多，我自己覺得。有 D 真係會相對黎講被動 D 既，譬如話，但我觀察就係被動 D 多數都係，可能係脫勾得緊要，落後得緊要 D 既小朋友囉。或者佢真係有 D...譬如話我自己舉例就係呀 JOEY，你會見到佢...如果係咁多個之中，佢係...雖然...能力係比較弱，但係佢想學既動機呢，唔強呀，相對返呀 DEREK 咁，佢個能力都唔係話好強，唔係話好高，但佢個動機強，所以佢做活動...或者其他野都會係好積極囉，我自己覺得。(Umm...there are, I think you...yes, there are some...I think it is more about...when his/her ability in English Language is comparatively higher, he/she understands what to do, he/she would be more participative...the ability is obviously higher, I personally think that. Some of the students are comparatively passive, for example, from my observation, those who are more passive, they may be off-tracked and left-behind more seriously. Maybe he/she is really...for example, I give an example, joey, you can see that she...among other students, although he is...with lower ability, but his motivation to learn, is not strong. Compared to Derek, his ability is not strong, not very high, but his motivation is strong, so he is more enthusiastic about group work or others. I personally think.

S: Ok...Right.

S: How about...are there any individuals that you think he/she is particularly unenthusiastic about group work? Like they may prefer learning individually instead of doing group work?

F: 有無呀...如果呢班黎講.....我又覺得...可能呀 Fion，會有既，可能一個兩個，但係唔代表佢...欸...唔鍾意做 group work，不過佢覺得自己既能力都好高，我可以做到自己...自己搞掂都得既...自己學都得既。(Is there any...If we are talking about this class...I think...maybe Fion, there are some, maybe one to two. But this doesn't mean...eh...he/she doesn't like group work. But he/she may think his or her ability is high and he/she would be able to complete it by his/herself, he/she can get it done by his/herself, he or she can learn by his/herself.)


S: Right. Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix 3: A sample of students' questionnaire

在英語課時進行分組活動

名字: _____ () 性別: 男/ 女* (請將不適用者刪除*)

年齡: _____ 日期: _____

	 No 否	 No comment 沒意見	 Yes 是
1. I like working in groups during English lessons. 我喜歡在英語課時進行分組活動。			
2. I am happy when I work in groups. 進行分組活動時，我感到快樂。			
3. I am sad when I work in groups. 進行分組活動時，我感到不快樂。			
4. I think working in groups is interesting. 我覺得分組活動很有趣。			
5. I think working in groups is boring. 我覺得分組活動很沉悶。			
6. Working in groups helps me learn English. 分組活動能幫助我學習英語。			
7. Working in groups helps raise my interests towards English-learning. 分組活動令我對學習英語更感興趣。			
8. I always contribute during group work. 進行分組活動時我常常幫忙。			
9. I rarely contribute during group work. 進行分組活動時我很少幫忙。			
10. I want to have more group work in English lessons. 我希望英語課能有更多分組活動。			
11. I want to have less group work in English lessons. 我希望英語課能有更少分組活動。			

Appendix 4: Interview Protocol for students' interview

Interview protocol for students

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewees:

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for attending this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain a thorough understanding of your past group-work learning experience and how do you like the use of group work in English lessons. I have prepared a set of questions for this interview but you are welcomed to raise any questions or issues that you think are important during the interview. The interview will be audio-taped. The information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. You can choose to stop or end the interview anytime if you are not comfortable with the questions. Do you have any other questions or concerns? If not, shall we start our interview?

Questions

Understanding of 'group work'

1. What is your understanding of 'group work'?

Group work experience in class

2. Why do you like/ dislike working in groups during English lessons?

3. Why do you feel happy when you are working in groups?

4. Why do you feel sad when you are working in groups?

5. What makes you feel working in groups interesting?
6. What makes you feel working in groups boring?
7. Why do you think working in groups can help you learn English?
8. In what ways do you think group work can raise your interests towards English-learning?
9. What makes you contributing/ not contributing during group work?
10. Can you share with me why do you want more/less group work?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and contribution. Your response would be helpful in facilitating me to gain a better understanding towards your previous group work experience and your perception about the use of group work in English lessons. All the information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will be used for research purposes only. The data will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. You can review the audio-recording of the interview anytime. I can also erase part of or the entire part of the audiotape for you under your request. Data obtained from this interview will be transcribed into archives with no personal identifiers. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will also be maintained for the transcription. If you have any concerns or questions for this study, please feel free to contact me at 6122 9525 or through email [stepfany@hku.hk]. Thank you so much and your effort is highly appreciated.

Appendix 5: A sample of Transcription for students' interview

Transcript for P.2 students' Interview (Translation)

Date:	28-03-2014
Location:	2B classroom
Time:	12:30 p.m.
Duration:	Approximately 22 minutes
Interviewer:	Miss. Leung Lai Ting Stephany
Interviewee(s):	Christy, Winnie, Tommy
Language:	Cantonese

Key:

S: Interviewer; C: Christy; W: Winnie; T: Tommy;

Translation in *Italics*;

S: 好啦，我想問下你地啦，你地覺得乜野係為之分組活動呀？ (*Right, I want to ask you guys, from your perceptions, what is 'group work'?*)

C: 即係一 D 既組員一齊分工，即係每一個人做 D 唔同既野囉。 (*Meaning...some group members, division of labor together, meaning...everyone is doing something different.*)

S: 每一個人做 D 唔同既野，Winnie 呢？ (*Everyone doing something different, how about Winnie?*)

W: 唔..... (*Umm...*)

T: 分工合作。 (*Division of labor and cooperation.*)

W: 係呀，我都想講。 (*Yes, I want to say so.*)

S: 好，咁你地...通常呢你地做分組活動既時候係咪要聽晒組裡面既其中一個人話嫁？ (*Right, then you...do you have to listen to a particular person when you do group work?*)

W: 係呀。 (*Yes.*)

S: 係呀？聽邊個話呀？ (*Yes? Listen to whom?*)

W: Ella.

S: Ella，點解既？ (*Ella, why?*)

C: 唔係嫁啫..... (*Not really.*)

T: 我無嫁啫。 (*I don't have to.*)

C: 我地呢，就係聽唔同既組員既意見。(For us, we listen to the opinions of different group members.)

S: 聽唔同既組員既意見，咁點解你地個組會聽晒 Ella 話既？(Listen to opinions of different group members, then why would your group listen to Ella?)

W: 如果我地轉左組就唔係聽 Ella 嫁啦。(We aren't listening to Ella if we have changed our group.)

S: 但都係聽一個人話既？(But still listening to a particular person?)

W: 噃。(Yes.)

S: 咁個個人就係你地既組長，係咪呀？(Then, that person would be the group leader of your group, right?)

W: 噃。(Yes.)

S: Tommy 呢？(What about Tommy?)

T:

S: 頭先你話無呀嘛，係嘛？(Just now you said no, right?)

T:

S: Tommy.....Tommy 呀.....你地使唔使聽晒一個人話嫁？(Tommy...Tommy...Do you have to listen to a particular person?)

T: 唔使。(No.)

S: 唔使，即係你地每個人都有講唔同既野既？(No, meaning all of you would say different things?)

T: 係。(Yes.)

S: 好，咁啦，咁你地上英文堂既時候多唔多做分組活動呀？(Right, then, do you do group work frequently during English lessons?)

W: 唔係咁多啦。(Not so many.)

T: 唔係好多。(Not a lot.)

C: 都.....唔係咁多嫁咋。(Eh...not many.)

S: 唔係咁多。咁.....你地鍾唔鍾意做分組活動呀？(Not many. Then...do you like doing group work?)

T: 鍾意。 (Yes.)

W: 鍾意。 (Yes.)

C: 鍾意。 (Yes.)

S: 鐘意呀？點解鍾意呀？ (Like? Why do you like?)

W: 因為..... (Because...)

T: 因為可以..... (Because we can...)

C: 因為..... (Because...)

T: 可以增加知識。 (Can gain knowledge.)

W: 可以比..... (Can give...)

S: 可以增加知識既呀 Tommy 你覺得？ (Tommy, you think you can gain knowledge?)

T: 係呀。 (Yes.)

S: Winnie 呢？ (What about Winnie?)

W: 可以.....欸.....學到好多野囉。 (Can...Eh...learn a lot.)

S: 可以學到好多野。 (Can learn a lot.)

C: 可以聽到好多唔同人既意見囉。 (Can listen to many people's opinions.)

S: 咁點解.....欸.....Winnie, 點解你覺得可以學到好多野呀？ (Then...why...eh...Winnie, why do you think you can learn a lot?)

W: 欸..... (Eh...)

S: 因為係分組既過程裡面，會有同學幫你？ (Because some classmates will help you?)

W: 係呀。 (Yes.)

S: 邊個會幫你呀？ (Who will help you?)

W: 唔.....有時會叫囉，有時 ANGEL 都會啦。 (Umm...sometimes will ask for help, sometimes Angel will help.)

S: 有時 ANGEL 都會呀？呀 TOMMY 呢？分組裡面你有無幫忙呀？*(Sometimes Angel will help? What about Tommy? Do you help during group work?)*

T:有。*(...yes.)*

S: 有。通常你會幫助做 d 咩呀？搗亂？幫助做 D 咩呀你會？*(Yes. Usually how do you help? Creating chaos? How do you help?)*

T:

S: 譬如話好似 MISS. F 上次同你地做超級市場個個呢，你地去唔同地方，去買野個個活動咁樣啦，咁呀 TOMMY 你個時係負責做 D 咩呀？*(Take the supermarket task that MISS. F done with you as an example, you went to different groups and bought food, Tommy, what were responsible for?)*

T: 個陣時負責買野。*(Responsible for buying things.)*

S: 負責講定係負責計數呀？*(Responsible for talking or calculating?)*

T: 唔.....講。*(Umm...talking.)*

S: 負責講。呀 WINNIE 呢？*(Responsible for talking. What about you, Winnie?)*

W: 唔.....*(Umm...)*

S: 超級市場個個活動你負責咩呀？*(What were you responsible for?)*

W: 欸.....寫！*(Eh...Writing.)*

C: 我會負責呢，買野啦同埋計數。*(I was responsible for...buying (speaking) and calculating.)*

S: 你負責買野同埋計數，唔。咁你地...鍾意...呀，你地頭先話你地鍾意分組呀嘛，你地鍾意點樣分組呀？老師分組呀？定係自己分組呀？*(You were responsible for buying (speaking) and calculating. Umm...then...do you like...Ah! Just now you have mentioned you like group work, how would you like to form your groups? By teachers? Or by yourselves?)*

W: 老師。*(Teacher.)*

C: 自己。*(By myself.)*

T: 自己。*(By myself.)*

W: 都係自己。*(By myself too.)*

S: 欸...呀，WINNIE，唔緊要既，你係咪鐘意老師分組呀？無所謂嫁喎。
(*Eh...Ah, Winnie, never mind, do you like to be grouped by teachers? It doesn't matter.*)

W: 1 D D 啦。(A little bit.)

S: 點解既？(Why?)

W: 唔..... (Emm...)

S: 無所謂嫁喎，你可以講嫁喎，我細個都鍾...即係我自己啦，我細個個時都鍾意老師分組，因為我覺得即係...唔使同其他同學商量，你呢？(It really doesn't matter, you can just say it. When I was young, I also like...Personally, when I was young, I like to be grouped by teachers because I think...need not to discuss with other classmates. How about you?)

W: 都係既，有 D 野都幾秘密既，係呀。(Kind of, there are some secrets, yes.)

S: 有 D 野都幾秘密？你意思係唔可以同我講呀？定係唔可以同其他同學分享呀？(There are some secrets? You mean you can't tell me? Or cannot share with other classmates?)

W: 唔...唔同同學分享 D 野。(Em...not sharing with classmates.)

S: 唔同同學分享...咁呀 TOMMY 同 CHRISTY 呢？點解鐘意自己分組呀？(Not sharing with classmates...then what about Tommy and Christy? Why do you like to form groups by yourselves?)

C: 自己一個分組呢，就可以唔使問人地 d 意見囉。(There is no need to ask for others' opinions when there is only me in the group.)

S: 唔係喎，自己分組既意思係，自己揀同邊個一組喎。(No. Formed by yourself meaning...you are the one to choose whom to form groups with.)

C: 哦。自己揀... (Oh. Choose by myself...)

S: 咁你鍾意自己揀組員呀，定老師幫你揀組員？(Then do you like to pick your own group members or teachers helping you to choose?)

C: 自己揀。(Choose by myself.)

S: 自己揀，點解呀？(Choose by yourself, why?)

C: 因為自己揀可以同 D 好好既同學一齊。(Because it allows me to choose some good classmates.)

S: 你呢？呀 TOMMY？你係鍾意...自己揀既？點解鍾意自己揀呀？*(How about you, Tommy? You prefer...choosing by yourself? Why do you like to choose by yourself?)*

T:

S: 點解鍾意自己揀呀？咁...咁我問你啦，如果比你揀，揀四個人一組，你會揀同邊幾個人一組呀？*(Why do you like to choose by yourself? Umm...let me ask you, if you were to choose, choose 4 people to form a group, who will you choose?)*

T:

S: Tommy，Tommy。四個人一組，你啦，仲有邊三個？*(Tommy, Tommy. Four people in a group. Including you, who else?)*

T:

S: Ken? 同唔同 Ken 一組呀？*(Ken? Do you want to form group with Ken?)*

T:照平時咁樣。*(...as usual.)*

S: 照平時咁樣.....即係平時你同呀 Fi 呀，Ken 呀，佢地一組。*(As usual...meaning with your group members as usual? Fi and Ken, with them.)*

T: 嗯。*(Yes.)*

S: 呢個組係老師編排嫁嘞，係咪呀？*(This group was formed by teachers, right?)*

W: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 嗯，咁你地鍾唔鍾意呢一組呀？*(Right. Do you like this group?)*

W: 都鍾意。*(Kind of...yes.)*

S: 點解鍾意既？*(Why do you like?)*

W: 唔.....*(Umm...)*

S: 係個組裡面呢，有 D 叻既同學，都有 D 比較無咁叻既同學嫁嘞，係咪呀？*(There are some more-able students in the group, and also some less-able students, right?)*

C, W & T: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 咁你覺得咁樣好唔好呀？*(Do you think it is good?)*

C, W & T: 好呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 點解呀? (*Why?*)

C, W & T:

S: Christy, 點解好呀? (*Christy, why is it good?*)

C: 唔.....叻既人呢, 我呢, 我唔識個時呢, 我又可以問下佢啦, 唔叻既話呢, 可能佢有其他野都好擅長, 咁我又可以問下佢呀。 (*Umm...Smart students...Just like for me, when I don't understand, I can ask him/her; some students who are not smart, they may have other strengths, and I can ask them too.*)

S: 唔.....唔.....唔.....呀 Winnie 呢? 點解覺得咁係好呀?
(*Umm...umm...umm...ah, what about Winnie? Why do you think it is good?*)

W: 同佢意見一模一樣。 (*As same as her opinions.*)

S: 一樣, 呀 Tommy 呢? (*Same, what about Tommy?*)

T: 都係。 (*Same.*)

S: 都係。好啦, 咁你覺得...你地覺得...一分.....呀, 不如咁呀, 你地鍾意平時咁樣上堂呀, 定係做分組活動呀? (*Same. Right, Then do you think...do you think...when you have...Ah, put it this way, do you prefer having lessons as usual, or doing group work?*)

T: 分組。 (*In groups.*)

C: 分組。 (*In groups.*)

W: 分組活動。 (*Doing group work.*)

S: 分組。咁你地覺得, 係小組活動壓力大 D 呀, 定係無咁大呀? (*In groups. Then what do think, is it more pressurized or less pressurized to work in groups?*)

C: 無咁大壓力。 (*Less pressurized.*)

T: 無咁大壓力。 (*Less pressurized.*)

S: 呀 Winnie 呢? (*What about Winnie?*)

W: 都係。 (*Same.*)

S: 咁你地係咪...呀, 我不如咁問呀, 你地係咪覺得, 如果一分組呢, 就即係代表你地要講英文啦? (*Are you...Ah! Let me put it this way. Do you agree, once you are arranged to work in groups, it means you have to speak in English?*)

T: 係呀。 (*Yes.*)

S: 係呀? (Yes?)

C & W: 係呀。 (Yes.)

S: 係呀? 咁你地會唔會覺得有少少驚嫁? (Yes? Then will you be afraid?)

C: 唔會。 (No.)

W: 有 D 啦。 (A little bit.)

S: 有 D 呀? 呀 WINNIE, 驚咩呀? (A little bit? Winnie, what are you afraid of?)

W: 驚唔識。 (Afraid that I don't know.)

S: 驚唔識講? (Afraid that you don't know how or what to say?)

C: 唔.....我都有少少驚。 (Umm...I am a little bit afraid too.)

S: 你都會有少少驚, 點解既? (You are a little bit afraid too, why?)

C: 因為呢有 D 呢, 有 D 呢, 我都有 D 唔識。 (Because there is some...there is some...there is something that I don't know.)

S: 都會有 D 唔識.....咁你地唔識既時候會點呀? 係個組裡面, 唔識既時候?
(There is something that you don't know...then what will you do when you encounter something that you don't know, when you are in groups?)

T & W: 問人。 (Ask other people.)

C: 都係問其他叻既同學囉。 (Ask classmates who are more-able.)

S: 問 D 叻既同學。 (Ask some classmates who are smart.)

S: 咁你地係全部都係用中文呀, 定有時用英文, 有陣時用中文呀? (Then do you use Cantonese completely or sometimes English, sometimes Cantonese?)

T: 有陣時用英文, 有陣時用中文。 (Sometimes English, sometimes Cantonese.)

S: 有陣時用英文, 有陣時用中文。呀 Winnie 呢? 你呢? (Sometimes English, sometimes Cantonese. Winnie, what about you?)

W: 我.....我大部分都係用 D...用 D...英文都係, 或者中文囉。 (For me...I mainly use...use...English too, or Cantonese.)

S: 兩樣都係, 兩樣都有, 你呢? Christy? (Both, both, how about you, Christy?)

C: 有部分都係用英文，有 D 重要 D 就用中文囉。*(Partly English, use Cantonese for something that is more important.)*

S: 嗯嗯，咁點解.....呀 TOMMY 同呀 WINNIE 你地有時會有中文既？*(Uh huh, then why...Tommy and Winnie, you use Cantonese occasionally?)*

W: 有 D...唔.....*(Something...Umm...)*

T: 唔識講。*(Don't know how to say it in English.)*

S: 唔識講.....譬如話，舉例呢？可唔可以比個例子我呀？係一 D 關於課文既生字你唔知點講呀，定係...呀，我想講話「呢個意見唔好」但我唔識得點樣講？*(Don't know how to say it...For example, give me some examples? Can you give me some examples? Is that something related to vocabulary items found in the textbook unit? Or...you don't know what to say when you want to express the meaning of 'This idea is not good.')*

C, W & T:

S: 譬如話啦，好似呀 Winnie 咁樣啦，Angel...譬如話 Angel 寫左個字，你覺得...「唔，我覺得唔係咁好啲」咁你...咁你係咪...咁你會講中文定英文呀？*(For example, take Winnie as an example, Angel...For example, when Angel has written a word, and you think 'Umm...this is not so good', then you...then are you going to use Cantonese or English to express it?)*

W: 中文囉。*(Cantonese.)*

S: 中文，你會講話「呢個唔好」咁樣。Tommy 呢？*(Cantonese, you will say 'this is not good (in Cantonese)'. What about you, Tommy?)*

T: 都係中文。*(Cantonese too.)*

S: 點解用中文既？*(Why would you use Cantonese?)*

T: 唔識講。*(Don't know how to express.)*

S: 唔識點樣用英文講話「呢個唔好」咁樣，係咪？*(Don't know how to use English to express the meaning of 'this is not good (in Chinese)', is it?)*

T: 嗯。*(Yes.)*

S: 呀 Winnie 呢？係咪呀？*(How about Winnie? Is it?)*

W: 都係。*(Kind of.)*

S: 咁你覺得.....分組活動係咪有效學習英文呀？*(Do you think...group work is helpful in facilitating English Language learning?)*

T: 有。(Yes.)

C: 有。(Yes.)

S: 對學習英文有咩幫助呀？(How does it facilitate English Language learning?)

C, T, W: 有。(Yes.)

S: 有咩幫助呀？有咩幫助呀你地覺得？(How does it help? How does it help, in your opinion?)

C: 唔.....分組活動可以令我...可以...更加了解囉。(Umm...group work allows me...can...have clearer understanding.)

S: 對乜野更加了解？(Clearer understanding of what?)

C: 即係對老師講既課文個樣野更加了解。(Meaning...gaining better understanding towards the chapter that teacher taught.)

S: 咁你呢？Winnie？(What about you? Winnie?)

W: 又係同佢一模一樣。(As same as her opinion again.)

T: 都係。(Same.)

S: 都係一模一樣。咁仲有無其他呀？除左對課文有更多了解之外呢？譬如話好似超級市場個個活動咁樣啦.....(Same. What else? Other than gaining more understanding. For example, just like the supermarket task...)

C: 超級市場呢.....MISS. E 帶呀嘛，我有 D 聽唔明呀嘛，咁有 D 同學講...講比我聽，咁我就開始聽得明。(Supermarket task...MISS. E led us right? Sometimes I didn't understand. Then some classmates told...explained for me, then I began to understand.)

S: 哦！咁即係你地覺得...有 D 同學解釋比你聽，咁你就會聽得明啦？(Oh! That means...you think...when there are some classmates explaining for you, you will be able to understand?)

C: 有時 MISS. E 會講中文字咁樣比我地聽。(Sometimes Miss. E will speak in Cantonese.)

S: 咁好似譬如話 MISS. F 同你地係課室做個個超級市場活動呢，記唔記得呀？(Then take the supermarket task that Miss. F. done with you in class as an example, do you remember?)

W: 記得。(Remember.)

S: 你地覺得.....欸.....你地覺得...個個活動有無幫助你地學英文呀? (*In your opinion, umm...do you think...do you think that task helped you learn English?*)

C, T & W: 有呀。 (*Yes.*)

S: 點解呀? (*Why?*)

W: 欸..... (*Umm...*)

T: 可以..... (*Yes.*)

T: 可以.....學多 d 野食既名。 (*Can...learn more vocabulary items related to food.*)

S: 可以學多 d 野食既名, 你呢? (*Can learn more vocabulary items related to food. What about you?*)

W: 都係。 (*Same.*)

C: 同埋去 supermarket 個時都有幫助。 (*It was also helpful for equipping us for the supermarket field trip.*)

S: 同埋對 supermarket 個個都有幫助, 因為你地有角色扮演, 係咪呀? (*And it was also helpful for equipping you for the supermarket field trip because you had role play? Is it?*)

C: 噃。 (*Yes.*)

S: 好, 咁你地覺得...不如我咁問你啦, 平時 MISS. F 呢, 上堂呢, 咪成日都係企係度, 企係前面講咁樣既..... (*Yes. Then you think...Let me ask you, when Miss. F has lessons, she always stands there and talks at the front...*)

W: 係呀。 (*Yes.*)

S: 咁.....你覺得佢企係前面講, 對你地學習英文有幫助 D 呀, 定係分組活動有幫助 D 呀? 如果比較。 (*Then...from your perception, having Miss. F talking at the front is more helpful in English Language learning, or doing group work is more beneficial? If we are comparing the two modes.*)

W: 分組活動。 (*Doing group work.*)

T: 分組活動。 (*Doing group work.*)

C: 差唔多。 (*Fair.*)

S: 差唔多。好啦, 我問左點解你地兩個覺得分組活動先啦。首先有咩分別先? MISS. F 企係出面講, 同埋你地分組? (*Fair. Right. Let me ask you first, you guys*)

chose doing group work. First of all, what are the differences between teacher talk by Miss. F and group work?)

W: MISS. F 企係出面講，有 D 悶呀有時。*(Miss. F standing outside and delivering teacher talk, sometimes a little bit boring.)*

T: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 有 D 悶，咁.....但係分組活動呢？*(A little bit boring, then...what about doing group work?)*

W: 分組活動.....比較好 D 啦。*(Doing group work...better.)*

T: 好玩 D。*(More interesting.)*

W: 係呀，好玩 D。*(Yes, more interesting.)*

S: 好玩 D。好。*(More interesting. Good.)*

S: 咁除左.....呀，咁譬如話我地英文堂做多 D 分組活動，咁你地會覺得，會唔會提升對於你地學英文既興趣呀？*(Then apart from...Ah, for example, if we are going to do more group work during English lessons, do you think, does it help raising you interests towards English Language learning?)*

C, T & W: 會呀，會。*(Yes, yes.)*

S: 即係你地想多 D 既？想多 D 分組活動。咁你地係覺得分組活動令你地對於學英文更加有興趣既，係咪呀？*(That means you all want to have more? Want to have more group work. You all agree that group work can boost your interest towards English Language learning, is it?)*

T: 係。*(Yes.)*

S: 係，咁好啦，咁我想問啦，除左對於學英文之外，分組活動仲有 D 咩好處唔好處呀？*(Yes, that's good. Then I want to ask, apart from promoting English Language learning, what are some pros or cons of doing group work?)*

C: 分組活動個時呢，唔好既地方係呢，我地呢，好容易就會嗌交呀。*(During group work, the cons is that...we...argue easily.)*

S: 分組活動好易嗌交。*(Doing group work will argue easily.)*

T: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

W: 上次先嗌完。意見唔一樣囉，就會嗌啦。*(There was an argument last time. Argue when different opinions arise.)*

C: 係呀。(Yes.)

S: 呀 WINNIE 你話上次先嗌完，咁係做乜野呀？點解嗌呀？點解嗌交既？
(Winnie you said an argument occurred last time, what happened? Why argued? Why argued?)

W: 嗌之一舊擦膠。(Because of an eraser.)

S: 一舊擦膠。(An eraser.)

W: 係呀。(Yes.)

C: 係呀係呀，我都記得呀。(Yes, yes, I remember too.)

S: 即係點呀？講件事比我聽呀？(What does that mean? Tell me about the argument.)

W: 即係舊擦膠呢.....佢呢.....拎左人地擦膠呢，佢就係度...佢地就係度「做咩拎左我舊擦膠」，跟住就係度講。(Meaning an eraser...Someone...took somebody's eraser, and she...they said 'Why did you take my eraser?', then kept on arguing.)

S: 哦！即係話.....你意思係.....可能係...有個擦膠係唔知邊個既，跟住.....(Oh! That means...you mean...maybe...there is an eraser and you don't know who the owner is, and then...)

C: 唔係，係人地既，係人地既，擺係書桌度。(No, it belongs to somebody, it belongs to somebody, it was put on the desk.)

W: 係 Betty 既。(It's Betty's.)

C: 擺左係度啦，跟住佢無問過 Betty 就拎，咁 Betty 發現左之後佢地...就係度鬧佢地，跟住佢地就會嗌交。(It was put on the desk, then she didn't ask Betty before she took it, and Betty discovered that, and she scolded them, and they started arguing.)

S: 哦！咁譬如話，你地嗌交既時候會點樣解決呀？(Oh! Then for example, how do you guys solve the problem when you argue?)

C & W: 欸.....(Eh...)

C: 我地嗌交個時呢...都...(When we argue...)

T: 猜「包剪揼」。(Play 'Paper-scissors-stone'.)

C: 係呀係呀，我地嗌交個時呢，通常 MISS. F 知道左就鬧嫁啦。(Yes, yes, when we argue and Miss. F knows it, she usually scolds us.)

S: 就鬧你地，咁跟住就點呀？*(She would you, then what happens next?)*

C: 跟住就叫我地同大家講對唔住個 D 就無啦。*(Then...tell us to say sorry to each other and nothing else.)*

W: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 哦。呀 TOMMY，你話猜「包剪揼」即係點呀？譬如話如果我同你嗌交，我同你就要猜啦？*(Oh. Tommy, what do you mean by playing 'Paper-scissors-stone'? For example, if I argue with you, I have to play 'Paper-scissors-stone' with you?)*

T: 決定囉。*(Make decision.)*

S: 決定聽邊個話？*(Making decision on whom to listen to?)*

T: 係呀。*(Yes.)*

S: 哦！咁好啦，我想問下啦喎，欸.....咁除左.....譬如話對你地認識朋友有無幫助呀？*(Oh! Good, then I want to ask, eh...apart from...for example, does it help making friends?)*

T: 有。*(Yes.)*

W: 有。*(Yes.)*

C: 都有。*(Yes.)*

S: 例如呢？舉 D 例比我聽。*(For example? Give me some examples.)*

C & W: 唔.....*(Umm...)*

S: 譬如話好似 Christy 咁，你同你既組員.....*(For example, just like Christy, you and your group members...)*

W (talks to C): 係呀，我識左你。*(Yes, I knew you.)*

W: 我之前呢，本來呢唔叻既，佢呢乜野科都係第一名既個時，跟住我識左佢呢，就開始.....有 d.....識左 d 英文呀，依家開始.....英文呢考試呢.....拎到 80 幾分呀都。*(Before I was not smart, and she always comes first in every subject, then I knew her, and started to...some...learnt some English, now begin to...is able to get 80 something in English examinations.)*

S: 呀.....即係你同佢一組？*(Ah...meaning you are in the same group?)*

C: 有時囉。*(Sometimes.)*

W: 之前囉，之前咪同佢一組。*(Before, we were in the same group before.)*

S: 哦，即係之前一組既，咁但係依家就唔同啦？Christy 你呢？有無識到新朋友呀？有無對於朋友更加了解呀？*(Oh, before you were in the same group, but now you are not? Christy, what about you? Have you met any new friends? Did you get to know more about your friends?)*

C: 都有既，個陣時呢.....之前我就唔知佢咩...又咩都唔了解佢呀嘛，跟住我發現佢唔識個陣時我又會教佢囉。*(Kind of, at that time...I didn't know her...I knew nothing about her, then when I noticed that she was not following, I taught her.)*

S: 有邊個係.....你覺得.....分左組之後.....本身係唔係好識既，但分左組之後係了解多左嫁？對於佢。*(Who...you think...you didn't know him or her well before working in groups and you know him/her better after forming groups?)*

C: 之前我同 Amy 同組，所以對於佢...係我地分組活動個時就了解左對方囉。*(Before I was in the same group with Amy, so in terms of her...We got to know each other better during group work.)*

S: 嗯嗯，咁跟住呢？咁譬如話落左堂啦，唔再係英文堂啦，咁你地會唔會一齊玩呀咁樣呀？*(Uh huh, then what happened next? For example, after lesson, not in English lessons, do you play together?)*

C & W: 都會嫁。*(Yes.)*

S: 都會既。呀 TOMMY 呢？*(Yes. What about Tommy?)*

T: 都會。*(Yes.)*

S: 你識左邊個呀？係分組活動。*(Who did you make friend with? During group work.)*

T: 無啱。*(Nobody.)*

S: 無呀？即係本身你既組員已經係你既朋友啦？*(No? Your group members are your friends already before forming groups?)*

T: 係.....*(Yes.)*

S: 咁你有無.....係.....咁你有無覺得係分組活動你可以了解你既朋友更加多呀？又...舉下例呀，話比我知，譬如話了解佢地既乜野呀？*(Then did you...yes...did you get to know more about your friends while working in groups? Tell me some examples, like what did you know more about them?)*

S: 譬如話.....好似 Ken 咁，分組活動你有無發現到佢 D 優點同埋缺點呀？*(For example, just like Ken, did you discover his strengths and weaknesses during group work?)*

T: 會嫁。(Yes.)

S: 會既，佢既優點係咩呀？(Yes. What are his strengths?)

T:

C: 我都會。(I did.)

S: 你都會既。(You did too.)

C: 同 Amy 一齊分組個時呢，我發覺呢，佢既優點就係呢，佢會聽...佢呢就好少同人地嗌交啦，仲有佢好聽人地既意見啦，咁...就係...缺點呢，就係有陣時佢呢...又...有時呢又...我講左個個字呢，佢就同有關個個字眼呢...就開玩笑囉。
(When I was in the same group with Amy, I realized, her strengths include, she would listen...she seldom argues with others, and she always listens to others' opinions. While...for weaknesses, she sometimes...sometimes...when I say a word, she would make fun with the word.)

S: 即係咩意思呀？(What does that mean?)

C: 即係.....我話.....例如我上數學堂個時又同佢一齊分組啦，咁我話...個老師就要我地分類呀嘛，分兩類呀嘛，咁我就話，「一類分四邊形，一類分非四邊形」，跟住佢話「咦？一類『飛』，一類『唔識飛』」，咁樣。
(Meaning...When I said... For example, I was in the same group with her during Mathematics lessons, and teacher invited us to do categorization, divided the items into two categories, and I said 'One side for quadrilateral and one side for non-quadrilateral.' And then she said 'Oh? One category knows how to fly and the other one doesn't know?' something like that.)

S: 哦..... (I see...)

S: 咁 Winnie 呢？你有無認識到.....呀，你頭先話 Christy 啦..... (What about Winnie? Did you know...ah, just know you mentioned Christy.)

W: 係呀。(Yes.)

S: 咁你有無發覺到佢，係分組活動既過程裡面，有無發覺到佢既優點同缺點呀？
(Did you realize her strengths and weaknesses during group work?)

W: 有。(Yes.)

S: 嗯，好。咁好啦，我想問下啦喎，你地係分組活動既時候，係咪成日都會幫忙嫁？(Right, good. I want to ask, do you always help during group work?)

C: 係呀。(Yes.)

T: 係呀。(Yes.)

W: 我都會幫。 (*I will help too.*)

S: 係既，都會幫忙既，咁會幫忙做 D 咩呀？ (*Yes, you will help, in what aspects?*)

C: 唔.....我地都會互相幫助，譬如..... (*Umm...we will help each other, for example...*)

T: 寫 D 野..... (*Write something...*)

W: 又寫野，又有 D...但多數都係寫野呀..... (*Write something again, and have something else...but most of the time writing...*)

S: 多數都係寫野..... (*Most of the time writing...*)

W: 都會互相幫助啦，即係我唔識佢又可以教我，我唔識佢又教我，教返我地..... (*Will also help each other, like when I don't understand, she will teach me, she will teach me when I don't understand, will teach us...*)

S: 咁有無一齊諗意見咁樣嫁？ (*Do you brainstorm ideas together?*)

W: 都有嫁。 (*Yes.*)

T: 有。 (*Yes.*)

S: 但會唔會有人係「我唔理，總之我咩都唔聽，我唔聽，我總之淨係堅持自己既意見，咁樣嫁？」 (*Is there anybody who would say something like 'I don't care, I won't listen to you, I won't listen, I insist on my own opinion. '?*)

C: 好少呀。 (*Seldom.*)

W: 係呀，好少。 (*Yes, seldom.*)

S: 好少會。咁即係.....你地係咪都希望有更加多既分組活動呀？ (*Seldom. That means...you all want to have more group work?*)

C, T & W: 係呀。 (*Yes.*)

S: 係.....因為無咁悶.....係咪？咁你覺得.....不如我咁問啦，係有陣時分組既活動裡面呢，你地有無試過唔開心既經歷呀？ (*Yes...because less boring...is it? Then from your perspective...let me put it this way, have you experienced some group work that made you sad?*)

C: 無。 (*No.*)

T: 有。 (*Yes.*)

W: 有.....有啦。有 D。 (*Yes...yes. Some.*)

S: 有 D.....咁.....唔開心既經歷係點呀? (*Some...then...what was the experience about?*)

C: 我都.....無喎..... (*For me...no...*)

T: 我唔知做咩.....跟住我問佢地...佢地又唔講..... (*I didn't know what to do...and I asked them...they didn't tell me...*)

S: 喔，呀 TOMMY 你有時唔知做咩..... (*Oh, Tommy, sometimes you don't know what to do...*)

W: 有時驚到唔睬人。 (*Sometimes I would ignore people because I am afraid.*)

S: 喔，你有時驚到唔睬人。點解驚既? (*Oh, sometimes you would ignore people because you are afraid. Why are you afraid?*)

W: 因為驚.....又.....又唔識讀字，又...又...幫唔到人地囉。 (*Because I am afraid...and...and don't know how to pronounce the words, and...and...not able to help others.*)

S: 哦，即係你會驚又唔識讀字，又幫唔到人地咁樣。咁...我...我問左呀 TOMMY 先，呀 TOMMY，咁如果你...譬如話你唔明，你問同學，同學唔答你啦，咁...咁跟住你點呀? (*Oh, so you mean you are afraid because you don't know how to pronounce the words, and you are not able to help others. Then, I ...let me ask Tommy first. Tommy, if you...for example, you asked your classmates when you did not understand, and when your classmates ignored you, what...what did you do next?*)

T: 跟住.....問第二個囉。 (*Then...asked somebody else.*)

S: 問第二個。唔同組既第二個? (*Asked somebody else. Somebody from another group?*)

T: 嗯。 (*Yes.*)

S: 咁通常佢地答唔答你嫁? (*Did they answer your questions?*)

T: 答。 (*Answered.*)

S: 都答你既。咁跟住你有無再參與個活動呀? (*They answered your questions. Then, did you participate in the task again?*)

T: 有。 (*Yes.*)

S: 呀 Winnie 呢? 你頭先話你有陣時驚到會唔出聲既，會唔理其他人，因為驚唔識讀 D 字，又唔知點幫忙，咁你會點解決呀? (*What about Winnie? Just now you*

have mentioned that sometimes you would not speak and ignored others because you were too afraid, because you didn't know how to pronounce the words, and didn't know how to help others, then how did you resolve it?)

W: 欸.....唔..... (*Eh...Umm...*)

S: 你會坐係度? (*you would just sit there?*)

W: 唔..... (*Umm...*)

S: 唔緊要嫁喎，如果..... (*It doesn't matter. If...*)

W: 會問老師囉。 (*Would ask the teacher.*)

S: 會問老師。咁有無時...有無時你係會坐係度嫁? 即係等個活動完? (*Would ask the teacher. Have you ever...have you ever taken the approach to sit there and wait for the end of the task?*)

W:有陣時都會。 (*...Sometimes yes.*)

S: 有陣時都會既。唔緊要嫁喎，咁...好正常呀，其實你唔知度做乜野好，咁你問老師，老師又未得閒幫你個時，你就會坐係度，咁其他同學會唔會邀請你幫忙嫁? (*Sometimes yes. It doesn't matter. That's...pretty normal. Actually if you don't know what to do, and the teacher is not able to provide instant support to you, you would sit there. Are the other group members going to invite you to help?*)

W: 會嫁。 (*Yes.*)

S: 即係見到你坐係度，會唔會叫你「喂，呀 WINNIE，做野啦」咁嫁? 會唔會嫁? (*Meaning they see you sitting there, are they going to say something like 'hey, Winnie, do something', yes or no?*)

W: 通常都無啦..... (*Usually no.*)

S: 通常都無乜，即係佢地都會由得你坐係度，係咪呀? (*Usually no, so they will just let you sit there, is it?*)

W: 嗯，不過呢，我調左位係橙組呢，我坐係度佢地又係度叫叫叫。 (*Yes, but after changing to the orange group, when I sit there, they keep calling me.*)

S: 你調左位之後? 調左去邊組呀? (*You moved your seat? To where?*)

W: 橙組。 (*To the orange group.*)

S: 即係你以家調左係 Betty 個組既時候，咁跟住佢地就會叫你啦，你坐係度，佢地就會不停講「呀 WINNIE 做野啦，做野啦，做野啦」咁樣，係咪呀? (*So,*

you now moved to Betty's group, and they will ask you to work. When you sit there, they keep saying something like 'Winnie, work, work, work'. Is it?)

W: 噃。 (Yes.)

S: 咁你會唔會幫忙呀？ (Then, are you going to help?)

W: 會嫁。 (Yes.)

S: 咁佢地會唔會教你點樣幫忙先？ (Did they teach you how to help?)

W: 有啦。 (Yes.)

S: 噃，都有既，即係佢地都會教你點樣幫忙既。Christy 呢，你話你無乜唔開心既經歷？ (Uh huh. So they will also teach you how to help. What about Christy? You have mentioned that you didn't have much negative group work experience?)

C: 噃，我都唔係咁樣坐係度。 (Yes. I don't just sit there.)

S: 咁有無試過你既組員坐係度呀？ (Were there any group members of yours doing nothing?)

C: 唔.....無呀，不過我聽過 MISS. F 話有 D 人囉。 (Umm...no. But I heard Miss. F saying somebody in the class doing so.)

S: 咁即係，係咪你地都覺得，分組活動裡面學英文，壓力係比較細既？無咁大壓力既？ (So that means, you all think that learning English Language in groups is less pressurized? Less pressurized?)

C, T & W: 係呀。 (Yes.)

S: 係開心 D 既？ (Is happier?)

C, T & W: 係呀。 (Yes.)

S: 你地都想有更加多既？ (You all want to have more group work?)

C, T & W: 係。 (Yes.)

S: 好啦，唔該晒你地，咁我地個訪問呢，就可以完嫁啦。 (Right. Thank you so much. So our interview is going to end.)

Appendix 6a: Lesson plan for 2B Cycle 1

Daily Lesson Planning Document

Date: 04-03-2014 **Time:** 10:15-10:50 **Class:** 2B **Focus:** Unit 3 ‘Yummy Food’- Food and prices

Objectives

- To consolidate students’ understanding towards vocabulary items related to food and drinks and price expression.
- To expose students’ the written advertisement as text type

Language focus and analysis (discourse, structures or functions, lexis)

• **Lexis:**

(i) *Food and Drinks*

Food	Salad, sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, chips, chocolate, hamburgers, sweets, noodles
Drinks	Orange juice, cola, tea, water, chocolate milk

*and students’ own vocabulary resources

A box of	salad, chocolate, chicken wings, eggs etc.
A packet of	sandwiches, biscuits etc.
A piece of	cake etc.
A plate of	noodles, pasta
A bottle of	cola, water, orange juice etc.
A carton of	chocolate milk, milk etc.
A cup of	tea, water, juice etc.
A glass of	orange juice, water etc.

(ii) *Partitives*

* and students’ own vocabulary resources

(iii) Price Expressions

Discourse:

Spoken discussion

Features: Involves two or more speakers, all the participants are expected to give their opinions, show agreements and/or disagreement and reach consents. They are also expected to create the advertisement together.

Functions: Exchanging information between different parties and establishing relationships.

Assumed knowledge

1. *Students would be familiar with vocabulary items related to food and drinks and the use of partitives to describe the quantity of food/ drinks*

Given that student played the guessing game in previous lesson, by showing students the realia used yesterday and/or some pictures as visual support, it is expected that most of the students would be able to recall the names of some food and/or drinks items. Some more-proficient students may also be able to recall the partitives used for describing the quantity of a particular food/ drinks items.

Potential problems and solutions

1. Students may find the use of partitives for describing the quantity of food and drinks difficult

Students may find it quite difficult because it is a relatively abstract concept for young learners. In addition, they may find the examples used in the textbook inauthentic because of two main reasons, including (1) different utensils can be used for serving the same food/ drink item and (2) the examples in the textbook may be different from the real objects that they have seen in daily life. To ease the difficulty, teacher may need to provide a very clear explanation for students such as using the partitives covered in the textbooks to create more examples that are more relevant to their daily live so as to demonstrate the fact that the same utensil can be used for serving different food/ drinks and/or the same food/ drinks item can be served by a variety of utensils.

2. Some of the less-proficient learners may find listening/ telling prices difficult

The listening and price-telling processes could be quite demanding for some less-proficient learners because it involves listening to numbers and translating numbers into sentences. Therefore, to lower the demand, teacher may consider providing longer task time and some practice for students before starting the activity.

3. Students may not be familiar with working in groups

In this lesson, students are expected to work in groups and design a poster. This task requires everyone in the group to work collaboratively towards a common goal. Provided that students in this class rarely work together in groups, they may not be able to share the workload and consequently, domination and/ or alienation may occur.

Assessment

Some formative assessment will be done:

(i) Classroom Observation

Teacher may observe students' both verbal and non-verbal clues to evaluate how they feel about the task and provide help if necessary.

(ii) Questioning

Teacher may ask both display as well as referential questions during the lesson. For display questions, it helps teacher check students' understanding towards the instructions as well as the content of the lesson; while for referential questions, it allows students to express themselves and share their thoughts with their peers and teacher.

(iii) Evaluating students' performance in their homework

Teacher may evaluate students' understanding of the targeted sentence structure by reviewing their performance in poster. By evaluating students' work, teacher can gain

data of students' progress, identify students' strengths and limitations during the acquisition of the targeted language structure and make adjustments in his/her own teaching accordingly.

Materials and aids

Newspaper supermarket advertisement

A5 paper

Markers

Visualizer

Procedural Stages

1. Greeting

2. T invites Ss to talk to their partners and share with them 'What did you eat during recess?', T elicits some responses from Ss and had some casual chat with Ss

3. T tells Ss that she wants to do some shopping after school but she wants to know more about the prices of food and/drinks before she goes. T asks Ss where she can find prices of food and drinks. T invites Ss to share with their friends and elicits ideas from some of the Ss

4. T shows a newspaper advertisement to Ss and invites Ss to identify some features of an advertisement

5. T goes through the advertisement with Ss and tell Ss that they are going to start a supermarket in their group and they are invited to make an advertisement for their own supermarket

6. T gives instructions for the task: T tells Ss that they will work in groups and each of the groups will have one A5 paper. Students have to talk to each other, think of some food/drinks items, draw them on the A5 paper, name the items as well as write the prices for the food items.

7. T distributes the materials, tells Ss that they will have 10 minutes and instructs Ss to start the task

8. T walks around the classroom, observes Ss' performance and provides help if necessary

9. T collects Ss' work and concludes the lesson by asking Ss 'What have we done today?'

Appendix 6b: Lesson plan for 5B Cycle 1

Daily Lesson Planning Document

Date: 03-03-2014 **Time:** 08:15-08:50 **Class:** 5B **Focus:** Unit 3 'Magic of Nature'-
Weather in Hong Kong

Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To expose students to the use of connectives 'so' and 'so that' to tell results and reasons/ purposes				
Language focus and analysis (discourse, structures or functions, lexis)				
Grammar structure:				
<i>(i) Connective 'so'</i>				
Subject	Factor contributing to the result	Connective	Result of the previous clause	Punctuation
Inn	reads a lot of English storybooks	so	he knows a lot of English vocabulary	.
<i>Function:</i> used for indicating casual relationships				
<i>(ii) Connective 'so that'</i>				
Subject	Recommendation	Connective	Purpose/reason of the recommendation	Punctuation
We	should wear some thick clothes if there is a very cold weather warning	so that	we will not get sick	.
<i>Function:</i> used for explaining or providing more information for the recommendation				
Assumed knowledge <p>According to the mentor, students have been exposed to the use of connective 'so' in previous term and therefore, it is expected that students would be able to recall the function as well as the sentence structure of the connective 'so'. Students are also expected to be able to formulate their own sentences for expressing causal relationships with the use of connective 'so'.</p>				
Potential problems and solutions <p>1. <i>Students may find understanding the differences between connective 'so' and 'so that' difficult</i></p> <p>Given that the two connectives are different in terms of their functions: one for expressing causal relationships while the other one for providing the reason/ purpose of doing a particular action, which could be cognitively challenging for students whose thinking skills are still under development. Although the language demand is not that demanding (due to the fact that both the connectives have 'standard position' in a sentence), students may find it challenging to distinguish reasons from results.</p>				

2. Students may not be familiar with working in groups

In this lesson, students are expected to work in groups and put the jumbled words into a sentence. This task requires everyone in the group to work collaboratively towards a common goal. Provided that students in this class rarely work together in groups, they may not be able to share the workload and consequently, domination and/ or alienation may occur.

Assessment

Some formative assessment will be done:

(i) Classroom Observation

Teacher may observe students' both verbal and non-verbal clues to evaluate how they feel about the task and provide help if necessary.

(ii) Questioning

Teacher may ask both display as well as referential questions during the lesson. For display questions, it helps teacher check students' understanding towards the instructions as well as the content of the lesson; while for referential questions, it allows students to express themselves and share their thoughts with their peers and teacher.

(iii) Evaluating students' performance in their homework

Teacher may evaluate students' understanding of the targeted sentence structure by reviewing their performance in homework (i.e. Booklet). By evaluating students' work, teacher can gain data of students' progress, identify students' strengths and limitations during the acquisition of the targeted language structure and make adjustments in his/her own teaching accordingly.

Materials and aids

'So' & 'so that' paper strips & envelopes

Booklet

Blackboard & chalks

Visualizer

Procedural Stages

1. Greeting

2. T invites Ss to talk to their partners and share with them 'What did you do at weekend? How was the weather like?'

3. T elicits responses from Ss and has casual chat with them

4. T writes the two connectives 'so' and 'so that' on the blackboard and asks Ss if they know the differences between the two connectives

5. T invites Ss to discuss with their peers and later elicits some responses from Ss

6. T tells Ss that they are going to play a game in their groups and find out if their predictions towards the function of the two connectives are correct
7. T gives instructions for the game:
 - (i) T distributes an envelope to each group
 - (ii) Inside each envelope, there will be some sentences and words (main clause, reasons/purpose, result and 'so' and 'so that')
 - (iii) Ss in groups have to read through the words and match the main clause with appropriate subordinate clause and connective
 - (iv) T invites a group of Ss to come out and do a demonstration for the class
 - (v) T assigns roles for every member in all the groups
8. T asks some concept-check questions to check students' understanding towards the instructions
9. T sets the timer and starts the game
10. T walks around and observes Ss' performance. T may need to provide help if necessary.
11. T concludes the game by allowing Ss to discuss with their peers 'What is the difference between 'so' and 'so that'?'
12. T elicits response from Ss and confirms/ corrects their responses
13. T goes through the examples (i.e. sentences used in the game) with Ss and invites Ss to check if they get it right
14. T gives instructions for homework: T invites Ss to take out their Booklet, puts down the date and does 1-2 questions as examples for Ss
15. T concludes the lesson by asking Ss 'What we have done today?' and elicits responses from Ss

Appendix 6c: Lesson plan for 2B Cycle 2

Daily Lesson Planning Document

Date: 27-03-2014 **Time:** 08:15-08:50 **Class:** 2B **Focus:** Unit 4 ‘Interview with Mr. Gordon’ - Daily routines and time expression

• **Objectives**

- To revisit and consolidate students with vocabulary items related to daily routines by doing pair-share and showing the robot video and eliciting ideas from the class.
- To familiarize students with the use of Simple Present Tense (both spoken and written form) for telling habits by inviting them to design a robot helper, write a timetable for it and introduce it to the class.
- To facilitate students’ listening development, particularly on listening for specific information by engaging them in a discussion for designing a robot- helper.
- To facilitate students’ speaking development, particularly on maintaining discussion within groups, expressing and/or explaining personal opinions, responding to others’ opinions and speaking aloud by engaging them in group discussion, presentation and peer assessment.

Language focus and analysis (discourse, structures or functions, lexis)

• **Lexis:**

- (i) Daily routines: get up, come to school, have lunch, go home, have dinner, take a shower & go to bed (* and students’ own vocabulary resources)
- (ii) Other activities: have swimming lessons, paint pictures, play badminton, play basketball, play football, play table tennis, play the piano and read storybooks (* and students’ own vocabulary resources)
- (iii) Chores: set the table, fold the clothes, make the bed, clean the windows, water the plants, sweep the floor and wash the dishes (* and students’ own vocabulary resources)
- (iv) Time expressions

• **Discourse**

- (i) Written Timetable: Titles, catchy-words, pictures, table(with time and activities), use of imperatives, illustrations/ descriptions
Function: Showing the time/sequence of activities
- (ii) Spoken discussion: involves two or more speakers. Speakers discuss on a particular

issue and exchange their opinions with others. Sometimes, different parties may show agreement or disagreement. The discussion may/ may not lead to consent between different parties.

Functions: Exchanging personal opinions and may need to reach consent

(iii) Spoken Presentation

Features: May/may not involve one or more speakers. Speakers present some factual information about a particular product/ an event or issue.

Assumed knowledge

It is assumed that most of the students in class will be able to recall the spoken form of some vocabulary items concerning daily activities and numbers (in terms of time). It is also expected that most of the students will be able to use Simple Present Tense for telling daily routines as it is covered in the previous unit. However, students may find it difficult to spell some of the words. Teacher may invite students to take out their notebook to check for the spelling.

Potential problems and solutions

1. The use of group work in the discussion task

Students in this class lack the experience in doing collaborative learning tasks such as group work. Therefore, in order to lower the cognitive demand, short, explicit and precise instructions are needed. In addition, some other problems such as arguing or complaining against each other may occur.

Suggested solution:

- The instructions given by teacher have to be very explicit. Teacher has to assign different roles for students, for example, teacher may provide a number for each student and explain their duties very explicitly (E.g. All members think for the activities, Student 1 & 2 from each group: write; Student 3 & 4 from each group: draw the robot; Student 5 from each group: check)
- Teacher may want to demonstrate and ask concept-check questions before starting the activities so as to guarantee every student understand what is going on and what to do during activity time. Also, teacher may want to provide 1 to 2 minutes for students to talk in their groups and clarify the instructions before starting the activity.
- Teacher may also want to maintain high awareness during running dictation and group discussion time because students may argue or complain against each other. Teacher may want to provide some polite phrases for students before starting the discussion activity and/or tell the class very explicitly that she doesn't want any groups to argue/ complain and marks may be deducted if it happens.

Assessment

Some formative assessment will be done:

(i) Classroom Observation

Teacher may observe students' both verbal and non-verbal clues to evaluate how they feel about the task and provide help if necessary.

(ii) Questioning

Teacher may ask both display as well as referential questions during the lesson. For display questions, it helps teacher check students' understanding towards the instructions as well as the content of the lesson; while for referential questions, it allows students to express themselves and share their thoughts with their peers and teacher.

Materials and aids

Task-sheet

Blackboard & chalks

Visualizer

Computer

Procedural Stages

1. Greeting
2. T invites Ss to talk to their partners and share with them 'What do you do everyday?'
3. T elicits responses from Ss and has casual chat with them
4. T tells Ss that she found an interesting video from the Internet and wants to share with them
5. T plays the video and asks Ss to focus on the visuals
6. T asks Ss to discuss with their partners regarding 'What did you see from the video?'
7. T elicits ideas from Ss and writes down the lexis on the blackboard
8. T asks Ss 'Do you want to have a robot helper?', elicits responses from Ss and writes the idea on blackboard as scaffoldings for Ss
9. T gives instructions for the task: T tells Ss that they are going to work in groups, design a group robot that helps everyone in the group for their routines or everyday duties
10. T invites 4 Ss to come out and does a demonstration for the class
11. T asks Ss 'What do you say when you want agree or disagree with your group members?', T elicits responses from Ss and tells them that they can use some polite phrases such as 'I like it' or 'I don't like it' / 'That's good!', 'I don't think so.' Etc. (depends of Ss' language resources)

12. T asks some concept-check questions for Ss to ensure their understandings
13. T assigns roles to Ss: 1 writer; 1 designer; 1-2 presenter(s) and 1 checker; then distributes the materials to Ss and indicates the start of task
14. T sets the timer, starts the activity. During activity, T walks around the classroom, observes Ss' performance and provides help if necessary.
15. T concludes the task; T invites some groups to come out and present their robots; T invites Ss to vote for the robots and gives some comments
16. T concludes the lesson by asking Ss 'Do you like the activity?' and/or 'What have we done today?'

Appendix 6d: Lesson plan for 5B Cycle 2

Daily Lesson Planning Document

Date: 27-03-2014 **Time:** 10:15-10:50 **Class:** 5B **Focus:** Unit 3 ‘Magic of Nature’- Weather in Hong Kong

Objectives

- To consolidate students’ understanding of the use of modal verb ‘should’ in spoken form to give recommendations through the role-play activity.
- To facilitate students’ speaking development, particularly on eliciting responses by asking questions or providing information on a topic by the use of role-play activity. Most importantly, building up students’ confidence in speaking English.

Language focus and analysis (discourse, structures or functions, lexis)

Spoken Discourse:

(i) Group discussion

Features: Involving two or more speakers. Members discuss on the same topic and share their thoughts (in this situation, what should/ shouldn’t be done during a particular scenario). Consents may/ may not be reached.

Function: Mainly exchanging information/ ideas between parties.

(ii) Dialogues

Features: Involving two or more speakers, one asks questions and the others answers questions

Function: Establishing relationships, exchanging information between parties.

• Grammar Structure:

(i) Asking for suggestions/ obligations (Questions):

<i>Question Word</i>	<i>Modal Verb</i>	<i>Subject (pronoun)</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Conditional clause</i>	<i>Punctuation (question-mark)</i>
What	should	we	do	if there is...	?
	shoudln’t				

(ii) Making suggestions/ obligations (Answers):

<i>Subject (pronoun)</i>	<i>Modal verb</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Conditional clause</i>	<i>Punctuation (full-stop)</i>
We	should	...	if there is...	.

Assumed knowledge

It is assumed that most of the students in class are able to recall vocabulary items such as some weather warnings and safety precaution measures that are covered in the textbook unit (if they are given the scenarios related to weather). They should be familiar with the sentence structure too. Given that the scenarios are relatively simple, it is expected that students would be able to think of at least one ‘should’ and ‘should

not' for each scenario by using their own language resources.

Potential problems and solutions

1. The first potential problem is that students in this class are not familiar with collaborative learning and they are not used to neither pair work nor group work. Therefore, there is a possibility that the class will become chaotic or may argue during group-work.

Suggested solution:

- The instructions given by teacher have to be very explicit. Teacher has to decide on the role for each member (for example, who will be the actor(s), writer, checker, time-keeper etc.
- Teacher may want to ask concept-check questions before starting the activities so as to guarantee every student understand what is going on and what to do during activity time. Also, teacher may want to provide 1 to 2 minutes for students to talk in groups and clarify the instructions before starting the task.
- Teacher may also want to maintain high awareness during activity time because students may argue or complain against each other. Teacher may want to provide some polite phrases for students before starting the discussion activity and/or tell the class very explicitly that she doesn't want any groups to argue/ complain and marks may be deducted if it happens.

Assessment

Some formative assessment will be done:

(i) Classroom Observation

Teacher may observe students' both verbal and non-verbal clues to evaluate how they feel about the task and provide help if necessary.

(ii) Questioning

Teacher may ask both display as well as referential questions during the lesson. For display questions, it helps teacher check students' understanding towards the instructions as well as the content of the lesson; while for referential questions, it allows students to express themselves and share their thoughts with their peers and teacher.

(iii) Group-work products

There are at least three products of the group work: the discussion, task-sheet and performance. By observing students' during group-discussion, teacher can evaluate students' interactional skills for maintaining a discussion; by looking at students' performance on the task-sheet, teacher can evaluate students' understanding of the targeted language (written discourse) in terms of accuracy and their logical- thinking; last but not least, when students in groups come up to the class to perform, teacher would be able to evaluate students' speaking skills (particularly on volume of voice and eye-contact) as well as the accuracy of the use of targeted language in terms of spoken language.

(iv) Peer-assessment

Peer-assessment will be conducted in the form of sticking smiley stickers on the

evaluation sheet. By doing so, it enables students to understand teacher's expectations and allows them to show appreciation towards others' effort. They are going to assess their peers in four aspects, namely acting, quality of the suggestions, volume of voice and eye-contact. As mentioned earlier, the first one focuses on how entertaining and accurate their acting is; the second one focuses on the usefulness and relevancy of the groups' suggestions and the last two focus on some basic speaking skills that they are expected to demonstrate.

Materials and aids

PowerPoint (Appendix 1)

Task-sheet x8 (7 groups and 1 for demo) (Appendix 2)

Peer Assessment Form (Appendix 3)

Timer

Blackboard

Visualizer

Computer

Procedural Stages

1. Greeting

2. T shows some funny questions found in the internet with Ss and elicits some responses from Ss

3. T tells Ss that she has got some more funny scenarios that she wants them to think of some suggestions/ obligations in groups

4. T tells Ss that they will work in groups and each group will receive one scenario. T instructs Ss to move their desks and chairs and form groups.

5. T shows the task-sheet through the visualizer and tells Ss that they have to:

(i) Take on different roles: 2 actors, 1 writer, 2 checkers and 1 time-keeper (assigned by teachers)

(ii) T instructs actors to stand up and invites them to look at the question word displayed on the door: E.g. 'Who are you?', 'Where are you?', 'What are you doing?', 'How do you feel?'

(iii) T tells Ss that they will have 5 minutes to discuss and prepare for the task. After that, some of the groups will be invited to come out and show the class.

6. T sets the timer and starts the task

7. T walks around the classroom, observes and provides help if necessary.

8. After discussion, T tells Ss that some groups will come out and perform and other groups have to watch their performance and give some stickers to them in terms of the 4

assessing aspects.

9. T shows the assessment form to the class through the visualizer.

10. T invites two groups to come up to the class and do the following procedures (together with the help of the teacher)

(i) 1 minute- actor(s) act the scenarios+ the rest of the class guess

(ii) 1 minute- other group members ask the class the question ‘What should we do if ...?’

(iii) 1 minute- T and Ss elicit ideas from the rest of the class

(iv) 1 minute- Ss tell the suggestions they have written down.

(v) 1 minute- T asks that group of Ss ‘What shouldn’t we do if...?’ and elicits responses from that group

(vi) 1 minute-T invites Ss to give a big hand to that group and invites Ss in groups to stick the smiley stickers.

11. T shows appreciation towards Ss’ effort and invites the class to recall what they have done and what they have learnt today.

Appendix 7: Sample of Observational note

Observational Note

Date: 03-03-2014

Class: 5B

Module: 'Magic of Nature'- Weather in Hong Kong

Activity: Reorganizing sentences 'so' and 'so that' with paper strips

Objective(s): To expose students to the use of connectives 'so' and 'so that' to tell results and reasons/ purposes

Time/Stage	Group number & members' names	Behaviour/utterance	Remarks (if any)
During task	Group 1: Ian, Jessica, Yuki and Chloe	J, Y: received the envelope, opened it, started forming sentences; I: complained about J & Y not letting him to do; C: daydreamt	J & Y: more-proficient I: could not contribute, even after making complaints; C: less-proficient;
	Group 6: Herman, Timothy, Raymond and Rio	H: always did the work by himself; T: tried to form the sentences and gave comments, H picked the paper strips from T and ignored him; R & R: occasionally helped (when H asked them to 'give me the paper'), most of the time chatting	H: more-able student; T: wanted to participate but others ignored him; R & R: sometimes helped,
	Group 1: Yoshi, Jason, Peter, Matthew	Y: did nothing, only observed others; J & P: tried to form the sentences (but not correct); M: playing with the paper strips	Y: did not participate, observed others, did not point out the mistakes; J & P: not motivated in learning English but forced to do the task because no one in their group is

			working; M: rarely participate, told me that he doesn't like learning English
Note			
<p>1. Domination and left-behind: existed in every group; usually more-proficient learners dominating, less-proficient learners not participating at all;</p> <p>2. Lack of communication between group members: from my observation, due to domination, students did not communicate much with their group members (even if they communicated, they communicated in Cantonese or switched to English when I passed by);</p> <p>3. Code-switching & code-mixing: Students switched to English when I passed by; and occasionally mixed some English lexis into a Cantonese sentence.</p>			
Reflections			
<p>1. Modify task design: improve the task design → making it more authentic, lower cognitive and linguistic demands and increase social demand;</p> <p>2. Assigning roles to students: promote even participation among group members;</p> <p>3. Teaching of polite phrases: teaching students to use some polite phrases such as 'That's good' / 'I agree' / 'I don't agree' etc. to students so as to increase the quantity of the use of English and raise their awareness towards using more English in group work</p>			

Appendix 8: Sample of Teaching Journal

Teaching Journal

Date: 03-03-2014

Class: 5B

Module: 'Magic of Nature'- Weather in Hong Kong

Activity: Reorganizing sentences 'so' and 'so that' with paper strips

Objective(s): To expose students to the use of connectives 'so' and 'so that' to tell results and reasons/ purposes

Reflection

☺ Strengths:

This activity serves as a noticing activity for students to notice the differences between the two connectives 'so' and 'so that' by allowing them to reconstruct the scrambled sentences and link the connectives with the sentences. In general, some of the more-proficient learners were excited about the activity and they were able to form the sentences. Also, I have included some of the names of students from 5B into the sentences, this makes the learning activity more personalized and some of the students were happy about seeing their own names during the activity.

☹ Limitations:

By observation during lesson, I have identified some weaknesses of the task:

1. Uneven participation

→ It was observed that participation among students in groups was so uneven that not everyone was participating in the activity. Dominations by more-able students were observed in EVERY single group. Many of the less-proficient students such as Timothy, Matthew and Rio (pseudonyms) did not participate at all and just sat there, went daydreaming. The existence of uneven participation may be due to the demand of the activity. Given that the activity requires students to understand the main and subordinate clauses and hence, make connections with the use of either 'so' and 'so that'. On one hand it requires students to comprehend the sentences, and then figure out the relationships between the sentences and lastly, choose the correct connective to link up the sentences. Some of the less-able students in class may not be able to understand the meaning of the sentences as no context or visual support is provided for comprehension. Thus, they may be left-behind.

2. Lack of communication

→ Based on the fact that dominations existed in groups, some of the more-able students controlled the activity and did not engage other participants. They did not ask for opinions from other peers too. Therefore, negotiation of meaning was not able to take place.

3. Use of Cantonese

→ It was found that on one hand, there was limited interaction among group

members, on the other hand, even interactions were found, students discussed in Cantonese with some English lexis mixed into the sentence. For example, they said something like ‘呢個係 so that 呀’. This may be because of the fact that, they don’t have the habits of using English for discussion or they lack the language resources to express the complete sentence in English. Also, it was interesting to observe that every time when I passed by the groups, students would immediately switch to use English for 1-2 minutes or keep quiet and wait until I moved to another group. This indicated that, students actually have the awareness of the need to use English during classrooms but practically, they were not able to do so.

Improvement to be made:

1. Take design → modify the cognitive and language demand of the task; strengthen the communicative demand;
2. Assign roles for students
3. Introduce some polite phrases or phrases that are expected to be useful during discussion so that hopefully, students would use more English

Appendix 9a: Consent Form for Principal

17th February, 2014

Dear Ms Wong,

Examining students' perception towards the use of group work in the English classroom

I am a Year 4 student from the Bachelor of Education (BEd) (Language Education) Primary English, the University of Hong Kong. To meet part of my BEd degree requirement, I am required to conduct a small-scale study for my dissertation, which is under the supervision of Dr. Li Yongyan, assistant professor of the Faculty. This will involve English teachers and students. For English teachers, they will be interviewed on their observation on students' behaviour during previous group-work experience while for students, they will be invited to complete a questionnaire twice regarding how they like doing group work during English lessons and two interviews on their perception towards the use of group work during English lessons as well as the potential benefits and/or challenges that they may encounter during group work. Students' in-class behaviour and work completed during English lessons will also be recorded and collected for evaluation. The details of each data collection method are as follows:

(a) Interview for English teachers:

Target interviewees:

Approximately 2-3 English teachers

Length of the interview:

Approximately 20 minutes

Format:

- An 1-to1, face-to-face semi-structured interview, preferably during lunch or after school inside the school.
- Participants will only be interviewed once and they are not required to complete the interview protocol by themselves.
- The interview will be conducted in English and it will be audio-taped.

(b) Questionnaire for students:

Target participants:

Students from primary 2B and 5B

Length of the questionnaire:

Approximately 11 questions and takes around 10 minutes

Format:

- The questionnaire will be completed in school, preferably during recess or lunch-break
- Participants will be required to complete the questionnaire twice and they are required to fill in the questionnaire by themselves.
- The questionnaire will be written in English (while participants are allowed to respond in Chinese or English) and it will be collected.

(c) Interview with students:

Target interviewees:

Approximately 2-3 students from 2B and 5B respectively

Length of the interview:

Approximately 20 minutes each

Format:

- Two face-to-face semi-structured interviews in groups of 2-3 students, preferably during lunch or after school inside the school.
- Participants are not required to complete the interview protocol by themselves.
- The interview will be conducted in English and it will be audio-taped.

(4) Class observation:

Target participants: Students from primary 2B and 5B
Length of observation: Approximately 35 minutes per English lesson
Format:

- In-class observation
- Data will be recorded in teaching journal and/or observation recording sheet

(5) Collection of students' work:

Target participants: Students from primary 2B and 5B
Format:

- Students' work will be photocopied.
- Original work will be returned to students.

According to the university's policy on the ethical conduct of research, I am writing to ask for your consent for these procedures.

I will make sure that the information (both teachers and students provide to me) will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Further, the interviewed teachers and students have the right to review and/or delete part of or their entire part in the audio-tape, or not to be included in my analysis, and if there is anyone who does not wish to be included, I will act according to that wish and not include his/her part. The information collected will only be used for the dissertation and reviewed only by me and my university supervisor. All the information in paper form will be kept in a sealed file, which will be stored in a locked cabinet at home while information in digital form will be saved in a password-protected personal laptop, which will be kept in a locked cabinet at home. These information will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. The participation of this study is entirely voluntary and participants can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you agree to these procedures, please kindly sign the reply slip attached with this letter and return it to me at any convenient time. If concerns arise about this aspect of my work, please feel free to contact me at 6122 9525, or my Programme Director Dr. Jeffrey Day at 2241 5456. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU at 2241 5267.

Yours sincerely,

Leung Lai Ting Stephany
Bachelor of Education (Language Education) Primary English Year 4

Reply Slip

I ** will / will not give permission for the school to participate in the research.
(** Please delete if inappropriate.)

School Name: _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 9b: Consent Form for English teachers

17th February, 2014

Dear teachers,

Examining students' perception towards the use of group work in the English classroom

I am a Year 4 student from the Bachelor of Education (BEd) (Language Education) Primary English, the University of Hong Kong. To meet part of my BEd degree requirement, I am required to conduct a small-scale study for my dissertation, which is under the supervision of Dr. Li Yongyan, assistant professor of the Faculty. This will involve English teachers and students; you will be interviewed on your observation or opinions towards students' behaviour during the use of group work in English lessons. The details of the interview are as follows:

Target interviewees:	Approximately 2-3 English teachers
Length of the interview:	Approximately 20 minutes
Format:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•An 1-to-1, face-to-face semi-structured interview, preferably during lunch or after school inside the school.•You will only be interviewed once and you are not required to complete the interview protocol by yourselves.•The interview will be conducted in English and it will be audio-taped.

According to the university's policy on the ethical conduct of research, I am writing to ask for your consent for these procedures.

I will make sure that the information you provide to me will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Further, you have the right to review and/or delete part of or the entire part of your interview in the audio-tape, or not to be included in my analysis, and if you do not wish to be included, I will act according to that wish and not include your part. The information collected will only be used for the dissertation and reviewed only by me and my university supervisor. The information collected will be stored in a personal laptop that requires password-access and the laptop will be kept in a locked cabinet at home; they will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

If you agree to these procedures, please kindly sign the reply slip attached with this letter and return it to me at any convenient time. If concerns arise about this aspect of my work, please feel free to contact me at 6122 9525, or my Programme Director Dr. Jeffrey Day at 2241 5456. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU at 2241 5267.

Yours sincerely,

Leung Lai Ting Stephany
Bachelor of Education (Language Education) Primary English Year 4

Reply Slip

I ** agree / do not agree to participate in the research.
(** Please delete if inappropriate.)

Teacher Name: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 9c: Consent form for parents

17th February, 2014

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Dear Parents,

I am Leung Lai Ting Stephany from the Bachelor of Education (Language Education)-Primary English Year 4 at the University of Hong Kong. I will conduct a research project titled ““Move your desks and chairs”: Primary students working in groups in the English classroom”, which is under the supervision of Dr. Li Yongyan, assistant professor of the Faculty. I would like to invite students from class 2B/5B* (*circle the appropriate) to participate. The purpose of this study is to find out how Primary students like the use of group work in English lessons. By involving students from 2B/5B* (*circle the appropriate) to participate in this research, it provides an opportunity for teachers to understand students’ learning needs and to improve teaching quality.

Students who participate in this research will complete a questionnaire twice (each will include 11 questions and will take approximately 10 minutes) in school during recess or lunch-break, and approximately 2-3 students from the class will be invited to participate in two face-to-face semi-structured interview in groups of 2-3 students (each will last for approximately 20 minutes) in school during recess or lunch-break. The two interviews will be conducted in English and audio-taped. Students’ work will also be photocopied for evaluating students’ progress. After the study, it would be my pleasure to share with and explain the findings for the participants so as to assist them to explore learning strategies that facilitate academic progression.

This research will involve personal opinions and/or personal information, I will make sure that the information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Further, the interviewed students have the right to review and/or delete part of or their entire part in the audio-tape, or not to be included in my analysis, and if there is anyone who does not wish to be included, I will act according to that wish and not include his/her part. The information collected will only be used for the dissertation and reviewed only by me and my university supervisor. All the information in paper form will be kept in a sealed file, which will be stored in a locked cabinet at home while information in digital form will be saved in a password-protected personal laptop, which will be kept in a locked cabinet at home. These information will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. The participation of this study is entirely voluntary and participants can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Please complete the reply slip below to indicate whether you would allow your child to participate in this research soon. By participating in this research, students will be able to express their opinions towards the use of group work in English lessons, which allows teachers to hear students’ inner-voice and adapt their teaching so as to fulfill learners’ learning needs.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at 6122 9525. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, the University of Hong Kong at 2241 5267.

Your help is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Leung Lai Ting Stephany
BEd(LangEd) Primary English Year 4
The University of Hong Kong

Reply Slip

Student Name: _____ Class: _____ Class No.: _____

I ** will / will not give permission for my child to participate in the research.
(* Please delete if inappropriate.)

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Table 1: Findings of Action Research Cycle 1

Summary of findings in Cycle 1		
Data	Findings of Class 2B	Findings of Class 5B
<p>1. Observations & observational notes (Appendix 7)</p>	<p>(i) Arguments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arguments in 2B:</i> 2 groups argued; group members argued about issues such as ‘I can’t see the paper’ & ‘I want to write’ etc. • <i>Arguments in 5B:</i> 1 group argued; group members argued about dominations (e.g. A student of intermediate-ability complained about his group members by saying ‘They don't let me touch the paper!’) <p>(ii) Dominating/ Left-behind students;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dominating/ left-behind in 2B:</i> At the beginning of the task → all members brainstormed; after 3 minutes → dominations existed in 3 groups (i.e. half of the class); in the 3 groups, only 1-2 more-proficient learners contributed; others, sat there, did nothing; Targeted students: Christy → worked with all of her group-mates; Tommy & Winnie → daydreamt; • <i>Dominations/ left-behind in 5B:</i> Dominations existed right at the beginning of the task; dominations and left-behind in ALL groups; only 1-2 more-proficient learners participated, less-proficient learners either tried to help 	

	<p>or chatted; ‘communicated’ through moving paper strips but not talking; Targeted students: Jessica→worked alone, did not listen to others; Yoshi→daydreamt; Timothy→tried to arrange the paper strips, but his group members took the strips without asking & gave suggestions by saying ‘I think is ‘so’’ but being ignored;</p> <p>(iii) Code-switching and/or code-mixing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Class 2B & 5B:</i> Used Cantonese to discuss; mixed some English lexis into one Chinese sentence; switched to English when teacher (i.e. me) passed by. 	
<p>2. Questionnaires (Appendix 3: questionnaire);</p> <p>(Table 3 & 4: summary of results)</p>	<p><u>(i) ‘Experience’ Strand (Questions 2, 4 & 8):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of the surveyed students (12 out of 17) were happy when working in groups, while only 4 students have no comments; • Whether students found it interesting in working in groups, a preponderance of “Yes” has been identified (14 out of 17) while only 3 students have answered “No” or “No comment”; • Similarly, a lion share of surveyed students (12 out of 17) said they always contributed during group work, which is an encouraging phenomenon, only 5 students responded they 	<p><u>(i) ‘Experience’ Strand (Questions 2, 4 & 8):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant majority (26 out of 30) of the students were happy when working in groups, compared to only 4 students indicated “No comment”; • Almost all students (27 out of 30) found working in groups is interesting while only 1 student found opposite; • In terms of contribution during group work, 23 students said they always do so but 5 students responded a “No” to such question;

	<p>do not contribute to the group or have no comment;</p> <p><u>(ii) ‘Belief’ Strand (Questions 1, 6-7 & 10):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A preponderance of students (14 out of 17) reported that they like doing group work in English lessons whilst 3 student indicated “No comment”; • 15 students agreed group work is effective in facilitating them to learn English while 2 students have chosen “No comment”; • A majority of students (12 out of 17) have indicated that the use of group work in English lessons is beneficial in boosting their interests towards learning English; however, almost 30% of students (5 out of 17) showed “No comment”; • Almost all students (16 out of 17) indicated their wish to have more group work in English lessons and 1 student had “No comment” 	<p><u>(ii) ‘Belief’ Strand (Questions 1, 6-7 & 10):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 students regarded highly for working in groups during English lessons, only 2 students showed “No” / “No comment”. • A great share of students (24 students) agreed group work is beneficial to their English learning, with only 5 students showed “No comment”; • Whilst most students found effectiveness in learning English through group work, only 18 students (60%) felt group work arouse their interest in learning English, and 9 students (30%) have no comments. This might attributed to the students’ lack of general interest in the subject. • Encouragingly, most students (24) said they want to have more group work in their English lessons, and only 6 students had “No comment” / “No”;
Conclusion		
Limitations of the group work	<p>(i) The communicative & cooperative purposes of the tasks were not strong (i.e. the need to work either collaboratively or cooperatively with group members was not strong);</p> <p>(ii) Task design leading to imbalance participation among group members (which consequently</p>	

	<p>led to arguments); (iii) Code-switching and code-mixing were identified; (iv) Failed to promote students' interests towards participating in the task/ learning English</p>
Improvements in Cycle 2	<p>(i) Assigning roles for every student; (ii) Improving the task-design- a more authentic task that includes purposes of communication; (iii) Providing language input for students- both targeted language as well as language needed for communicating in groups</p>

Table 2: Findings of Action Research Cycle 2

Summary of findings in Cycle 2		
Data	Findings of 2B	Findings of 5B
<p>1. Observation & observational notes (Appendix 7)</p>	<p>(i) Arguments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the groups argued due to minor issue (e.g. stationery problem); <p>(ii) Dominating/ left-behind students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domination was observed in one group: the writer ignored her group member’s ideas and merely put down her ideas (i.e. her own routines) on the task-sheet; • Left-behind: Two students were found to be left-behind and daydreamt while other students were working; Targeted students: Christy → worked with her group members, responsible for writing; Tommy → responsible for checking spelling, elicited an idea but the writer in his group did not consider/ respond to his ideas, he said ‘Too much work, I want the robot to play’; Winnie: responsible for drawing pictures; seemed to enjoy a lot; <p>(iii) Code-switching/ code-mixing:</p>	<p>(i) Arguments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No argument was observed <p>(ii) Domination/left-behind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domination was not observed during task; students really worked together. First, brainstormed solutions → Wrote down the solutions → helped the actors/ actresses to prepare for the presentation • Left-behind: One student was found to be left-behind, he took the role as the time-keeper; Targeted students: Jessica → worked with her group members, guided her group members to finish the solutions quickly and brainstormed for the acting part; Timothy → took the role as an actor, asked his group members how he could act the scenario; acted with another less-proficient learner in his group; Yoshi → responsible for writing, gave comments to the actors in her group after writing the solutions; <p>(iii) Code-switching/ code-mixing:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heard the use of polite phrases taught in 5 groups (5 out of 6 groups); • Polite phrases used for at least 3 times in every group; • Code-switching: less; was only observed when they were brainstorming the names of the robot (e.g. Tommy said ‘I want it to be called Ironman’ in Cantonese); • Code-mixing: included vocabulary items related to household chores and time into sentences occasionally; • Generally, used more English; used Cantonese as remedy but not the main medium of communication; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heard the use of polite phrases taught in all groups; • Polite phrases were frequently used; for at least 5-8 times; especially when they were preparing for the acting part; • Code-switching: was only observed during preparation for acting part (e.g. Timothy said ‘Do I have to shiver?’ in Cantonese); • Code-mixing: students integrated 1-2 Chinese lexis into an English sentence (e.g. using Cantonese to describe the action words); • Generally, used more English; used Cantonese as remedy but not the main medium of communication;
<p>2. Questionnaires (Appendix 3: questionnaire); (Table 3 & 4: summary of results)</p>	<p>(i) ‘Experience’ Strand (Questions 2, 4 & 8):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all students (16 out of 17 students) expressed that they felt happy when they were engaged in group work; whilst 1 students responded “No comment”; • Similarly, a lion share of students (16 out of 17 students) have reported that they found working in groups interesting; whereas only one student suggested he/she had “No comment”; • 15 out of 17 students have reported that they always make contribution during group work and 2 students rated “No” and “No comment” respectively; 	<p>(i) ‘Experience’ Strand (Questions 2, 4 & 8):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A considerable amount of students (28 out of 30) have reported that they were happy while doing group work; whilst 2 of the respondents suggested “No” or “No comment” respectively; • Whether students found it interesting in working in groups, a preponderance of “Yes” (29 out of 30) has been identified while 1 of the students reported “No”; • A significant majority of students (26 out of 30) have reported that they always contribute during group work in English lessons;

	<p><u>(ii) ‘Belief’ Strand (Questions 1, 6-7 & 10):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all students (16 out of 17 students) reported that they like doing group work in English lessons whereas 1 of the students gave “No comment”; • A large proportion of students (15 out of 17) suggested that they believe working in groups is facilitative to their English learning and 2 of the students responded “No” and “No comment” respectively; • A comparatively small proportion of students (13 out of 17 students) have agreed that the use of group work can boost their interests towards learning English whilst 4 students responded “No comment”; • A lion share of students (16 out of 17 students) have commented that they want to be engaged in more group work during English lessons and 1 of the participants indicated “No comment”; 	<p><u>(ii) ‘Belief’ Strand (Questions 1, 6-7 & 10):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant majority of students (29 out of 30) have reported that they like group work done in English lessons; at the same time, 1 of the students chose “No comment”; • In terms of the use of group work for facilitating English learning, 27 out of 30 students expressed positive opinions whereas 3 of the respondents reported “No comment” to such questions; • A comparatively small amount of students (25 out of 30 students) have indicated that the use of group work can raise their interests towards learning English whilst 5 participants have answered either “No” or “No comment”; • A considerable amount of students (26 out of 30 students) have agreed that they want to have more group work in English lessons; at the same time, 4 students responded either “No” or “No comment”;
<p>3. Interviews (Appendix 4: interview protocol); (Appendix 5: Transcription for 2B’s interview)</p>	<p><u>General perception:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, all the three interviewees expressed that they like doing group work during English lessons and they found participating in group work interesting and less-pressurized. • Comparatively, two of the interviewees found teacher-talk (the usual learning mode 	<p><u>General perception:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, one of the interviewee Jessica suggested that she likes to have group work in English lessons whereas the other two had no comments; Jessica mentioned that she only likes group work that without presentation; while Yoshi expressed that comparatively, she likes activities that involve the whole class

	<p>that they experience during English lessons) a bit boring whilst another interviewee (Christy) find both teacher talk and group work ok.</p> <p><u>The effect of group work on English learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They also expressed their belief that by engaging in group work, it facilitates their English learning and promotes interests towards learning English (by gaining support from others such as having peers explaining the teaching content for them and listening to different opinions); • They indicated that they noticed the difference in terms of English ability within groups and they considered it as positive as different students possess different strengths and thus, can provide or seek help from other group members; <p><u>Contribution during group work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them expressed that they always contribute during group work by writing; 	<p>instead of merely pairs or groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yohsi further commented that she found herself learning better, knowledge and instructions were made clearer during teacher talk; <p><u>The effect of group work on English learning:</u></p> <p>Positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the interviewees indicated the use of group work is beneficial to learning English, for example, Jessica suggested that she can ‘hear’ others’ thinking process, learnt some good sentences and peers reminding her for her spelling mistakes; Yohsi expressed that the acquisition of English varies among individuals and can learn from others by ‘seeing’ their opinions whilst Timothy pointed out that he learnt by group members teaching each other and foster his understandings; <p>Negative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy commented that group work is not useful in English learning when teacher did not make the instructions clear and when his group members don’t understand the content too; while for Yoshi, she made it very clear that she thinks group work is only beneficial for exposing to new knowledge, she finds it very boring when group work is used for consolidation due to excessive repetition; Jessica commented that the use of Cantonese using group work would hinder the
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	<p><u>Group work for facilitating social development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them agreed that by doing group work, it facilitates social development such as getting to know the strengths and weaknesses of their group members; <p><u>Use of Cantonese and English in group work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three participants indicated that they would use both Cantonese and English during group work because of different reasons- Christy→to express something that is important in Cantonese; Tommy and Winnie→ lack of L2; <p><u>Argument during group work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They expressed that argument is common when they do group work, they argues about minor issues such as something related to an eraser; they took different approach to solve argument: Tommy would play ‘paper-scissors-stone’, other 2 suggested their English teacher would involve and told them to apologize to each other; <p><u>Undesirable group work experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two of the participants shared their undesirable experience of working in groups: 	<p>effectiveness of group work;</p> <p><u>Group work for facilitating social development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the interviewees pointed out that group work is useful in maintaining/ developing friendship as well as gaining more understanding towards their friends, in particular personality and learning progress; <p><u>Use of Cantonese and English in group work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three participants indicated that they would use both Cantonese and English during group work because of different reasons: Timothy→seek for clarification after listening; Jessica→ to express something hard to express, difficult words, cannot use body language to express; Yoshi→ don’t know the words • They used English only when: writing down the ideas and reading aloud what they have written down; <p><u>The use of more group work in English lessons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them indicated that they have no comment towards this questions because it depends largely on the task design as well as the performance of their group members; <p>Teacher’s role in facilitating good group</p>
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	Tommy did not know how to participate and was being ignored when seek help from his group members; Winnie hesitated to participate in group work because of her limited L2 ability and ‘don’t know how to help’;	work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them suggested the need for teachers to assign roles for them as well as longer activity time
Conclusion		
Limitations of the group work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not really personalized: the requirement for producing one robot in each group may make the task less personalized, since some of the ideas made by group members were not taken into account; 2. Failed to provide motivation to some students: some of the students need more motivation in learning English; 3. The use of excessive polite phrases may result in inauthentic communication: after teaching, students only used the polite phrases taught for expressing agreement or disagreement, may need to teach some 1-2 more alternative phrases 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The allocation of roles: as from observation, students who took the roles as time-keeper turned out doing nothing; 2. Did not equip students with sufficient language for discussion: although students’ use of English to communicate for the writing part (i.e. writing two suggestions for the given scenario) was satisfactory, the use of Cantonese was found in the rehearsing stage (i.e. planning for the acting part), this implied that I have not provided sufficient amount of language needed, in particular action words, as inputs for students during pre-task stage;
Planning for future lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Continue to implement:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles allocation 2. The teaching of communicative language (e.g. how to interrupt, how to start a discussion etc.) progressively • <u>Areas to improve:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the pros and cons of the use of group writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Continue to implement:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles allocation 2. The teaching of communicative language progressively • <u>Areas to improve:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equip students with language needed for discussion (e.g. in the current context, some action verbs) and hopefully, to reduce code-

	2. Use of authentic tasks to motivate learners; or identify the causes of demotivation for some of the students;	switching and/or mixing; 2. Reconsider how roles should be assigned according to the task (e.g. is it necessary to have a time-keeper? How to make sure the time-keeper is participating? etc.)
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Table 3: Summary of 2B's first and second questionnaires

Summary of 2B's first and second questionnaires						
Questions	First Questionnaire			Second Questionnaire		
	No	No comment	Yes	No	No comment	Yes
1. I like working in groups during English lessons.	0	3	14	0	1	16
2. I am happy when I work in groups.	1	4	12	0	1	16
3. I am sad when I work in groups.	13	3	1	16	1	0
4. I think working in groups is interesting.	2	1	14	0	1	16
5. I think working in groups is boring.	14	0	3	16	1	0
6. Working in groups helps me learn English.	0	2	15	1	1	15
7. Working in groups helps raise my interest towards learning English.	0	5	12	0	4	13
8. I always contribute during group work.	3	2	12	1	1	15
9. I rarely contribute during group work.	12	2	3	15	1	1
10. I want to have more group work in English lessons.	0	1	16	0	1	16
Total number of responses for each questionnaire: 17						

Table 4: Summary of 5B's first and second questionnaires

Summary of 5B's first and second questionnaires						
Questions	First Questionnaire			Second Questionnaire		
	No	No comment	Yes	No	No comment	Yes
1. I like working in groups during English lessons.	1	1	28	0	1	29
2. I am happy when I work in groups.	0	4	26	1	1	28
3. I am sad when I work in groups.	25	5	0	28	1	1
4. I think working in groups is interesting.	1	2	27	1	0	29
5. I think working in groups is boring.	27	2	1	27	1	2
6. Working in groups helps me learn English.	1	5	24	0	3	27
7. Working in groups helps raise my interest towards English learning.	3	9	18	1	4	25
8. I always contribute during group work.	5	2	23	2	2	26
9. I rarely contribute during group work.	23	2	5	24	2	4
10. I want to have more group work in English lessons.	2	4	24	1	3	26
Total number of responses for each questionnaire: 30						